



ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEETING

July 7, 2025
2 - 3:15 pm CDT
Zoom

Attendees

Council Officers: President, Troy Reeves; First Vice President, Mark Cave; Past President, Kelly Elaine Navies

Absent: Vice President, Sarah Milligan

Council Members: Shanna Farrell; Francine D. Sprang-Willis; Nishani Frazier; Abby Perkiss

Absent: Anna Sheftel

Executive Office: Executive Director, Stephen Sloan; Associate Director, Steven Sielaff; Program Associate, Leslie An

Notes

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS
CALL TO ORDER		
Opening Thoughts by Francine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Francine prompted reflection on the meaning of July 4th.	
Consent Agenda	No items were submitted for approval.	
PRESENT BUSINESS		
Advocacy/Strategic Plan Work (All)	<p>Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Advocacy is drafting a letter based on last year's version, to be shared by the August meeting.At the OHS Glasgow conference, Steven Sielaff delivered a 3-minute statement on OHA's role in the current U.S. climate, upcoming events, and support for members. The statement, developed with Rob Perks, was well received.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kelly Elaine: Share Advocacy Committee letter by August Council MeetingSteven: Update statements page

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven wants to update the statements page on the OHA website, which currently features sign-on statements, to be a unified collection. <p>Midwinter Document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council reflected on the meaning of accountability in the organization. • Internal accountability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Among Executive Office and Council members – fulfilling commitments, supporting each other professionally, engaging in difficult conversations, and speaking with a unified voice. ◦ Extends to non-Council leadership as well. • External accountability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ To members (those who pay dues, attend events, and engage with the organization). ◦ To the broader oral history field – encouraging ethical practices and cross-disciplinary engagement. ◦ To communities not formally in the membership, including future members, marginalized people, and those using oral history to challenge power. ◦ Specific groups mentioned included scholars, emerging professionals, archivists, and vulnerable communities. ◦ Ancestors were also named as a group to whom OHA holds accountability. • Discussion: 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Field of digital humanities ○ Troy supported naming audiences to make accountability explicit. ○ Agreement that oral history ethics and methodology extend beyond practitioners and can guide others. 	
Updates from the Executive Office (Sloan & Sielaff)	<p>Website Alt Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rachel and Steven used an AI tool to bulk-generate alt text for 600+ images across the OHA website. ● Rachel conducted QA and updated where needed. System allows for future edits. ● Cost: \$50/year with ~500 credits remaining for future image uploads. <p>Draft Calendar of Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Idea for a site-integrated calendar of upcoming events, linked to their respective posts – either a dedicated page or a splash page widget. ● Rachel is researching implementation options. <p>Oral History & The Law Webinar #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First installment went well: ~58 registrants, paid speakers, small revenue generated. ● Attendees appreciated the novel programming. ● Programming Committee's upcoming event (~50 registrants) will mark the most successful in OHA history. ● Community Support Space continues. Expecting monthly programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Steven: Work on integrated upcoming events calendar ● Council: Purchase flight tickets – find competitive prices and take advantage of any available institutional support (NOTE: Tuesday dinner) ● Council: Let Sloan know the nights you want booked for the Annual Meeting and whether you're willing to have a roommate ● Executive Office: Advertise Newsletter Editor position ● Executive Office: Start interviewing for Newsletter Editor position this month (July) ● Council: Remind members to vote for OHA Elections ● Troy: Reach out to Renée about volunteering

