

# MARAC

Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference

---

Delaware • District of Columbia • Maryland • New Jersey  
New York • Pennsylvania • Virginia • West Virginia

## MARAC Steering Committee

2023 October 19

Saratoga Hilton, Saratoga Springs, NY

**In attendance:** Jessica L. Webster (Chair), Ali Zawoyski (Chair-elect), Kevin Clair (Secretary), Amy Fitch (Treasurer/Finance Committee chair), Carley Altenburger (Member at Large), Dyani Feige (Member at Large), Amanda May (Member at Large), Diane Bockrath (Delaware caucus), Christopher Anglim (DC caucus), Allison Fischbach (Maryland caucus), Tara Maharjan (New Jersey caucus), Zachary Hottel (Virginia caucus), Lori Hostuttler (West Virginia caucus), Sara Predmore (MARAC Administrator), Arian Ravanbakhsh (Parliamentarian), Lauren Brown (Archives Coordinator/Historian), Brian Keough (Development Coordinator), Michael Martin (Communications co-chair), Missy Nerino (Communications co-chair), Colleen Bradley-Sanders (Education chair), Vicki Russo (Membership chair), Jenny Mitchell (Nominations & Elections chair), Heather Perez (Web Team co-chair)

**Regrets:** Mary Mannix (Meetings Coordinator), Deb Schiff (Member at Large), Danielle Glynn (New York caucus), Taylor Mason (Pennsylvania caucus), Joni Floyd (MARAC Archivist), Jan Zastrow (NCH Representative), Andrew Cassidy-Amstutz (RAAC Representative), Rayna Andrews (Diversity & Inclusion chair), Laura Montgomery (Web Team co-chair)

## Agenda

- I. **Call to Order (5 min):** The meeting was called to order at 6:23pm.
  - A. **Introductions**
  - B. **Approval of Agenda:** Fitch moved to approve, Hottel seconded. Agenda approved.
- II. **Approval of Steering Committee Minutes (5 min):** p. 2: Lauren Brown prefers a spring meeting. Will be corrected. Minutes approved as amended.
  - A. Amy suggested sending minutes out soon after the meeting so that action items are fresh in the mind when attendees review them. Kevin can send them soon after the meeting ends.
- III. **Officer's Reports (15 min)**
  - A. **Chair**
    1. **Chair's Report (Jessica Webster):** Nothing to add.

**2. Administrator's Report (Sara Predmore):** Registration at 214 as of tonight. Hoping a few more come in tomorrow. If you know anyone who has not renewed their MARAC membership, please remind them to renew.

- a) Brown asked when the CafePress study group will be completed. Keough said their work is still in the planning phases.
- b) Fitch asked if we would need to keep an inventory. Keough said this will be a third-party responsibility.
- c) Maharjan asked if a list of non-renewed members can be circulated so we know who to ask. Predmore says yes.
- d) Feige asked if our membership numbers are back to pre-pandemic levels. Predmore says yes.
- e) We have a pattern of 200 members or so not renewing every year, and a different set of 200 members or so renewing instead. This is largely conference-driven.

**B. Chair-Elect (Ali Zawoyski):** Nothing to add.

**C. Meetings Coordinator (Brian Keough on behalf of Mary Mannix):** We met our food/beverage minimum. No problems today, hoping for no problems tomorrow. If there are problems, reach out to the registration desk to report them. Also some information about future meetings: Spring DEI Symposium, April 8, 2024 in Philadelphia. Bystander training and conflict de-escalation training, in addition to programming. The Fall 2024 conference will be virtual, mid-late October. No LAC or PC chairs yet. Next in-person meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 2025 in Harrisburg. There are LAC and PC co-chairs in place, specific locations TBD.

1. Bradley-Sanders raised a concern (over e-mail) regarding problems with an October date for federal employees. September would be better. Mary acknowledged this and noted that this was due to a conflict with the VAC chair.

**D. Secretary (Kevin Clair):** Nothing to add.

**E. Treasurer (Amy Fitch):** A good Q1 for this fiscal year. Net gain of approx \$43K. This is typical because people are registering for fall conference and renewing memberships. We'll lose money Q2 due to expenses being paid. We also have some investment income coming in.

