

SHAFR Council Agenda
June 3, 2024
via Zoom, 10:00am-1:00pm (U.S. Eastern)

Present: Mitch Lerner (chair), Megan Black, Brooke Blower, Gretchen Heefner, Mary Ann Heiss, Chris Hulshof, Melanie McAlister, Sarah Miller-Davenport, Christopher McKnight Nichols, Vanessa Walker, Molly Wood, Kelsey Zavelo

Attending: Amy Sayward (ex officio), Faith Bagley, Michael Brenes, Elizabeth Ferguson, Justin Hart, Kaete O’Connell, Tom Zeiler

Introductory matters:

SHAFR President Mitch Lerner opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking all present for their participation. He then turned to an affirmation of the votes taken electronically since the last Council meeting: approval of the minutes of the January and April Council meetings and the sign-on to the American Historical Association’s statement on campus protests. Council then turned to a vote of thanks to retiring committee, task force, and editorial board members:

- Christopher Fisher, Program Committee co-chair
- Meredith Oyen, Program Committee co-chair
- Jason Colby, Program Committee member
- Steve Brady, Program Committee member
- Wang Tao, Program Committee member
- Se Yong Jang, Program Committee member
- E. Kyle Romero, Program Committee member
- Carly Goodman, Program Committee member
- Benjamin Montoya, Program Committee member
- Amy Fedeski, Program Committee member
- Brian Etheridge, Program Committee member
- David Atkinson, Program Committee member
- Rob Rakove, Program Committee member
- James Stocker, Program Committee member
- Manna Duah, Program Committee member
- Mary Ann Heiss, Ways & Means Committee chair
- Julia Irwin, Development Committee co-chair
- Salim Yaqub, Development Committee member
- Kelsey Zavelo, Graduate Student Committee co-chair
- Grant Golub, Graduate Student Committee member
- Steven Rodriguez, Graduate Student Committee member
- Amin Esmailzadeh Aghjeh, Graduate Student Committee member
- Grace Song, Graduate Student Committee member
- David Milne, Stuart L. Bernath Book Prize Committee chair
- Theresa Keeley, Stuart L. Bernath Scholarly Article Prize Committee chair
- Karine Walther, Dissertation Prize Committee chair
- Mario Del Pero, Robert H. Ferrell Book Prize Committee chair
- Andrew Rotter, Norman & Laura Graebner Award Committee chair
- Frank Costigliola, Peter L. Hahn Distinguished Service Award Committee chair

- Katharina Rietzler, Michael H. Hunt Prize for International History Committee chair
- Kimber Quinney, Myrna Bernath Book & Fellowship Awards Committee chair
- Monica Kim, Marilyn Blatt Young Dissertation Completion Fellowship Committee chair

Council also passed a special resolution of thanks to Andrew Johns:

“SHAFR Council offers its sincere thanks and appreciation to Andy Johns for his years of service as *Passport* editor. Over the course of 14 years and 41 issues—which included, amongst other things, 76 roundtables, 14 teaching columns, and 12 pieces about FRUS—Andy has worked tirelessly to provide SHAFR members with invaluable information about the profession. He has made *Passport* what it is today: a critical part of the diplomatic history field. His commitment to the publication and to SHAFR has been extraordinary, and the entire organization owes him a debt of gratitude. SHAFR Council thanks him for his many years of service.”

Conference matters:

Kaete O’Connell, SHAFR’s Conference Consultant, joined the meeting and reported on conference matters. As of that morning, 324 people had registered for the conference, which was 75 more than the 2022 conference in New Orleans but 100 less than the 2023 conference at Arlington, Virginia. She did note, however, that there had been a 16% attrition rate of people accepted onto the program who ended up not attending; additionally, there were far fewer exhibitors, mostly because of budgetary and sales constraints. Because of the small number of exhibitors, she had created an orphan table for recent books by members whose publishers were absent. She then summarized the hurdles posed by having an on-campus conference, including the conflicts between campus convocation and the conference as well as delays in completing the program. Asked about the lower number of registrants, O’Connell pointed to passport/visa issues, rising airfares, and the small number of graduate students who had applied for travel funding. Asked about how to address some of the issues that had arisen with the 2024 conference, O’Connell and Amy Sayward, SHAFR’s Executive Director, discussed the deadlines they had established for the incoming Program Committee as well as offering that committee greater support via Faith Bagley, whose skill set and years-long experience with SHAFR have equipped her very well to serve as the Program Committee assistant. They also had suggested changing the deadline for travel grant applicants from December 1st to January 1st to address the low number of travel-grant applications.