	<p>Annual Meeting Travel Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council members encouraged to use institutional funding when possible. • Correction to Sloan's remarks in June Council Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Travel covered: ½ airfare, ½ private auto (\$0.545/mile), ½ ground transport, 2 nights lodging, meals (\$50/day up to 3 days), and ½ of other reasonable costs (e.g., parking fees, tolls, baggage fees). Add-on personal costs not covered. • Executive Office will book hotel nights; Council members to book flights and indicate if they're open to rooming. • Tuesday dinner planned; Council meeting all day Wednesday (only scheduled meeting). • Council registration is typically not comped; past practice was to comp standing committee chairs only. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ A motion to continue comping registration only for standing committee chairs (not caucuses or full committees) passed unanimously at 3:47 pm. ◦ Acknowledgment that chair activity levels vary; standardizing on role-based criteria (i.e. "standing") avoids subjective decisions. <p>Newsletter Editor Position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalized position description reflects Council input. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews to begin soon. Advertisement rollout planned to allow for transition overlap with outgoing editor MaryKay (on retainer through year-end). <p>Slate of Candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final slate set; Council members asked to remind membership to vote. Renee declined to run but may be contacted for other service roles. 	
Committees, Caucuses, Task Force Updates/Discussion (All)	<p>Committee Chair Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Troy and Sloan finalized a "Committee Chair Needs Assessment" in collaboration with the Committee on Committees. Survey will be distributed this month; responses due by end of July. Purpose: gather feedback to inform the August Call for Committee Volunteers and improve internal committee processes. <p>History Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafted a committee mission based on Midwinter notes from Amy and Steven. Next step: propose a bylaws amendment to officially add the committee. Announcement to be made at Business Meeting (Sept 30, 2:30 CDT); members will vote. One task force member expressed interest in joining; Steven will serve ex officio if committee is ratified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sloan: Send "Committee Chair Needs Assessment" doc by end of July Troy/Sloan: Prepare Call for Committee Volunteers to be sent to all members in August Troy: Prepare messaging to members about amendment to bylaws to be voted on at the Business Meeting (9/30) Executive Office: Make sure IIRF decision is received (sometime in July) Executive Office: Make sure Advocacy's updates to statement on banning of ideas is received (due 7/31) Abby: Let Executive Office know about reimbursement amount for meetup Troy & Sarah: Prep for next Community Support Space (7/29)

	<p>Committee/Task Force Potpourri</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Committee: Andrea actively recruiting and coordinating with Kelly Elaine. Two new members added. • International Committee: Reviewing scholarships. • Programming Committee: Chair commended; event signup surpassed 50 participants. • Nominating Committee: Successfully archived process notes for future transitions. • Membership Committee: Small group but meeting monthly, conducting outreach, and welcoming new members. • IIRF Award Committee: Met in June, final decision planned for July. • Diversity Committee: Consistently engaged, offers suggestions, and participates actively. • Oral History Advocacy Committee: Rebuilding. Met in June, planning updates to statement on banning of ideas. Revisions due by July 31. • Note: May Council decision to remove Indigenous identity requirement from IIRF application criteria caused pushback (to be discussed later in meeting). • Low international scholarship application numbers possibly due to political climate and Poland conference location. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Unused funds reallocated to domestic scholarships. Martha instructed to still be selective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelly Elaine & Shanna: Plan Bay area meetup
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	<p>June CSS & Council-Sponsored Meetups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philadelphia Meetup: Awaiting expense details from Dave/SHIP (who covered snacks). Abby to notify EO once received. • CSS (June): Modest attendance but fruitful discussion on regional organizing and independent practitioner (IP) funding—issues echoed by membership. • Upcoming CSS: July 29 at 10am CDT, co-hosted by Troy and Sarah; will focus on IPs. • Bay Area Meetup: In planning stages by Kelly Elaine and Shanna. 	
<p>Committee members from the Indigenous Initiative Research Fund Award join at 3:00 pm CDT</p>		
<p>Indigenous Caucus' concern</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IC expressed strong concern over Council's unilateral decision in May to remove Indigenous identity from IIRF application criteria. • Felt the change was significant, even radical, and was made without input or consultation with the Indigenous Caucus or IIRF Committee. • Stressed the importance of dialogue and inclusion in decisions affecting Indigenous content or communities. • IC views Indigenous oral history as methodologically distinct-rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems—and requires specific cultural understanding. • Concern that the decision compromised the fund and diminished Indigenous oral 	

	<p>historians' work and presence in OHA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IC shared two takeaways: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open dialogue is essential for strong relationships. 2. IC must increase visibility within OHA and the broader Indigenous community. • Council responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Apology from Executive Office for not consulting IC beforehand. Acknowledged the aim was legal protection and nonprofit compliance, not opposition to DEI. ◦ Website changes are final for this cycle as applications are now closed. ◦ IIRF Committee can raise any remaining concerns during review. ◦ Diversity & Inclusivity statement on the website remains unchanged. • Francine's input: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Francine (Chair of IIRF and member of IC) was mistakenly assumed to be a representative of both groups. She was not given time to confer before Council vote. ◦ IC suggested developing protocols to avoid such misassumptions in future decisions. • IC wants input on future Indigenous programming and potential speakers (e.g., Law & Ethics Task Force's choice of Trevor Reed for webinar). • Expressed disappointment with OHA's response to broader DEI rollbacks, while affirming their commitment to the 	
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	organization and its shared values.	
ADJOURNMENT		

Minutes prepared by Leslie An