

MARAC

Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference

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

MARAC Steering Committee
2024 November 8, 9:30am
Virtual (Zoom)

Attendance: Ali Zawoyski (Chair), Mary K. Mannix (Meetings Coordinator), Kevin Clair (Secretary), Amy Fitch (Treasurer/Finance Committee Chair), Carley Altenburger (Member at Large), Amanda Koss May (Member at Large), Diane Bockrath (Delaware Caucus), Jason Speck (District of Columbia Caucus), Jen Gathings (Maryland Caucus), Diane Biunno (New Jersey Caucus), Melissa McMullen (New York Caucus), Isaac Alexander (Pennsylvania Caucus), Lorna Loring (Virginia Caucus), Grace Musgrave (West Virginia Caucus), Sara Predmore (MARAC Administrator), Arian Ravanbakhsh (Parliamentarian), Lauren Brown (Historian), Jan Zastrow (NCH Representative), Kira Dietz (Awards Chair), Liza Zakharova (Membership Co-Chair), Missy Nerino (Communications Co-Chair), Tara Wink (Diversity and Inclusion Chair), Colleen Bradley-Sanders (Education Chair), Jen Pulsney (Membership Co-Chair), Tiffany Cole (Nominations and Elections Chair), Heather Perez (Web Team Co-Chair), Carolyn Friedrich (Mid-Atlantic Archivist)

Regrets: Zachary Hottel (Chair-elect), Dyani Feige (Member at Large), Deb Schiff (Member at Large), Joni Floyd (Archivist), Andrew Cassidy-Amstutz (RAAC Representative), Jasmine Smith (Web Team Co-Chair)

The meeting was called to order at 9:33am.

A round of introductions was completed. The agenda was approved at 9:42am.

The minutes for the August 2 Steering Committee meeting were approved at 9:43am.

Officer's Reports

- Chair's Report (Zawoyski): no updates
- Administrator's Report (Predmore): 479 people have registered for the conference. Registration has been extended to Monday if people are late, but you must pay at registration (no invoices)
- Chair-elect's Report (Hottel): Zach is absent
- Meetings Coordinator Report (Mannix): No updates
- Secretary Report (Clair): no updates
- Treasurer's Report (Fitch): Reporting on Q1 2025. Our finances are good. Details are in the combined report that Sara sent earlier this week. Net gain of approximately \$14,900, which is modest for Q1 results (incoming dues, etc.). Registration for the MARAC virtual conference didn't open until late in Q1, so our income from that will not be clear until Q2. We are getting good returns from our CDs, although rates will be declining soon. Will revisit finances later.

The Harrisburg conference budget is ready for a vote. The Finance Committee was very impressed with the budget; kudos to Jim Gerencser for putting it together. There are two budgets drafted for two different attendee targets; both turn a profit for the organization. The food and A/V expenses are good guesses because the Hilton did not give us definite figures for either; we are using our best estimates based on the information on their website. Tour expenses are also a question mark, but we expect to charge \$5 over what our expenses are for each tour we organize for cost recovery.

A vote was called to approve the budget; it passed unanimously.

Finance proposed two updates to the Diversity and Inclusion Session Award to take effect in January 2025. First is to revise the terms of the award to say “up to \$1,200, with a maximum of \$600 per participant.” The concern is that in the past we have given the entire award to a single person, which causes inequitable outcomes; maximizing the amount a single recipient can get will reduce this inequity. It also prevents that person from having to report the award as taxable income.

We also want to standardize the award for virtual vs. in-person recipients. Conference registration should be included in the award (instead of “1200 plus conference registration fees.”) Virtual awardees will still get free admission to virtual conferences, but can choose to use their share of the \$1200 to offset in-person conference attendance.

Tara Wink reported a concern from Diversity and Inclusion about the Harrisburg conference, specifically: there has been messaging about the award that potentially led awardees to think a single person could choose to attend the spring conference based on receiving the entire \$1200 award. Should we wait until the new fiscal year to implement these new rules?

Amy moved to vote on the Finance Committee recommendation to implement the new rules for the D&I Award as of January 1. The motion passed unanimously. Tara Wink will reach out to the awardees for Harrisburg to let them know about the new rules and that by January 1 they should let us know how they plan to distribute the money.

