

# Participating Organization Council

## Meeting Minutes 02.01.2022

### Attending

Kathleen Fitzpatrick (MSU)  
Meredith Hale (ARLIS/NA)  
Bonnie Russell (MSU)  
Pauline Saliga (SAH)  
Mike Thicke (MSU)  
Peter Berkery (AUPresses)

### Regrets

Christopher Long (MSU)  
Paula Krebs (MLA)  
Lynda Park (ASEEES)

### Discussion

#### 1. Community Growth

We have a commitment from a very significant organization to join the Commons in the coming months; this group brings with it a community of 18,000 users, with significant overlap with our existing user base. They also bring models of peer-to-peer engagement that we look forward to exploring in the Commons. Their investment in the network will help us pay for some planned upgrades, although as it is an up-front payment for multi-year membership, we will need to explore how the income should be reported and invested.

#### 2. Grants

The team is actively working on the projects enabled by our NEH and Mellon grants. We are within about \$250,000 of our fundraising goal for the challenge grant match, and we are in the process of drafting several new proposals, with an emphasis on funding some key upgrades to our repository infrastructure and functionality.

#### 3. Hiring

The NEH and Mellon grants are enabling the hire of four new staff members, including two full-time members of the community team and two half-time members of the technical team. We are nearing the conclusion of the searches for the two community positions and have posted openings for the technical positions.

#### 4. Council Planning and Goals

Staff presented the draft council bylaws for discussion; PB noted an error to be corrected in the document. Further discussion was deferred until the full group could be engaged via the Commons; a goal of reaching consensus in the next few weeks was established, with an agreement that the next step would be to elect a council chair.

#### 5. Financial Update

KF shared the network's first annual financial report with the council for its review, as well as a summary of the network's current financial position. We noted that while the grant income we have received this year has resulted in a surplus, our investments in the platform will result in deficits for the next couple of years.

The staff noted that the 2021 Giving Tuesday campaign produced a significantly lower response than that in 2020, likely due to the overflow of Giving Tuesday requests this year, as well as a bit of "giving fatigue" resulting from the protracted COVID crisis. Council members noted similar experiences within their organizations.

We noted our intent to share each year's financial report with the council, and then to post them for the community at large.

#### 6. Advisory Group Update

Staff reported on the previous week's meeting with the technical advisory group, which included a robust discussion about ways group members could get involved with the site. The initial meeting of the user advisory group was upcoming later that day, and would involve a discussion of policies, outreach, and user-facing features.

Our goal is to keep these two groups energized and invested, and to present a list of new members for council approval each year. Groups will also produce annual reports for council discussion.

#### 7. Technical Update

Staff reported on progress on the remediation of technical debt, noting that the site is now on WordPress 5.8, and that plugins and themes have been updated. We are looking at under- and unused themes and plugins to remove unnecessary code, and adding new options to take advantage of the block editor.

Staff also reported on the decision to retire embedding of documents in sites, noting accessibility and responsiveness concerns, as well as security issues; communication with users is forthcoming.

Staff also reported on the completion of the transfer of the CORE repository from Columbia University Libraries to MSU Libraries, and several updates – including FAST metadata subject headings – that are in progress.

On the near horizon is an update to WordPress 5.9, which includes full-site editing, as well as new plugins and themes designed to take advantage of that functionality. The team is also working on improvements to user and account management, including self-service for email address changes, as well as a site-wide theme refresh. We are also working on documentation and back-end workflows that will help streamline our development process.