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Vice President's Column MAC Meetings and Symposia Update

By Michelle Sweetser, Bowling Green State University



Symposium Scholarships

As I write this column, we are making the final preparations to host over 100 participants in an all-virtual Fall Symposium. Cochairs Tara Laver and Lindy Smith report on the Symposium elsewhere in this issue, but I want to alert members about Council's appropriation of funds at its July meeting to support ten student scholarships and two scholarships for precariously employed individuals. Council felt this is a low-cost way to provide opportunities to access valuable educational content to those who might otherwise be unable to participate. As a result, we created a low-stakes process with minimal requirements for entry: those interested in the scholarships simply had to express interest using a Google form by the October 1 due date. A total of twenty-six applied for the student scholarship and six for the precariously employed scholarship. Winners were drawn at random.

Speakers Agreement

For many years, MAC has required individuals who present at the Annual Meeting to complete an agreement ensuring that all parties are clear about expectations related to publicity, attendance, and registration for the meeting. At its fall meeting in 2018, Council approved the collection of demographic data about speakers, including "race, ethnicity, gender identity, years in profession, and type of institution in order to attempt to rectify any imbalances during planning" through this agreement form.

A member of an accepted panel for the 2022 Annual Meeting in Madison raised concerns this fall about the demographic categories presented in the Ethnicity category on the form. We acknowledge that the categories in the Ethnicity section of the current agreement are problematic, from the choices provided to the instructions to make only one selection from the list. We apologize and acknowledge that we want to do better. All speakers have been made aware of this situation, and we will disregard any data that may have been submitted because it cannot accurately portray demographics as the tool itself is flawed.

So, how will we improve moving forward? Council has asked MAC's Ethics and Inclusion Committee, chaired by Harrison Inefuku, to review the demographic portion of the form so we can ensure that the categories more accurately reflect the diverse population of members and nonmembers who share their knowledge and expertise in MAC's educational spaces. Council has also discussed the reasons and purposes for collecting this data and is in ongoing conversation about whether the speaker agreement is the best venue for this effort. I will be conducting some research and bringing a proposal to Council for consideration in the spring. If you have thoughts about the need, purposes, and method by which demographic data related to speakers is collected and utilized, I would love to hear from you.

Annual Meeting in Madison, May 2022

Masking Policy

You'll learn more elsewhere in this newsletter about the exciting program that we have planned, from our tours to reception site. MAC volunteers and Council, as well as our support team at AMC, have engaged in many conversations about how best to handle an in-person meeting while protecting the health and safety of those in attendance. We will be actively monitoring the situation and will keep members and attendees apprised of changes.

As the COVID-19 situation is continually in flux, **MAC will require all attendees to wear masks in event spaces, even those fully vaccinated**, to provide the safest meeting experience possible. This requirement is in accordance with current CDC recommendations for counties with substantial or high transmission and with a current mandate within Dane County itself. As you make a decision about in-person conference attendance, I encourage you to learn more about the health and safety protocols

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currently in place at the Madison Concourse Hotel (<https://www.concoursehotel.com/safety>). Meanwhile, we will continue to monitor these resources and recommendations and will keep you informed.

Additionally, we are working with the hotel to explore the possibility of additional distance between chairs at sessions, the feasibility of spreading people out during breaks and at the reception, opportunities to utilize outdoor spaces or to open windows, and the like. These options depend upon venue, weather, costs, and attendance, but we will do everything possible to make the Annual Meeting a positive and safe experience for all.

Virtual Option

While we are committed to offering a safe in-person Annual Meeting experience in Madison, the last two years have demonstrated that a healthy appetite for virtual educational opportunities exists as well. I am excited to report that in addition to an in-person event, MAC will offer a virtual conference option for the 2022 Annual Meeting!

The virtual option will provide access to roughly one-third of program content for roughly one-third the price of the in-person registration fee. Attendees who select the virtual option will receive access to the plenary session, one predetermined session per time slot (seven total sessions of varying lengths), and the MAC Members' Meeting. Virtual registrants will be able to engage with presenters via chat in Zoom, and our virtual conference will be supported by in-person technical support to guarantee a positive experience for both presenters as well as attendees.

We hope that this opportunity will allow those who are unable to travel for whatever reason—travel budgets or restrictions, health considerations, child- or eldercare obligations, family conflicts, and so on—to continue to grow professionally and to benefit from MAC's high-quality professional development offerings. I hope to see you in Madison, be it in person or virtually!

Calling all MAC Members! Have You Renewed for 2022?

MAC membership is based on the calendar year, so to maximize your membership and ensure eligibility to vote in the 2022 MAC election, be sure to renew before January 31. Membership comes with benefits that keep you in touch with colleagues across the Midwest through the *MAC Newsletter*, abreast of current trends in the field with *Archival Issues*, and ahead of the class with educational opportunities, and it offers the chance to serve and connect with peers.

Renewing online is easy. Simply go to midwestarchives.org, and select the Membership Renewal Form located under the "Membership" drop-down menu. Log in with your username and password to complete the form, making sure your contact information is up to date. From there, you can pay online or with a check in the mail. Have questions about renewing? Email membership@midwestarchives.org.

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