Advisory Position Reports

- Parliamentarian (Ravanbakhsh): nothing to add
- Historian (Brown): nothing to add
- Archivist (Floyd): Joni Floyd absent, nothing to add. Lauren reported about some papers
- Web Team (Perez): nothing to add
- RAAC (Cassidy-Amstutz): Andrew absent
- NCH (Zastrow): nothing to add. NCH is folding. MARAC has supported NCH since 1982; this leaves a hole in our Advocacy budget. There will be more about this later in the meeting. NCH is preparing a report about its advocacy work throughout its history; Jan will circulate this report among MARAC membership when it is released, and it will be added to the MARAC Archives.

Old Business (10:06am)

- Becker Award (Dietz): The Scholarship Committee will be taking over administration of the Becker Award. Kira has met with the co-chairs to discuss how to incorporate it into their workload. We anticipate awarding Becker in the spring. We have banked about three years of Becker Awards through donations, and have a few donors who will give sustaining donations to support it. For new people: the Becker Award is \$1500 to support professional development activities for new professionals (including those on term-limited appointments). To include registration, travel costs, etc. for *non-MARAC* conferences. (Reasoning is that there are other awards that support MARAC conference attendance.) Need to be clear with awardees that this is taxable income (more than \$600). The report includes to-dos and administrative information that will be added to the Scholarship Committee internal manuals and the website.

Travel awards would be given in January-February; Becker would be announced in March-April. Sara recommended shifting travel award announcements to February-March because the spring conference information usually isn't ready in January. Amy suggested that if the Becker Award is approved by vote today, we should announce it widely and often to encourage donations to support it.

Fitch moved to approve the Becker Award, Zastrow seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Ad Hoc Advocacy Committee (Hottel): Diane Bockrath gave a report on the committee's work. This group was convened after the last Steering meeting to decide how we would conduct advocacy work, either within ACH or after its winding down. Should we advocate on the local, regional, and/or national level? Where should we spend our advocacy budget? The committee has met twice (in September and October). They are drafting a position statement that aligns with the MARAC Strategic Plan, outlining what MARAC believes in as an organization (free (equitable) access to information within our collections, in support of adequate archival funding and ethical labor practices). A draft position statement was circulated by Zach this morning and will be presented at the next Steering meeting in the winter. The next step is to determine the budget and how to allocate it.

As a non-profit MARAC cannot lobby, and must distinguish between advocacy and lobbying. We can advance position statements but cannot recommend actions that can be constituted as lobbying. Amanda May asked to distinguish between financially free access and equitably free access in the position statement.

Diane Bockrath was able to share the statement that Zach circulated this morning. Many Steering Committee members communicated their support for the draft. Jan Zastrow suggested conferring with other regional archival organizations to see if they had comparable position statements about advocacy. There were suggestions about advocating specifically for paid internships and against soft-money positions (grants, term-limited) or unpaid internships.

- Development Coordinator Search (Zawoyski/Fitch): We are still looking for a new Development Coordinator to replace Brian Keough. Tara Wink suggested potentially having Development Coordinator be a role that Steering members play on their way out of Steering, as outgoing Treasurer or Finance Committee chair. Could it also be an elected role? (That would require a change in the bylaws.)

Ali Zawoyski shared the job duties for Development Coordinator from the Operations Manual. Sara Predmore suggested clarifying the specific tasks and timelines for those tasks, to give potential volunteers a better idea of what the Development Coordinator does (and to maybe reduce some anxiety about the scale of the role). Amanda May suggested dividing the “investment coordinator” role from the “fundraising” role, and focusing the Development Coordinator position on the fundraising aspects.

We took a ten-minute break at 10:40am.

New Business (10:50am)

- Use of personal e-mails on the MARAC website (Predmore): Occasionally spammers will crawl the e-mails on the MARAC website. It’s not a major problem but it may be worth considering removing the e-mail addresses from the site for everyone except key positions, which would then have @marac.info e-mails specific to those positions. Steering agreed with this approach.
- Operations manual updates (Clair): Kevin will be reaching out to committee chairs and co-chairs starting next week to get the Operations Manual updated to reflect the tasks, timelines, etc. that committees and committee co-chairs are doing.
- *Mid-Atlantic Archivist* Committee Articles (Friedrich): Per the Strategic Plan, MAA will be soliciting committees for articles to be published in the journal as a way of publicizing the work that MARAC and its committees are doing, to increase their impact and promote the organization. MAA is working on guidelines for how these articles should be written, to strike a balance between promotion and allowing space in the journal for other goals (giving early-career professionals a place to publish, etc.) There will be timelines for each committee to get space in MAA – committing to specific issues where each committee will have a piece published, etc.

