

## 2012 AAM ANNUAL MEETING CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Council of Standing Professional Committees (SPC) considers contributions to the annual meeting not just from the perspective of their individual constituents, but the AAM membership at large. We seek new ideas and voices and a range of session proposals to ensure all interests are met.

At the AAM Annual Meeting in Houston, the 2012 SPC Program Chairs discussed key issues or trends in their area of expertise and for the profession as a whole. These ideas were compiled into six broad categories – Audiences, Professional Growth & Change, Technology, Organizational Development, Public Value, and Sustainability/Viability – outlined below.

In addition to these topics, the SPC Program Chairs encourage session proposals that consider the future of museums as well as work in collections, exhibitions, public programming, and other areas of museum operations.

Please contact any of the individuals listed next to each topic if you have questions or would like feedback on your session proposal ideas.

**Audiences** - Christine Reich (creich@mos.org), Jill Stein (stein@ilinet.org) and Sarah Jesse (sjesse@philbrook.org)

- As museums have an increased digital presence through their own web sites and increased global presence through the development of traveling exhibitions and even satellite museums, how do they define who their audiences are and are not? Museum audiences can no longer be defined by who enters the building or even by geographic boundaries, so there is a growing need to more clearly define and redefine who museums reach and how.
- How do museums identify who their community is and/or could be? How can museums work in collaborative, respectful, participatory ways to reach more communities and broaden their reach?
- What are potential benefits and challenges of establishing partnerships that go beyond the traditional partnerships? How can museums reach new audiences through new partnerships, and towards what end? What are effective processes for identifying and developing mutually beneficial partnerships that involve new audiences/communities?
- What is the right balance of curatorial voice and visitor voice when engaging visitors in content development and participatory exhibitions, programs, websites, or other aspects of the museum experience? What are potential impacts and implications of increasing visitor participation and ownership on the definition of “meaningful content”?
- Is the technology we use ADA compliant? How do we ensure all types of access to our content, not just physical, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

**Professional Growth and Change** – Nora Pat Small (npsmall@eiu.edu ) and  
Kym Rice (kym@gwu.edu)

- What is the future for curators and their role in museums when institutions are choosing to outsource or hire consultants in lieu of full time paid staff? Does this extend to other areas of the field? Will the funding issues facing museums change hiring practices? What types of training do curators, educators, and other museum professionals need for the future?
- How do we provide pre-professional training that prepares students to be flexible, visionary, technologically literate, and work in an interdisciplinary environment?
- How do you adapt to changing environments and shifting expectations such as PR and Marketing professionals who have traditionally held the role of editors of content and are now being producers of content? How to meet the challenge of finding people with the skills and training in use of technology and content development for use in social media and web content?
- Keeping abreast of current laws and regulations in areas such as collections, nonprofit administration and finance.
- How do you create a dialogue between research, theory and practice? How do you mediate conflict among departments around standards and best practices?

**Technology** – Perian Sully (perian@emphatic.org) and  
Brady Dyer (brady.dyer@blantonmuseum.org)

- Supporting digital asset management across departments.
- Using I-Pad and touch screens in galleries and for inter-actives, integrating gaming into the museum experience.
- How do you adapt technology in the small museum environment?
- How do you find funding for new software and keep up with software upgrades?
- As more functions become integrated through technology how do we maintain security? Are we testing enough?
- Going forward how do we use technology to support integrated knowledge and act together so we aren't in silos?

**Organizational Development** – Tamara Hemmerlein (mchs@accelplus.net ) and  
Jack Ludden (jludden@getty.edu)

- Working with business people who are taking on leadership roles in museums who are not versed in nonprofit management, collections stewardship or programming and their interaction with the professional museum staff.
- Tackling tunnel vision where staff members only care about their own little world and don't have a concept of the larger institution.
- Knowing who is in your community and how to define your organizational identity, demographic and geographic relevance.

- Risk taking in thoughtful intelligent ways.
- How can museums and museum professionals promote and encourage more cultural diversity in the field?
- How do museums relate to changing employment patterns (multiple jobs, night jobs) for staff?
- Where does interpretation sit and who does interpretation within the organization?
- Role of continuous planning vs. sequential planning – being nimble in the ever changing world.
- If museums are truly educational institutions how is education embraced by all departments?

**Public Value** – Barbara Cohen-Stratyner (bcohenstratyner@nypl.org) and Flavia Zuniga-West (flaviazwest@gmail.com)

- Measuring impact, value beyond exhibits, education – institution wide and community wide.
- Institutional identity and honest assessments of who you serve and dealing with issues of serving everyone all the time and viability.
- Social consciousness in museums; museums as community centers.
- Museums taking on social services formerly provided by government or other social service nonprofits.
- Race and culture in the museum space, opening intercultural discussions through exhibitions and programming.
- How are museums creating culturally inclusive exhibitions and programming?

**Sustainability/Viability** – Charlotte Montgomery (cmontgom@museum.state.il.us) and Heather Nielsen (hnielsen@denverartmuseum.org)

- Are museums at risk of losing their tax exempt status? Are museums good stewards of the public trust, donor intent, collections?
- Are museum directors putting their ethics on the line, misappropriating funds to rebalance the distribution of resources with museums? Are museums and their governing boards acting in a transparent manner? Are museums providing the public the right information?
- Keeping abreast of changes in the fundraising landscape such as micro-giving, third party giving, and fundraising for our community partners? Are we engaging our community in a dialogue about what we want them to financially support and is it relevant? How can we recruit, retain and develop qualified fundraising and development professionals?
- Financial struggles and risk management: by cutting security staff, service contracts and overnight staff are collections less secure? How does this impact loans and public confidence?