O’Connell then shifted to updates for upcoming conferences. For the 2025 conference in Arlington, she described the off-site welcome reception/social event organized for the Spy Museum, which will also host a plenary or keynote lecture. She described the professionalism of the staff and the easy access to the museum via Metro and bus. The 2025 registration form will include boxes to select no-cost attendance and to select no-cost bus transportation to assist in conference planning. For the 2026 conference, she reminded Council that the contract had already been signed with the Blackwell Conference Center at Ohio State University, which should provide an excellent venue. For the 2027 conference scheduled for the DC area, O’Connell has been exploring other venue options (including George Mason University’s Arlington campus), given the high costs at the Arlington Renaissance; Council also highlighted the new Virginia Tech and Northeastern campuses as potential options. For 2028, she suggested that a Texas conference could draw sponsorships from the three presidential libraries (given the relevant anniversaries of 1968, 1998, and 2008) as well as engaging our many Texas-based members.

It was also an opportunity to host a conference west of the Mississippi that might also engage Caribbean and Latin American members.

Council then turned to the question of the diversity statement to be included in future conference calls for papers, which had been discussed in the previous Council meeting. There was a lively discussion of several elements of the proposed statement. Lerner moved, Sarah Miller-Davenport seconded, and Council unanimously approved the following statement:

“SHAFR is committed to the values of equity, access, and representation. The organization invites proposals from all, especially scholars of color; those who identify as women, trans, and non-binary; individuals residing outside of the United States; untenured and contingent faculty; scholars working in other fields and disciplines, and those who work in less commonly studied chronological periods or who engage with unusual methodological approaches. The Program Committee welcomes—but does not require—proposals that include a brief statement detailing how their submission advances SHAFR’s commitment to these values.”

Summer Institute proposal:

Michael Brenes of Yale University joined the meeting to support a proposal to revive SHAFR’s Summer Institutes. Lerner reviewed the proposal he had provided to Council, which included four years of institutes in partnership with Yale University and Ohio State University. The proposal requested an allocation of \$19,520 from SHAFR over the four years; he noted that less might ultimately be required. Conversation then turned to the ways in which the Summer Institutes had created lasting communities, especially as graduate programs shrink at universities. There were questions about how the themes had been selected and how the selection processes will work. The host universities will choose the themes, but Council encouraged the organizers to define these themes broadly and to develop a selection process in order to attract a diverse cross-section of graduate students. Lerner and Brenes were very receptive to these suggestions. There was also a discussion about how and when future summer institutes might be organized, including ideas about bringing in additional universities and/or not hosting summer institutes every single year after this initial period. Brenes left the meeting ahead of the vote to approve the proposal with SHAFR’s financial contribution. The motion was made by Lerner, seconded by Gretchen Heffner, and passed unanimously.

Teaching award:

Justin Hart, co-chair of the Teaching Committee, joined the meeting to discuss creation of LaFeber-Wood Teaching Award. Molly Wood recused herself from the conversation due to a conflict of interest (the proposed naming of the award after her, which she was not aware of until she received the proposal). Lerner reviewed the proposal developed with the Teaching Committee to establish a \$500/year award with seed money from SHAFR and begin a campaign after the conference to fully fund a \$1,000 annual award. He indicated that there were a number of donors ready to contribute and explained that the Development Committee was ready to begin.