Steering agreed that limiting the committee reports that appear in MAA to one committee report per issue would be ideal, to limit workload for everyone. Should the MAA committee reach out to committees for publication times, or should we set a schedule in advance? The schedule should be added to the Operations Manual if we decide to set one.

Communications will be publishing first. Tara Wink volunteered for D&I to go second.

- Ad Hoc Disaster Relief Committee (Zawoyski): Historically the members at large convene the Disaster Relief Committee to review applications and allocate funding. The disaster relief fund is a restricted fund with caps on how many total awards can be distributed in a year and the maximum award that can be given to an applicant. Finance has, in the past, discussed the possibility of disaster prevention awards being given to applicants.
- Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship Change (Wink): Tara is proposing that Steering remove the self-selection option for the Diversity and Inclusion scholarship. Nobody self-selected for the award for the Saratoga Springs meeting, so we did not award a D&I Scholarship for that meeting. The D&I Committee is willing to review the program for conferences and select scholarship awardees based on program descriptions rather than relying on self-selection.

Amy Fitch asked if the workloads for D&I to do a program review are comparable between in-person and virtual meetings. Tara said it was pretty quick for the virtual meeting – they were able to do full program reviews in about an hour and identified 3-5 programs (out of 21) that were eligible according to their criteria. This seemed comparable to an in-person meeting.

Sara Predmore noted that the D&I Scholarship is based on already-accepted proposals, which affects to whom funding is allocated (because some recipients may already have their attendance covered through their institutions).

Steering was in favor of the D&I Committee reviewing proposals and selecting programs for the award, to ensure that the awards are given out and that diversity programs are rewarded in the program. The motion to adjust the procedures passed unanimously.

- Nominations and Elections Committee procedural change (Cole): The Operations Manual for NEC states that NEC members cannot run for elected MARAC office if they are also serving in NEC. However, this is not mentioned anywhere in the bylaws. We either need to update the bylaws to reflect the Operations Manual, or adjust the Operations Manual to reflect the bylaws.

Arian Ravanbakhsh said that if an NEC member wanted to appear on the ballot, they could present a petition signed by 10% of the MARAC membership to do so. We could also propose a bylaws change to be voted on at the spring meeting in 2025. The person on NEC who volunteered to run for office was not committed to it, so we may not need to make any changes at all. Amanda May noted that, in addition to it being impossible to make bylaws changes before spring, the election cycle for MARAC has already started, so we should not change our procedures at this time. We can revisit for the 2025/26 election cycle.

- Upcoming Virtual Business Meeting (Mannix/Zawoyski): To take place November 14, 2:00pm on Zoom. The link will only be available to conference attendees.

Standing Committees (11:41am)

- Awards (Dietz): Calls for Finch and Distinguished Service awards will be going out soon; think of nominees! We are also going to centralize nominations through a form, which Steering will hear more about at the winter Steering meeting.
- Communications (Nerino): Dickinson is increasing their design rates from \$50 to \$75/hour. We are sticking with Dickinson's printing office because it's cheaper than their competitors, but our publication costs for MAA and Technical Leaflets will go up. Communications will be keeping a close eye on their budgets in response to these changes. We may also be increasing our advertising rates to help cover these costs; our ad rates have not been increased since 2015. We also charge less than MAC does for advertising.
- Diversity and Inclusion (Wink): nothing to add
- Education (Bradley-Sanders): nothing to add
- Membership (Zakharova/Pulsney): nothing to add
- Nominations and Elections (Cole): We now have eleven candidates running for election.

Caucus Reports (11:48am)

- Delaware (Bockrath): They had 60 attendees for their first Caucus Conversations event.

- District of Columbia (Speck): nothing to add
- Maryland (Gathings): December tour at the University of Maryland. An invitation has been sent out.
- New Jersey (Biunno): nothing to add
- New York (McMullen): nothing to add
- Pennsylvania (Alexander): nothing to add
- Virginia (Loring): nothing to add
- West Virginia (Musgrave): nothing to add

The meeting adjourned at 11:50am.