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	• Francine prompted reflection on the meaning of July 4th.	
Consent Agenda	No items were submitted for approval.	
PRESENT BUSINESS		
Advocacy/Strategic Plan Work (All)	Statement • 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.	• Kelly Elaine: Share Advocacy Committee letter **by August Council Meeting** • Steven: Update statements page

	• Steven wants to update the statements page on the OHA website, which currently features sign-on statements, to be a unified collection.
	
	Midwinter Document
	• Council reflected on the meaning of accountability in the organization.
	• Internal accountability:
	  ○ 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:
	  ○ 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:	

	○ 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)	Website Alt Text ● 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. Draft Calendar of Events ● 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. Oral History & The Law Webinar #1 ● 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.	● 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

	Annual Meeting Travel Planning ● Council members encouraged to use institutional funding when possible. ● Correction to Sloan's remarks in June Council Meeting: ○ 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. ○ 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. Newsletter Editor Position ● Finalized position description reflects Council input.	

	• Interviews to begin soon. Advertisement rollout planned to allow for transition overlap with outgoing editor MaryKay (on retainer through year-end). Slate of Candidates • 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)	Committee Chair Survey • 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. History Committee • 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.	• 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**)~~

	Committee/Task Force Potpourri ● 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. ○ Unused funds reallocated to domestic scholarships. Martha instructed to still be selective.	● Kelly Elaine & Shanna: Plan Bay area meetup

	June CSS & Council-Sponsored Meetups • 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.	
Committee members from the Indigenous Initiative Research Fund Award join at 3:00 pm CDT		
Indigenous Caucus' concern	• 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	

	historians' work and presence in OHA. ● IC shared two takeaways: 1. Open dialogue is essential for strong relationships. 2. IC must increase visibility within OHA and the broader Indigenous community. ● Council responses: ○ 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: ○ 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	

	organization and its shared values.	
ADJOURNMENT		

Minutes prepared by Leslie An