Council provided significant feedback on the application and selection process outlined in the Teaching Committee proposal, including discussion of the page limit of applications and clarification that SHAFR’s Bernath Lecture Prize is—in part—a teaching prize. The majority of the discussion focused on the proposed alternation between R1 (or equivalent) and teaching-centered positions and the definition of

both types of institutions. Asked about the context of the Teaching Committee discussion that led to this proposal for rotation, Hart stated that the sense of the committee members was that many of the awards made by SHAFR go to R1s and that the committee members wanted to make sure everyone had access to the opportunities provided by SHAFR. Given this context, some suggested that the committee might want to revisit the idea of alternating, which could actually lead to an over-representation of winners from R1-type institutions. There was support for preferring nominees who did not come from R1-type institutions. Lerner then suggested that Council vote to approve creation of the award, so that fundraising could begin, and that the Teaching Committee refine the application proposal in line with the discussion that had occurred in Council. Hart agreed and left the meeting ahead of the vote. Mary Ann Heiss moved to approve creation of the award, Brooke Blower seconded, and Council voted unanimously in favor.

Lerner noted that the Ways & Means Committee had recommended that if the award raised more money than was needed for the \$1,000 annual prize that the original \$5,000 seed money from SHAFR could be returned to the budget from the endowment account.

Publication matters:

Elizabeth Ferguson from Oxford University Press (OUP) joined the meeting to highlight items from the publisher's report. She emphasized that traditional subscriptions are declining but that consortia subscriptions have remained more stable; and increasingly, OUP is including in these consortia deals reduced rates for open access. She emphasized that production had gone smoothly in 2024, with all issues being published on time. Conversation then moved to the Oxford contract, which had been corrected. After Ferguson left the meeting, Lerner noted that the one-year notice of termination meant that Council would have to decide on renewal in year three of the contract (2027) and therefore would have to issue a call for proposals in year two of the contract (2026) and create a task force to investigate the various proposals.

Sayward provided a tentative update about the projected cost of print copies of *Passport* and *Diplomatic History* based on a proposal from Sheridan (the current printer of SHAFR publications). It appears that it would cost approximately \$50 per person for 300-400 copies. Sayward indicated that she was happy to seek additional bids from other printers, if desired; the benefit of staying with Sheridan is consistency, but there was no way to know if it was a competitive bid without seeking additional bids. She sought direction from Council regarding whether members desiring paper copies of these publications should pay all, part, or none of the associated costs. She reminded Council that in the last membership cycle SHAFR had asked for donations to cover the cost of paper copies and had received about \$2,000. The Ways and Means Committee had had a robust discussion about this issue and had not reached consensus. There was a suggestion of receiving paper copies of *Passport* with a \$50/year donation and both with a \$100/year donation. There was discussion about the need to inquire of those currently receiving print copies about the level of their commitment to that decision, especially for life members who do not make a choice between print and digital every year as part of the renewal process. Sayward was instructed to seek additional bids and to draft a letter that would also explain the technical assistance available for those accessing digital copies for the first time. She reminded Council that a final decision would be needed before the renewal cycle begins on November 1st.

Conversation then turned to the suggested additions to the *Diplomatic History* editorial board that had been suggested by the editors. Lerner moved to approve the three suggestions, Megan Black seconded,

and Council voted unanimously in favor. Council also considered the draft memorandum of agreement for the *Diplomatic History* editors, which was drafted to comply with SHAFR's legal obligations based on the new contract with OUP. Lerner suggested creating separate agreements for each of the editors, as opposed to the joint agreement in the draft.

Financial matters:

Council then turned to the financial matters on the agenda. Sayward reviewed the financial reports provided in the conference packet, which showed that the current fiscal year was projected to show a small surplus. The upcoming fiscal year showed a small deficit, primarily because SHAFR has to pay Oxford for last year's memberships (under the terms of our current contract) as well as this coming year's publication costs under the new contract. Melani McAlister raised the question of not having AV at the upcoming conference, except for the luncheons that required amplification. Lerner summarized that Council had made this decision in the fall due to the high cost of the Arlington Renaissance AV services in the previous conference (\$37,000). Sayward pointed out that this phenomenon was not unique to SHAFR; the American Historical Association had recently notified affiliates of the rising cost of AV at the upcoming New York conference, which was higher than the previous year, which in turn had been higher than any of their rates prior to COVID. She also pointed to Council's suggestion of purchasing table-top podia and considering the purchase of a portable speaker and microphone if any SHAFR members requested this accommodation on their SHAFR registration form. Council also supported a 3% raise for the Conference Consultant and the IT Director. Chris Hulshof moved to accept the proposed budget with the amendments required by the teaching award, Summer Institute votes, and raises; McAlister seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Lerner commented that he had met with the endowment manager; he was not concerned with his work but also was not thrilled, so Council will probably revisit the guidance and targets provided to the manager moving forward.

