

Actions of the AASLH Council

On Sunday, February 21, 2016, the AASLH Council met prior to Museum Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., at the Washington Plaza Hotel and took the following actions. AASLH Chair Julie Rose led the meeting, which was structured to maximize discussion of the Council's four aspirations: promoting the relevance of history, building diversity and inclusiveness, cultivating an experimental and creative spirit, and increasing financial stability and transparency.

1. Approved the Minutes from the September 2015 Council Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky.
2. Accepted the reports of the Investment Committee and the Finance Committee. On December 31, 2015, halfway through the fiscal year, AASLH's actual total revenues were \$1,002,376, and actual total expenses were \$786,987, leaving a surplus of \$215,389. Because the annual meeting takes place in the first half of the fiscal year and is the AASLH's largest program, the organization relies on the net surplus to carry it through until the fiscal year's end on June 30. The net surplus on December 31 was within a few thousand dollars of budget expectations. The report on investments showed the current value of the endowment to be \$1,423,876, which is up from the \$1,340,585 reported for June 30, 2015.
3. Accepted the 2015 audit as referred by the Audit Committee. The auditing firm of Edmondson, Betzler & Dame, PLLC, noted no issues or qualifications. In the Management Letter, the firm did point out a weakness in controls regarding journal entries. By time of the Council meeting, the AASLH staff had implemented a new review system for entries before they are entered into the general ledger.
4. Heard the report on the 75 for 75 Campaign. The amount raised since the campaign launched in September 2014 is \$75,545, which includes an additional round of generous personal donations and pledges from Council members made during the Council meeting. The funds will help expand the number and type of workshops and webinars AASLH can offer each year to serve more states and localities and new audiences, such as avocational historians. (Shortly after the meeting, AASLH received a pledge of \$455 from Conner Prairie which completed the campaign, bringing the total to \$75,000.)
5. Discussed the preliminary results of the 2015 membership survey. At its June meeting the Council will dig deeper into the data in the context of AASLH surveys from 2011, 2006, 2004, 2003, and 2001.
6. Approved two new categories of membership: a New Professional category for individuals at the beginning stage of their career, and an Academic Program category for institutional memberships covering faculty and students in museum studies, history, public history, and related programs.
7. Approved the "Governance Committee Handbook for Council" submitted by the Governance Committee. The document is the culmination of a year and a half of work by the committee to establish a systematic process for educating and communicating with Council members about their responsibilities, the functioning of AASLH's programs and operations, the work of the

Council, and annual assessments of their performance.

8. Received the 2016 slate of candidates for Officer, Council, and Leadership Nominating Committee positions. The election opens in June.
9. Heard a report from Council members Burt Logan and Ken Turino who represented AASLH on the American Alliance of Museum's Direct Care Task Force. Comments from AASLH and other Discipline Specific Organizations have been integrated into the AAM's "White Paper on the Direct Care of Collections." (A few days after the Council meeting, the AAM board approved the white paper.) Council formed a committee (Ken Turino, Burt Logan, Erin Mast, and Donna Sack) to look at the AASLH statement on direct care and make a recommendation about more specifically defining preservation. Committee members will present a session at the annual meeting in Detroit.
10. Heard a report from the Editorial Advisory Board about the AASLH book publishing program with Rowman & Littlefield. The program produced 9 books in 2014, 7 books in 2015, and is scheduled to issue more than 20 in 2016.
11. Heard a report from Council member Donna Sack on behalf of the Standards and Ethics Committee about the white paper on fraud that the committee is creating. The committee will be delivering the paper to the Council at its June 2016 meeting. Committee members will present a session at the annual meeting in Detroit.
12. Discussed a proposal by staff to formalize a system for creating discounts from vendors on goods and services for AASLH members. Staff will elaborate the proposal and bring it to the Executive Committee for approval.
13. Summarized the recommendations of the Council's four breakout groups that had spent the afternoon discussing strategies and tactics for increasing the relevance of history, building diversity and inclusiveness, cultivating an experimental and creative spirit, and increasing financial stability and transparency in AASLH.
14. Concluded with a discussion of Museums Advocacy Day, which several members of the Council were planning to participate in for the two days following the meeting.