

Southeastern Archaeological Conference
Pre-Business Meeting of the Executive Committee
28 October 2024

In attendance (remotely): Kandi Hollenbach, Ramie Gougeon, Janene Johnston, Patrick Johnson, Tony Boudreaux, Karen Stevens, Richard Weinstein, Jon Marcoux, Carol Colaninno, Lindsay Bloch, Karen Brunso, Mikayla Absher Fletcher, Paige Ford, Maureen Meyers, Christina Friberg, Jane Eastman, David Anderson, Jessica Kowalski,

[R Gougeon, reporting]

After some technical glitches were resolved, President Kandi Hollenbach opened the meeting. The previous meeting minutes were still in the works and could not be approved at the time of this meeting. New officers were announced, including President-Elect Ashley Dumas, Treasurer-Elect Mary Beth Fitz, Executive Officer II Trevor Duke, Social Media Editor-Elect Michelle Rathgraber, and SHARP Coordinator Sean Lambert. A spreadsheet used to track officer positions and terms was not updated after the SEAC Editor role was shortened to a 2-year term, so an 'emergency' replacement for Lindsay Bloch was being sought at the time of this meeting. New officers were congratulated and those who were rolling off were thanked for their years of service to the organization.

Janene Johnston and Patrick Johnson gave an update as organizers of the pending annual meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia. Janene announced that 4 workshops, 3 panels, and a plenary panel about community engagement had been organized. The tours of Jamestown and their new collections/laboratory facility were all 'sold out,' as were the workshops. The tour of the Mariners Museum still had some open slots. She thanked the Council of Virginia Archaeologists for organizing the Public Day and related activities. Patrick Johnson noted that the final program was about to be posted to the membership. He reported that 686 people registered in advance, including 190 students, 519 SEAC members (that number includes students), and a number of non-members, vendors, guests, and volunteers. Patrick supposed that the meeting in Williamsburg was on track to be the most expensive SEAC Annual Meeting in history, but that due to the number of donations, sponsors, and other cost-savings he anticipated that SEAC would break even at the end.

Rich Weinstein provided an update on planning for the annual meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 2025. The specific date of the annual meeting could not yet be fixed until Louisiana State University published the dates of their football games. He reported that tours were being arranged, however, and other activities like selecting a band for the Friday evening dance were coming together.

Before turning to Officers' Reports, President Hollenbach noted that the Executive Committee (EC) had discussed changes to the way the Rising Scholar Awardee was selected and how previous applications were or were not to be rolled over until selected or no longer eligible. The EC received a lot of feedback from previous winners but had not yet come to any decision about whether or how to change these procedures. She moved to table the discussion for the time being and allow in-coming President Jane Eastman to take it up with the new EC once her term starts.

Officers' Reports

Secretary Ramie Gougeon noted that he was nearly caught up with the backlog of minutes to be posted to the SEAC website and that several sets of minutes had recently been posted. Given the many additional meetings held by the EC in 2024, he was behind getting the minutes out to the EC. Gougeon then reported on the election results, including a drop in participation to ~30% of the membership.

Treasurer Jon Marcoux began his report by noting the strength of the stock markets (etc.) as of late has greatly boosted SEAC's coffers, adding some \$80k to the Life Fund. However, SEAC will continue to run at a deficit because revenues are not in line with expenditures. The situation is improving: last year the deficit was running at ~\$26k; this year is closer to ~\$7k. Marcoux projects a deficit in 2025, but less than 2024. He requested a shift of \$9,400 from profits of the Life Fund into the operational funds to cover \$12,000 of expenses for the Williamsburg meeting, and a pending invoice for the end of the year issue of the journal plus all the catch up issues. Membership decreased by about 100 people last year (split between regular members and students). Membership stands at 922, which is where SEAC was in 2022. Marcoux notes that the student membership lottery has helped tremendously to recruit new members.

Marcoux closed his report by making some suggestions for the EC to take up in the coming year. First, the EC should consider ways to make accessing the Life Fund easier, perhaps by setting up an automatic recurring transfer from the Life Fund to the operating budget (like an annuity). He noted the risks of tying part of the operating budget to a fund that is subject to the swings in the stock market. Secondly, given the losses incurred by SEAC from the costs of the annual meetings, Marcoux recommended being more conservative about hotel/venue selections (ex., choosing venues with low/no minimum expenditure requirements), and creating a budget (and cap) for organizers of the conference.

