

Vice President's Column MAC Meetings and Symposia Update

By Michelle Sweetser, Bowling Green State University



As fall semester and the return to school loom here in Ohio, I wonder how it is possible that three months have passed since I last updated you on MAC activities. I hope you've been able to slow down, to restore mind and spirit, and to make memories with those who are near and dear to you. Amid their own vacations and family lives, MAC leaders have spent the last quarter behind the scenes in a flurry of planning and decisions to prepare for the coming organizational year.

Symposium Organizing Committee cochairs Tara Laver and Lindy Smith and I deliberated at length about the format for the event this fall. We are all eager to return to in-person gatherings and know that some peer organizations have planned for such activities this fall. The Symposium is a signature MAC event that thrives on small-group interaction that cannot be perfectly replicated in a Zoom environment. In the end, however, we've seen the case numbers rising locally in Missouri and are cognizant of the greater transmissibility of the Delta variant. Distancing measures would severely limit in-person attendance and significantly increase prices. Ultimately, we felt that the health of our members is too important, and Council agreed: the Symposium in 2021 will take an all-virtual form. However, Tara and Lindy are looking for ways to incorporate hometown flavor and to create bonds between participants who are scattered throughout the region (and perhaps beyond).

We are proceeding to plan an in-person Annual Meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, May 5–7, 2022. (If we all cross our fingers, wear our masks, get vaccinated, and distance when indoors, we can do this, right?) We are investigating the costs associated with making elements of the in-person meeting available in an online environment but do not yet know whether it is feasible

from a budgetary standpoint. If you have thoughts about appropriate costs for such opportunities or the types of Annual Meeting programming MAC should make available online, please drop me an email. We will be finalizing budgets this fall for Council's consideration in early November.

On the programming front, the Program Committee has announced a conference theme of "Moving Archives Forward." (Did you catch that nice play on Wisconsin's motto, adopted in 1851 to reflect the state's drive to be a national leader?) While the bulk of session proposals are due before this column makes its way to you in print, I hope you'll take advantage of the opportunity to submit last-minute pop-up sessions on time-sensitive topics when that call is distributed in January. Throughout MAC, plenty of individuals and organizations are moving archives forward, and this is your time to shine.

Part of moving forward as an organization also means taking time to reflect and learn from our past. This 50th anniversary year provides an opportunity to do so. MAC president Tamar Chute and I are currently working to identify individuals and activities to appropriately mark this milestone year. Do you have stories about MAC meetings long past? How has the organization impacted your professional or personal life? How should we appropriately celebrate this milestone year? I'd love to hear your stories and ideas (msweets@bgsu.edu)!

Happy Fall!