

SAA Annual Meeting Task Force - Social Responsibility Subcommittee Initial Thoughts  
February 2, 2012

Compiled by Rachel Vagts, Subcommittee Chair

Thoughts that came up during our initial e-mail exchange:

- Include a force majeure clause in future contracts with hotels
- think creatively about what social responsibility means outside of just labor issues,
  - environmental impact of the annual meeting
  - issues of diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, religion and income.
  - a sliding scale based on income (which SAA does already with annual dues)?
  - lobby for a certain number of panels or presentations that deal with issues of diversity at a given meeting?
- I'm wondering if we could find out where the labor contracts with the unions working at the hotel stand as far as duration? In other words, if we sign an agreement with a hotel three or four years out and their labor contracts run five years out, it wouldn't be a concern.
- The other part of it for me is if labor issues at the hotel we're contracting for a future meeting are good at the time the contract is signed, are we responsible for the probability of increased meeting expense if labor relations are not good when the meeting is held?
- Finally on the issue of labor relations, if this is a serious concern of ours, should we check perspective hotels to see even if they have good contracts with their unions, do they have good relations with their unions?
- I think SAA has to be much more transparent than they have been in the past so that everyone can see what has transpired with contract negotiations. They probably need to work in some extra steps where they document the state of labor relations at the time contract is sign. All of this should be available to members.
- I've worked on hotel contracts before and it is not easy to get a hotel to accept a force majeure clause. There are so many concessions you want from a hotel especially negotiating reasonable costs that we want SAA to have some leeway in working what is best overall.
- I'm currently involved in hotel contract negotiation for the American Association for the History of Medicine(AAHM). This group is much smaller than SAA and requires less of a conference hotel. We were recently faced with a similar issue to SAA in Chicago. One measure we put in place was to document our process and check web sites such as Unite Here <http://www.unitehere.org/> so we can say something about the state of labor relations at future hotel sites.
- United Association for Labor Education (UALE), whose annual conference planner works with Inmex to book only union hotels: <http://www.inmex.org/>.
- Here are several annual meeting policy examples:
  - [http://www.aaanet.org/meetings/loc\\_policies.cfm](http://www.aaanet.org/meetings/loc_policies.cfm)
  - [http://www.apsanet.org/content\\_77188.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/content_77188.cfm)
  - <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/1994/9409/9409ANN1.cfm>

- <http://www.aallnet.org/main-menu/Leadership-Governance/policies/AssociationPolicies/policy-annual-site-selection.html>