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AIC Adopts Strategic Plan for Professional Development

As part of the Professional Development initiative, AIC has formed a Strategic Plan for Professional Development to guide its continuing education efforts through 2005. The plan reflects data and suggestions received from the membership in the continuing education survey conducted in the summer of 2001 and contributions from the Education and Training Committee, the Internal Advisory Group, and the Board of Directors.

The full plan is over thirty pages in length, and is available on request from the AIC office. Key features of the plan are summarized below.

Overview and Goals

With the establishment of a Professional Development endowment, initiated by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, AIC has the opportunity to greatly expand its professional development activities. The recommended priority is for geographically-dispersed workshops to support the needs of mid-career professionals. Future projects may include similar workshops to support moves toward certification; development of professional study tours; and preparation for future distance learning initiatives. Resources will be leveraged by cooperative arrangements with national and regional organizations already connected to conservation activities. A cluster of related, supporting activities will also be initiated: continued identification of needs, implementation of assessment mechanisms, curriculum development, partnerships with other organizations, instructor development, consolidation of web resources, and additional fundraising to increase endowment funds.

In addition to the generous \$1.5 million endowment for educational programming, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provided \$300,000 in support of a staff position for professional development. The \$300,000 will be expended by the end of 2005.

Specific funding goals are to:

- 1) double the \$1.5 million endowment by the end of 2004 to support on-going staffing and administration as the existing funds for these purposes will expire by the end of 2005.

- 2) seek additional grants/gifts (for both endowment and specific projects) to increase educational programming as presented in this plan.

Specific program goals of the plan are:

- 1) Identify Professional Development needs among membership. On-going input will be solicited from surveys, evaluation forms, Education and Training Committee, Specialty Groups, the AIC board, and organizations offering similar opportunities.
- 2) Develop curriculum for each topic if curriculum does not yet exist.
- 3) Build partnerships with related organizations, regional guilds, and regional centers to expand offerings geographically and to leverage resources.
- 4) Create on-going series of professional development activities.

Possible series could be based on:

- a. Opportunities to develop existing skills by working with leading experts
- b. New technologies, tools, materials
- c. Knowledge and/or skills that would probably be included in any future certification or recertification initiative
- d. Conservators in Private Practice needs
 - 63% of the membership conduct at least some of their activities as private conservators. Many topics—marketing, insurance, business practices, accounting—would lend themselves to some sort of distance learning, multi-media, or print-based instruction.
- e. A series focusing on international exchanges/tours
 - This series would be modeled after the French Furniture Study Tour and previous conservation tours to China and Russia. The focus could rotate to include different specialty groups and cultural/geographic areas. It may be advisable to offer these no more than

- every two years, given the complexity and expense, and need for substantial additional funding.
 - f. A series repeating the most popular workshops and/or presentations from the Annual Meeting or from other venues in one or more locations at other times of the year
 - g. Other needs identified from the member survey and future input
- 5) Encourage and coordinate professional development activities by AIC Specialty Groups. A suggested set of models and guidelines has been distributed to Specialty Groups and is available from the Program Officer for Professional Development.
 - 6) Coordinate activities with Qualifications Task Force and Certification Task Force.
 - 7) Create professional development activities to be widely available. Offer repeated workshops in various locations; distance learning options; book/multimedia formats; etc. as appropriate to the material.
 - 8) Provide opportunities and mechanisms to improve effectiveness of instructors
 - 9) Develop and maintain additional resources on AIC web site to support Professional Development.
 - 10) Work to develop funding sources for on-going support of Professional Development. Given the incomes of AIC members, the expense of running hands-on workshops, and the limitations on the number of participants for such events, most professional development activities will not generate more revenue than expenses.
 - 11) Develop and implement an assessment mechanism for Professional Development activities.

Criteria

In selecting workshops for professional development, AIC will aim to provide those that might closely fit several of the following criteria:

- Be accessible: offered in a way that includes members from all parts of the U.S., whether that be by offering scholarships, having offerings in multiple locations, and/or through distance learning technologies
- Be affordable, roughly \$120 per day (for 2002, with an increase of no more than about 5% annually, and keeping in mind the current economy)
- Be led by recognized experts in the subject
- Be led by effective instructors
- Respond to expressed needs of the membership

- Be based on the best research available
- Cut across Specialty Group interests when feasible
- Help advance the conservation profession
- Be aimed at mid-career practicing conservators
- Focus on hands-on training (when appropriate)
- Follow “best practices,” including AIC Code of Ethics, AIC Guidelines, and health and safety considerations
- Not be readily available elsewhere

The Education and Training Committee and Specialty Groups may be asked to assist in reviewing proposed projects according to the above criteria.

Co-sponsorships

Because of the wide variety of workshop needs and wide range of potential co-sponsors, flexibility will be needed to work with organizations and facilities across the country. Relationships could be as simple as agreeing to publicize events, or could involve cost- and profit-sharing arrangements. In addition to partnering with outside organizations and institutions, similar agreements could be made with AIC Specialty Groups.

Funding

While the Professional Development Endowment, initiated by the Mellon gift, provides the much-needed support to launch a more expansive program, further funding will be necessary to continue this ambitious plan on a sustainable, on-going basis.

Several fund-raising efforts in the form of grants, donations from the membership, from interested individuals and corporations will be needed to help implement this Professional Development Plan. Additional grants for specific initiatives such as curriculum development, distance learning opportunities, and international study tours, will be necessary to support these efforts.

For more information about the Professional Development Strategic Plan, please contact Eric Pourchot at the AIC Office: epourchot@aic-faic.org or 202-452-9545, ext. 12.

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