Spring DEI symposium (1-day event). Budget for this is attached to the report. We expect to lose money on this event (this is accounted for). We are nevertheless committed to a different type of event with a DEI focus and are using some of our budget earmarked for professional development for this. \$5K for the training itself and another \$1K for associated expenses (\$6K total). We don't expect a turnout equal to what we might see for a full conference. Projected attendance 100-150 (as opposed to 250-300 for a conference). Finance discussed this and thought it would make sense to use the Archival Education Fund for this due to the type of event and the expertise of the trainers aligning with MARAC goals.

Conference cost is \$125 which is a little high for one day. We are bringing in professional trainers, and \$125 is a price point that falls midway between our usual one-day workshops and a full MARAC in-person conference. Student rate is \$70. Food costs for the day are \$71/person so student rate doesn't even cover that.

1. May discussed in further detail the use of the Archival Education Fund. We sometimes dig into that fund to support events like this; it would be ideal to have guardrails in place to govern our use of it. The use of professional trainers, in particular, seemed in line with the guidelines for the fund; it supports professional development and is an enhancement to typical MARAC conference programming. Finance is committed to being responsible with the stewardship of the fund; that said, the fund has over \$100,000 in it, and this seemed like a good use of the resources we have.
2. Keough elaborated that it is a long-term goal to think of the fund as an endowment, where we are paying for events using AEF from the interest rather than the principal. This can be useful for fundraising purposes as well (donate to the principal, spend from the interest).
  - a. May noted that we only got our funds in an interest-bearing vehicle this year. Endowments also have different reporting standards that we have to maintain over time (extra bureaucracy). This is why none of our funds are *formally* endowments, even if we informally think of them that way for stewardship purposes.
  - b. Webster says that the symposium is part of Steering's commitment to experimenting with different event models. Time will tell if this is an event format that we want to pursue over time, and if alternative / more mature funding paradigms are necessary to support them.
  - c. Fitch also notes that we need to establish income for the operating budget. Right now it is lower than it has been in some time.
3. Maharjan asked if it is possible for each caucus to have individual budget lines. Right now caucus reps are unsure if their budget requests are taking away from other caucuses. Fitch: The caucuses have a funding pool of \$1600 (\$200 each per caucus). Some flexibility if one goes over because of the funding pool.
  - a. May says that in her time it became a funding pool because caucuses would have had to submit individual budgets otherwise, and a lot of them didn't. We could go back to that if caucus reps are invested in providing budget requests/estimates.
  - b. Now that caucus chairs are meeting as a group again, there may be bandwidth/capability to prepare budget estimates as a group.

Webster proposed a voted on the budget for the Spring 2024 Symposium. Budget passed unanimously.

We are looking for a new accountant. It is not going well; lots of accountants are retiring and nobody is replacing them. If you know anyone, talk to Amy Fitch.

Finance has begun discussing potential changes in the dues structure for MARAC. Student membership costs have not changed since 1999; general membership costs have not gone up in seven years. With inflation in other costs it makes sense to consider it now. What is Steering's timeframe for coming up with a proposal?

1. It has to go before Steering; 30 days before a Business Meeting it has to go before the general membership. If we wanted to do this in the spring, the notice would have to go before membership no later than March 13, 2024 (assuming a business meeting of April 12).
2. We also need to know how many voting members need to be present for a quorum, given that the next business meeting will be virtual. We don't have rules or by-laws for that (it is implied in the by-laws that business meetings happen at the in-person event, not a hybrid like we are doing in April.)
3. Steering meets again in January. We would have to vote on a proposed dues change then. That means Finance would have to hammer something out by the end of 2023.
4. Feige raised the possibility of a special meeting of Steering to vote on the changes, to give Finance some more time to discuss. This would happen in February, and would give Finance time in January to discuss (and Fitch time in December to do Finance Committee duties.)
  - a. Predmore also mentioned that we don't have to have the regular Steering meeting in January – it could be February instead.
  - b. Is there any Steering business that cannot be delayed? No concerns were raised.
5. Predmore asked to clarify: Quorum based on registered attendees, or registered members? Ravanbakhsh said registered members (including members who became members during registration, even if on-site).
6. Discussion settled on **February 2** for the regular Steering meeting. Fitch believes this will give Finance enough time to address concerns raised by Steering that cannot be resolved during the Steering meeting.

Finance discussion stressed the importance of maintaining a simple dues structure like we have now. This is in reference to previous Steering discussions about having a new rate level for contingent/retired workers between the student and full rate.