Hollenbach noted that she is the new head of the Finance Committee. She provided an overview of current policies about how much can be transferred from the Life Fund at the end of a given year. She mused that changes to how SEAC uses the Life Fund could potentially allow for bigger transfers to the operating budget.

Journal Editor Lindsay Bloch reported that the journal is in good health in spite of slightly fewer submissions over the past year. This is offset by increased interest in special issues. One or two special issues per year alongside two or three thinner, regular issues can help SEAC meet its new 4 issues per year requirement. Bloch also noted that SEAC's long-term freelance copy editor, Deborah Upton, died, and that personnel changes at Taylor & Francis are adding to the length of time needed to review and copy edit manuscripts.

Webmaster and Social Media Editor Karen Stevens noted her efforts over the past year to make the SEAC website 'evergreen' so as to avoid updating every page annually. The grants and awards page has been updated. She has also changed the formatting of our documents page and sorted them by decade. The past year saw 40 announcements posted to the website, 33 of which were job listings. An ad hoc committee has met twice to discuss a SEAC website redesign. Fixed email addresses for specific committees and EC positions are in the works. SEAC's 19 email campaigns in 2024 had an average opening rate (i.e., the receiver actually opened the email from SEAC) of 52%, which is above the norm for non-profits (40%). Stevens cleaned up the active members list to just over 1000 (down from 2300) so SEAC will not have to pay for additional (inactive) subscribers. In regard to social media, SEAC has accounts with Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The SEAC LinkedIn account doubled in size to 340 followers. Facebook and Twitter remain stable with an increase of about 100 on Facebook and only 30

on Twitter. Stevens closed her report by suggesting that two people be elected to the Social Media/Webmaster role. Hollenbach noted that this would take a change in the bylaws.

SHARP coordinator Carol Colaninno-Meeks reported that three people were added to the committee while another three rolled off. SHARP operated the SAFE officer program at the 2023 annual conference (and will be at the Williamsburg conference). Colaninno noted that the student luncheon hosted by SHARP was sold out for a second year and that they hosted two workshops with 19 attendees. She suggested that SHARP needs a Coordinator-Elect position to make transitions from officer to officer smoother. Colaninno expressed gratitude to SEAC for providing a space and funds to do this important work.

Other Reports and Topics

The Inclusivity task force (R Gougeon, M. Twaroski, E. Bandy, D. Byrd, J. Baggett, C. Hill, and S. Baires) reported that their newly formed group had met to talk about actions SEAC could take to be more welcoming and inclusive of different stripes of archaeologists. The task force passed several suggestions to the organizers of the Williamsburg meeting. They plan to meet after the annual meeting to discuss successes and challenges, as well as to propose further actions and ideas to the Baton Rouge organizers.

The Investment Committee report was offered by Kandi Hollenbach. The committee was put in place in 1996 under Paul Welch, with Al Goodyear and Lynn Sullivan as the other 2 members. Lynn stepped off in 2022 when Hollenbach joined. Al Goodyear rolled off in 2023 with Patrick Livingood taking his spot. Welch stepped off in 2024, with Jon Marcoux joining. The committee started off with \$30,913 in 1996. As of September 30th the Life Fund is at \$343,518.

The investment Committee also oversees the investments of the Hudson Fund, which operates like an endowment. Hollenbach reported an increase of \$5,834 as of September 30th. The Hudson Award Committee asked if they could increase the award from 800 to \$1,000, which the Investment Finance Committee voted in favor of.

The Native American Affairs Liaison committee (NAALC) co-chairs Karen Brunso (reporting) and Isabel Holland-Lulewicz noted efforts to revive and revise this group in 2024. They reported no applicants for their Speaker Series funding. Their committee convened a panel on the topic of collaboration at the 2024 Society for American Archaeology (SAA) meeting. Brunso thanked the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Mississippi Division of Archives and History, the Muskogee Nation, and the Chickasaw Nation for their assistance in filling out and participating on the panel. The committee later assisted President Hollenbach present SEAC's new image policy at the Bridging the Gap conference. The NAALC reports that they are developing a list of federally recognized tribal contacts in the States of Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida. This list will be on the SEAC website for members to begin collaborations earlier in their projects. They may also offer training on best practices in collaborative projects with Native communities and governments, and an online educational series centered on unlearning some of the structural inequalities and colonial legacies within archaeology. Lastly, the NAALC would like to have a discussion broadly within SEAC about improving behavior at the annual meeting, and whether a code of conduct for our membership is needed.