Tom Zeiler then joined the meeting to discuss his role as SHAFR's representative in the National Coalition for History (NCH). He pointed to the working group report and the fact that NCH is restructuring as rationales to revisit Council's decision to end its membership in September. Instead, he suggested that—if the working group report was endorsed and the restructuring was positive—Council consider continuing its membership at the lowest (\$600) level. Council members indicated support for a fall email vote on whether to continue membership at the \$600 rate or to end SHAFR's membership, as per the earlier fall vote.

Personnel matters:

Council did not offer any suggestions for revising the MOA with Richard Immerman to cover the executive director transition.

Lerner provided updates on the search process for the *Passport* editor. As the past editor, he is chairing the committee. He explained that Ohio State might make an application, which does not involve him; if so, he will recuse himself from committee discussions of that proposal. So far, the committee has received indications of interest from 2-3 sources. The deadline for applications is July 15th. Sayward will draft a memorandum of agreement for the new editor(s).

In terms of the stipends to be paid to the section editors for *The SHAFR Guide*, Sayward noted that these had originally been allocated for the coming fiscal year but were now being postponed and are reflected in the long-range projections report.

Council matters:

Council reviewed the IT Director's report, which included a recommendation to assess cyber security. Lerner requested some specific recommendations and George Fujii's attendance at the January meeting.

Council then turned to the proposal to make the by-laws more inclusive through removal of gendered language, which had been discussed previously. Following input from CARE (Committee on Access, Representation, and Equity), the proposed language follows the Modern Language Association (MLA) approach of removing pronouns. Gretchen Heefner moved to approve the included version, Chris Nichols seconded, and Council voted unanimously. The new language will be included in the fall ballot for membership approval, and there will be a linked red-line version for members to examine before the vote.

The other by-law amendment under consideration—also previously discussed—was inclusion of an international member on the Nominating Committee. There was a question about whether a sufficient number of international members were interested in such a position and also a statement that the time of meetings might have to be adjusted to accommodate an international member. Sayward pointed out that when Council first moved to Zoom that it had accommodated members from Qatar to California. Hulshof moved to approve the proposed language, Vanessa Walker seconded, and Council voted unanimously in favor.

Sayward then spoke of the need for an organizational conflict-of-interest policy. There is a scattering of such policies for book prize committees and for the endowment, but our contract with Oxford University Press requires us to have an overarching policy. Ferguson has promised to provide Sayward with some examples from similar organizations. Sayward will work on a draft for Council discussion in January.

Committee matters:

There were many committee reports that did not require action and generated no Council concerns or questions. Hulshof gave an update based on his written report that connected his email membership drive to a double-digit increase in graduate student membership. He also pointed out that several Graduate Student Committee members were rotating off and that he was actively seeking new members. Sayward stated that the graduate student breakfast would be integrated into the conference food & drink budget in line with what we do for the *Diplomatic History* editorial board, for example.

Sayward highlighted that the Gale Digital History Fellowship applications were with Digital Resources and Archival Sharing Committee for decision; Gale will sponsor a session at the 2025 conference and provide travel funding to the selected fellows.

The Development Committee had recommended DropBox for donations, which allows both recurring and one-time donations. Sayward explained that the costs would be folded into existing budget line-items. Lerner made a motion to approve this expenditure, Miller-Davenport seconded, and Council voted unanimously in favor.

Sayward highlighted that the Committee on Women in SHAFR's Second Book Workshop was shifting in time (from June to January) and format (in-person to virtual); the money already approved by Council for this year was to be rolled to next fiscal year. Lerner highlighted the need for a regular rotation for the Historical Documentation Committee, and Sarah Snyder would have to be replaced as chair after November 1st.

Council adjourned at 12:12pm.