**F. Parliamentarian (Arian Ravanbakhsh):** Nothing to add.

#### **IV. Advisory Positions (15 min)**

**A. Historian (Lauren Brown):** At some point Lauren will try to write a history of the pamphlet series (going on since the early '70s)

- B. **Archivist (Joni Floyd):** Absent.
- C. **Development Coordinator (Brian Keough):** Report went out a few days ago. Mentioned the CD ladder that Amy set up. No details yet on the org merch. A quilt is being auctioned off for the benefit of the AEF. It will be on display in the vendor room.
- D. **Web Team (Laura Montgomery/Heather Perez):** Next week the Education tab on the website will receive a major upgrade.
- E. **Regional Archival Association Consortium (Andrew Cassidy-Amstutz):** Absent. Report recently submitted.
- F. **National Coalition for History (Jan Zastrow):** No report.

V. **Old Business (30 min)**

- A. **Update on Committees Task Force and commitment form (Ali Zawoyski):**  
Needs to be correlated – what are the roles of junior and senior co-chairs? What is working well for committees, what needs to be updated? Developing job descriptions for different roles, including: is it an entry level role or is familiarity with MARAC required? What time commitments are required? This task force is being assembled now. Fits into Strategic Plan goal areas of organizational transparency and accountability.
- B. **Updates on creation and sale of MARAC swag:** Already discussed earlier in the agenda. Development taking the lead. Keep up the good work, Brian!

VI. **New Business (30 min)**

- A. **Discussion of the draft Strategic Plan (Jessica Webster/Ali Zawoyski):**  
Working draft was sent out earlier this week. Some people have submitted questions and comments. The current plan is for Jessica and Ali to present the working document at the listening session on Saturday morning (right after the business meeting). Going through area by area, to talk about the themes. There are still a lot of goal areas that we want to flesh out yet, so it's not quite ready for production.

Hoping for lots of input from Steering and from the membership. We will also be holding a virtual session similar to this for people who were unable to attend MARAC in person (or who perhaps think of things after the conference). Not yet scheduled but should happen soon.

The plan just needs to be approved by Steering, at our next meeting on February 2 (unless significant changes come to light from the listening sessions; then we can wait until our symposium-adjacent meeting).

Discussions:

1. Nerino liked in the previous plan where the goal areas were themselves broad-reaching goals, rather than themes (instead of "Advocacy" we had a specific statement *about* Advocacy, from which the tasks flow.)
2. Altenburger wished for the goal areas to tie back to MARAC mission and vision statements. Webster noted that the writing strategy for this plan

was bottom-up, but we can certainly connect what we have to the mission and vision.

3. Maharjan talked about changing job duties of caucus reps, and how that may make the increased responsibilities of caucus reps within the strategic plan difficult to carry out. How to enable or facilitate more collaboration with other parts of the organization?
4. General discussion among caucus reps in the room about the value of collaborative sponsorship of programs so that the weight of executing the plan doesn't fall disproportionately in caucuses (who may have limited funds or availability).
5. Nerino asked if there was ever a post-mortem on the last strategic plan to figure out what worked and what didn't. There was no memory of one. We should build that into the timeline for this one.
6. Speaking of the timeline... We haven't fleshed out timelines for the plan itself or for particular tasks within it. After the listening sessions we will be building those up.

#### Discussion of different areas:

- **Advocacy.** There has been lots of discussion in recent years about the extent to which MARAC should be active in advocacy (vs. relying on NCH, SAA, etc.) Also discussion about MARAC involvement in responding to issues such as climate change and disaster preparedness.

Bockrath raised the issue of contingent labor support as something for MARAC to consider as well.

- **Education.** Items such as mental health awareness and advocacy; career and professional development issues; education for new professionals.
- **Inclusivity and accessibility.** Dietary restrictions at conferences; membership dues. That was all, which is inadequate. For example, need more about being a welcoming environment for BIPOC archivists.
- **Organizational transparency and accountability.** Different modes of meeting; updates to the Meetings Manual; better documentation of roles within the org (Committees Task Force).
- **Outreach.** More pitch literature for MARAC. Encouragement of volunteering on different committees; building a bench of membership with experience in service to the organization. More programming? Assembling task forces or *ad hoc* committees to look at different questions that come up in Steering or that bubble up from the membership at large (such as meeting models).