Hollenbach reported on behalf of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion task force and noted that Leanne Wendt and Jayur Metha are both rolling off. They are calling for new members and for SEAC to formally make this a committee.

The Student Affairs committee report was given by Mikayla Absher Fletcher. They changed their bylaws to designate an At-Large position for an undergraduate student. They changed the format of their Student Luncheon at the annual meeting to focus on networking. The Student Affairs committee is surveying their members in November 2024 about attitudes towards SEAC in general, the SHARP program, inclusivity, and affordability for students. Tara Skipton will chair this committee after the annual meeting in Williamsburg.

Paige Ford, Chair of the Nominations committee, reported finding three additional members for the committee and sought nominees for various roles (President-Elect, Social Media Editor-Elect, Executive Officer II, and SHARP coordinator). There will have to be a special election for Editor-Elect after the annual meeting.

Colaninno reported on behalf of the Public Outreach Grant committee. Ben Steere rotated off and Emily Clark will take over as the committee lead chair. Over the past year (2024), Clark and Colaninno co-led in the 2023-2024 funding cycle and received two proposals. The committee reviewed the proposals and unanimously agreed that both proposals should be funded. One was fully funded and the other one partially. One project worked with 52 Scouts Boy Scouts who received their archeological merit badge. The NDN Company supported 11 indigenous youth to travel to Florida to participate in archaeological excavations. Colaninno reported that the call for the 2025 grant was imminent.

Maureen Meyers provided a report on the SEAC/Archaeology in the Community (AITC) partnership. The task force includes Meg Buchanan, Caroline Gardner, Lauren Walls, Meyers, Matt Rooney, and Tara Skipton. The task force wrote articles for the spring newsletter that highlighted existing partnerships and what has been accomplished. They worked with K. Stevens to create a page for the partnership and thanked her for her help. The task force responded to a request for information from the SAA on the partnership, because they were impressed by it and were looking to model something after it. Finally, the SEAC/AITC task force created a list of resources for partners and communities on the website, both a general list, but also state specific lists. The task force discussed hosting a webinar for the membership about SEAC/AITC in the coming year. Other outreach may include sending the Newsletter articles they wrote to organizations that may be interested. SEAC/AITC did not have any budget requests. They are seeking new members and leadership.

Gougeon provided a brief update on the Heritage at Risk Task Force (HRT), headed by Lindsey Cochran and Emily Jane Murray. He reported that their preliminary survey of the membership would be presented at Williamsburg, during which time some focus interviews would be conducted.

Meyers, in her position as Immediate Past President, headed up the Rising Scholars Award committee. This committee advertised in the spring for new applications, contacted the former nominators to update any previous submissions, and removed ~2 previous applicants who had aged out. (There's a 10-year limit since the awarding of one's PhD.) Meyers used a Google voting system (Google form) to track voting. And that was much easier for me. Results were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet and the winner was determined with input from Hollenbach and Eastman. A total of 31 people voted, which is

about the same amount as last year. Of these 4 were board members and the rest were former winners. The awardee will be announced at the annual meeting in Williamsburg.

The Hudson Award committee called for more applicants, emphasizing that the award is not just for ethnohistory projects. The Hudson Award has also been increased from \$800 to \$1000. The Student Paper Award committee consistently saw 5-6 entries and encouraged more applicants. Four Lifetime Achievement Awards will be issued for 2024 and presented at the annual meeting in Williamsburg. The first CRM Award will be awarded in 2025.

Hollenbach noted that organizers and cities for future meetings are being discussed, including Birmingham, Alabama in 2026.

Old Business: Hollenbach noted that the long absent Curation Committee should be revived soon. Tony Boudreaux, Meyers, and David Anderson discussed materials that need to be transferred to facilities who took SEAC materials in the past (National Anthropological Archives; Smithsonian). A bylaws review and overhaul may also be necessary for the health of the organization. Lastly, the possibility of hiring an Executive Director should be taken up by the next EC.

Meeting adjourned at 12:45pm (Central).