

**Society of American Archivists Foundation
Board of Directors Meeting
August 13, 2020
Virtual Meeting**

**Executive Director's Report
(Prepared by Executive Director Nancy Beaumont)**

Many important updates for the period from August 2019 to August 2020 are available in other reports for this meeting, including those of the President (IV.A.), Vice President/Development Committee (IV.B.), Treasurer (IV.C.), and Grant Review Committee (IV.F.).

FUNDRAISING / DEVELOPMENT

- Completed the memorandum of agreement with Michael Kurtz for “The Dr. Michael J. Kurtz Initiative for the Future of Archives, Records, and Information” on November 5. Kudos once again for the excellent work that Margery and Dennis did in drafting the FARI concept and negotiating it with Michael. Michael announced his legacy bequest in a brief video shown during Plenary 1 of the 2020 Joint Annual Meeting. (Unfortunately he mentioned SAA rather than the Foundation in his video. Meredith was clear to mention the Foundation in her introduction of the video.)
- Implemented the 2019 year-end Annual Appeal using messages drafted by Development Committee Chair Margery Sly. Letters (signed by the SAA and SAAF presidents) were prepared for past presidents of SAA, Fellows, and individuals who donated in 2017 and/or 2018 but not yet in 2019 and were sent to Foundation Board volunteers who hand-notated them and posted them on or about December 12. Thank you, All!
- Published articles and announcements in four of six issues of *Archival Outlook*:
 - *September/October 2019*: Ad announcing 2020 grant application deadlines.
 - *November/December 2019*: Display announcement, “Retirees: Donate Your IRA Distribution to the SAA Foundation.”
 - *January/February 2020*: 1) Half-page display ad/article, “Connecting the Strategic Dots,” about the Strategic Growth Fund and 2) my column featuring “The 2019 Donors to the SAA Foundation.”
 - *May/June 2020*: Display box publicized both applying for and donating to the newly established Archival Workers Emergency Fund, and I boosted it with a mention in my column.

- Participated in the October 21 meeting of the Development Committee in Chicago. See the Vice President/Development Committee report at IV.B.

GRANTMAKING AND AWARDS

- Publicized the grant application deadline via the September/October issue of *Archival Outlook*, *In The Loop*, and social media.
- Provided administrative support to the Grant Review Committee in its review of 28 letters of inquiry for Strategic Growth grants, of which 17 were invited to submit a full proposal. Subsequently assisted the committee in 1) reviewing 12 grant proposals using SmarterSelect software to streamline both the submission and review processes and 2) recommending to the Board that five grants be awarded. Staff handled all communication with grant proposers and awardees, from letters of inquiry through grant notifications and payments. (See also the Grant Review Committee report at IV.F.)
- Significant staff support was required to support the Archival Workers Emergency Fund, from the initial request to the Board, to implementing publicity for both applications and donations, to reviewing and approving applications, to making sure that funds got into the hands of recipients. Many thanks to Amy, Sharmila, Felicia, and Peter for their outstanding efforts while dealing with their own COVID-related challenges. Keep in mind that the Board will be evaluating the AWEF project in November and determining whether and how the Fund might continue.
- Publicized the availability of the Travel Award to assist precariously employed/unemployed archivists in registering for the 2020 Joint Annual Meeting. Thus far 81 individuals have received a travel award.

GOVERNANCE

- Felicia worked with Scott Cline to recommend revisions in the Annual Meeting Travel Award Program committee description and application guidelines. (See Interim Board Actions at I.D., Appendix D.)
- Prepared materials for the Foundation Board's August meeting.

ADMINISTRATION

- Amy and Peter prepared a recommendation for Fund Asset Classification that was approved by the Board in June. (See Interim Board Actions at I.D., Appendix B.)
- Peter drafted the FY 2021 proposed budget, discussed it with Treasurer Amy Fitch, and put it forward for discussion and vote at this meeting.
- Peter prepared the FY20 year-end financial statements. (See Agenda Item IV.C.)

REFLECTIONS

In reflecting on the growth of the Foundation since 2011 and its future, I'd like to share some observations and recommendations.

- The Board’s response to the *ad hoc* group proposal to create AWEF to assist displaced workers was truly inspiring. The Board moved quickly, took risks, and put its money where its mouth is with the seed funding of \$15,000 plus the \$6,000 from the Travel Award Fund. The staff, too—primarily Felicia and Peter—stepped up to provide support at a time when they were coping with quarantine challenges and other priorities themselves. It is wonderful to see the commitment of Board members and staff to the Foundation and its mission....
- But it is also true that we must pay attention to the depth (or lack thereof) of our “bench.” While it’s likely that AWEF’s success will reflect well on the Foundation, it is also likely that it will have a significant impact on other development efforts for at least the remainder of 2020. With \$108,390 in donations from 861 donors, one wonders how much may be left over this year for individuals to make donations to the Strategic Growth fund, for example.
- The Board drew the \$15,000 in seed money for AWEF from the “Development Consultant” line item in the FY20 budget. I fully supported that decision. Given the bench analogy, however, I think it is critically important that the Foundation bring in outside expertise on development as soon as possible in FY21—even if that means a deficit budget. The proposed budget includes \$7,500 for a consultant; I think that \$10,000 or even \$20,000 would go a long way in helping the Foundation Board develop a realistic plan for future efforts.
- I believe that the time has come to open the Board election process to wider participation that allows for newer voices and industry expertise and development expertise. (And, to be crass, possibly even deep pockets). The Board should have a fully transparent process for bringing in new Board members and should be allowed to be comfortable with inviting individuals with specialized expertise and experience to apply to serve on the Board.

We are grateful to Audra Eagle Yun, whose term as a Class A member ends at this meeting, to Tanya Zanish-Belcher for her willingness to serve (yet) another year on the Board as SAA’s immediate past president, and to Waverly Lowell—whose long-standing passion for the Foundation and its mission is remarkable. We appreciate their commitment to ensuring that the Foundation has a firm footing and is set to grow and thrive. Welcome to Class A members Courtney Chartier and Melissa Gonzales and Class B member Lisa Mangiafico!

As always, I welcome your questions, ideas, and suggestions.