Many of the ideas that came up related to Outreach require us to have a better understanding among ourselves about what the specific roles and responsibilities of volunteers are. For this reason Steering recommended

enshrining the Committees Task Force and its goals in the strategic plan itself.

Nerino asked: is it a problem that we technically do not have an active strategic plan right now? There's nothing in the bylaws that says we have to have a strategic plan at all. Most people felt it was fine to go a year or so without one, to make sure this one is as good as it can be.

Has the process of drafting the plan worked, to this point so far? There may be value in having an Event where we finalize it, where we draw a group of people together for very focused thinking on the plan. May proposed charging small groups to write up goal statements for the different areas that Sara Borden identified (to the extent that they remain the same, are merged into one another, etc.)

Russo: Should we codify bylaw reviews and revision schedules as part of this strategic planning process? We certainly can; it is at the discretion of the chair.

Altenburger: What about our mission and vision statements? These were drafted with the last plan in 2018. Worth looking at again. (Altenburger volunteered to do this. Any other volunteers are more than welcome.)

Steering will take up the strategic plan at its February 2 meeting. At that time the updated mission and vision statements (if updates are needed) will be reviewed; we will make adjustments to the goal areas and tasks based on those statements; and hopefully we will approve the plan and move forward.

- B. Awards Committee Chair special election:** A special election for a replacement Awards Committee Chair must be called by the end of the month. Mitchell has already identified someone to run for the seat.
- C. Updates on the forthcoming quarter (all):** Webster asked committee chairs to review their memberships and let Zawoyski know by the next steering committee meeting who will not be running again. This will help with appointments for the next cycle. We can use the committee spreadsheet in Google Drive for this.

Graduate Scholarship Award call is out. Nominations due October 31. Finding Aid Award call going out next week, nominations due December. Distinguished Service Award call goes out in December; nominations due January 31.

- D. Next Meeting Date (Jessica Webster/Sara Predmore):** February 2, 2024.

## VII. Standing and Operational Committees (15 min)

- A. Awards (Jessica Webster):** Nothing to add.
- B. Communications (Michael Martin/Missy Nerino):** MAA team is looking at possibly adding a new member.
- C. Diversity & Inclusion (Rayna Andrews):** Absent. Reminder that the proposal deadline for lightning talks for the DEI symposium has been extended to October

31. (Fitch mentioned that we did contract with the trainers for a virtual training in addition to the in-person symposium; this will be in late April, and you can attend even if you are also attending the in-person training in Philadelphia.)

- D. Education (Colleen Bradley-Sanders):** Education is considering raising the workshop fees. This just happened in 2021 (commensurate with raising reimbursement rates for facilitators); is it too soon to do it again? Need to strike a balance – how high can rates go before people stop attending workshops? Now may not be the best time for a rate increase. Also this would need to be a discussion for Finance Committee. Flagged for further discussion.

Maharjan asked if we offer scholarships for workshops? We have in the past but they did not draw a lot of application interest. We should consider promoting them more.

- E. Membership (Vicki Russo):** Nothing to add. Question for Brian Keough: At new member orientation, are we allowed to discuss future events? Only Philadelphia is concrete at this point.
- F. Nominations and Elections (Jennifer Mitchell):** Tell everyone to volunteer for elections! Nominations are due November 10.

**VIII. State Caucus New Business and Updates (15 min)**

- A. Delaware (Diane Bockrath):** Nothing to add.
- B. District of Columbia (Christopher Anglim):** Nothing to add.
- C. Maryland (Allison Fischbach):** Nothing to add.
- D. New Jersey (Tara Maharjan):** Nothing to add.
- E. New York (Danielle Glynn):** Nothing to add.
- F. Pennsylvania (Missy Nerino, on behalf of Taylor Mason):** Nothing to add.
- G. Virginia (Zachary Hottel):** Nothing to add.
- H. West Virginia (Lori Hostuttler):** Nothing to add.

**IX. Comments for the good of the order**

- A.** Fitch offered to come to a caucus reps meeting to discuss finances. Maharjan said yes; the next meeting is not for a while (they meet quarterly.)
- B.** Maharjan asked if we know how this meeting will do financially, for when the NJ Caucus asks. We will probably lose money; our break-even point was 270 attendees.

- X. Adjournment:** Maharjan moved to adjourn. Hottel seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.



3/29/2024