

MINUTES OF THE MAY 15, 2013, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROGRAMS COMMITTEE MEETING

The Strategic Planning and Programs Committee (“the Committee”) of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution held a meeting on May 15, 2013, at 11:00 a.m.

Participating were Committee Chair Shirley Ann Jackson and Committee members Steve Case, Representative Tom Cole, Judy S. Huret, John McCarter, Paul Neely, and Patty Stonesifer. Committee members Senator Jack Reed and Alan Spoon were unable to participate.

Staff in attendance included Secretary G. Wayne Clough; Chief of Staff to the Secretary Patricia Bartlett; Director of the Office of Facilities, Engineering and Operations Nancy Bechtol; Assistant Secretary for Education and Access Claudine Brown; Under Secretary for Finance and Administration Al Horvath; Sant Director of the National Museum of Natural History Kirk Johnson; Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture Richard Kurin; Chief of Staff to the Regents John K. Lapiana; Liaison for Senator Reed Moria Lenehan-Razzuri; General Counsel Judith Leonard; Director of Communications and External Affairs Evelyn Lieberman; and Liaison for Representative Cole Sean Murphy.

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Jackson called the meeting to order.

The draft minutes of the January 16, 2013, Committee meeting were approved without modification.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Dr. Jackson noted that the majority of the meeting would be devoted toward considering four key priorities of the strategic plan in anticipation of further deliberations by the full Board at its June 24, 2013, meeting: (1) how the Smithsonian disseminates its research to the public; (2) new and continuing educational initiatives; (3) progress toward a digital Smithsonian; and (4) sustainability efforts already under way across the Institution. [**NOTE:** Due to time constraints, the sustainability presentation was postponed to the Committee’s September 2013 meeting.]

She encouraged members to both provide substantive input on these strategic topics and advice on crafting an engaging platform to discuss them with the Board.

REPORT OF THE UNDER SECRETARIES

Dr. Jackson noted that at each committee meeting, the two Under Secretaries with programmatic responsibilities are asked to present informal reports on major events or initiatives of note in their respective areas.

Science. Dr. Pell reported that the National Zoological Park will be receiving a new female

elephant from the Baton Rouge Zoo. She also provided an update on the search for the director of the Tennenbaum Marine Observatories.

In response to a member's question, Dr. Pell noted that the Smithsonian did not play a role in the upcoming closure of the National Aquarium housed in the Department of Commerce building.

History, Art, and Culture. Dr. Kurin briefed the Committee on the status of the Hirshhorn seasonal inflatable structure (or "Bubble") initiative. He noted that the Hirshhorn's Board of Trustees will consider whether to recommend moving forward on the Bubble at its May 23, 2013 meeting. He said that Smithsonian leadership will determine the initiative's future shortly after the Trustees' meeting. At this point, Dr. Kurin noted, fundraising has fallen short of that needed to build and maintain the seasonable structure.

Dr. Kurin outlined a pan-institution program to increase the number of Latino curators at the Smithsonian. He said five additional curators have been selected and placed at the Anacostia Community Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Portrait Gallery, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Smithsonian Travelling Exhibition Service. In addition, he said, a position is being funded in the Office of Public Affairs to focus on Latino initiatives and outreach to Spanish-language media.

DIFFUSING RESEARCH

Dr. Jackson noted that at the Board's January 2013 meeting, the Under Secretaries discussed how the Smithsonian measures the quality of its research. At the Chair's suggestion, she said, that discussion will continue at the June Regents' meeting with a presentation by Mrs. Lieberman on how information about Smithsonian research is shared with the public and other stakeholders.

Mrs. Lieberman explained that a variety of methods and platforms are used to share information about Smithsonian research activities. The primary means of disseminating this information, she said, is through the scholarship, exhibitions, public programs, and educational materials that are produced directly by the museums and research centers.

In addition, Mrs. Lieberman said, public affairs, web, and communications staff at the central and unit level employ digital media (websites and social media accounts); earned media (news releases, media outreach, and press conferences); owned media (*Smithsonian* magazine, Smithsonian Channel, and Smithsonian.com); and congressional outreach (briefings, tours, and e-newsletters). She explained that together these methods offer multiple opportunities to learn about the Smithsonian's discoveries, collections, and ideas, providing specific proof points that support the Smithsonian's overall brand messages.

At the Secretary's request, Mrs. Lieberman said, additional emphasis is being placed on Smithsonian research regarding innovation and global climate change. In response to a question from Mr. Case, she said that more coordination is taking place with *Smithsonian*

magazine staff on advances made by the research units.

She said that across the Smithsonian there are 479 social media accounts and 806 websites. Secretary Clough noted that the quality of these offerings vary, and said that work is being done to improve their design and to encourage content standards.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS: EDUCATION

Dr. Jackson noted that, at its January 2013 meeting, the Committee endorsed a calendar governing the review of key components of the strategic plan. Pursuant to that calendar, Ms. Brown will discuss progress made under the strategic plan to “revitalize education and broaden access” at the Committee’s regular May meetings. At the Committee’s regular September meetings, the Secretary is expected to discuss progress made under the four Grand Challenges, as well as under the entire plan generally. Winter Committee meetings will focus on strengthening organizational excellence and management of the collections.

Ms. Brown began her report by noting that one of the benefits of the strategic plan has been to encourage educators to work more collaboratively and align their content with the research of their units’ scholars and to the goals of the plan. The central education office has partnered with the Grand Challenges Consortia to identify and support pan-Institutional educational initiatives in more meaningful ways. The “big takeaway” about improving access, she added, is that partnerships, both internal and external, are “making the difference.”

Ms. Brown directed the Committee’s attention to materials identifying the central education and outreach units that report directly to her office: Smithsonian Affiliates, Smithsonian Associates, Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Services, Smithsonian Science Education Center, and Smithsonian Travelling Exhibition Service. She noted that by placing these organizations under the same central office, they are now working together to improve both the quality and delivery of diverse educational offerings.

She noted that the Smithsonian received two important assets since the launch of the strategic plan: the gift from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support Youth Access Grants (\$30 million endowment) and the Investing in Innovation (i3) grant (\$25.5 million) from the U.S. Department of Education. These two grants have been “game-changers” for Smithsonian education, she said.

Ms. Brown next provided updates on three pan-institutional initiatives previously presented to the Committee: Waterways, American Journeys, and Creativity and Innovation, focusing primarily on how the Waterways initiative is both revitalizing education and broadening access across a number of Smithsonian units.

Committee members discussed the need to ensure that these initiatives promote the Smithsonian as the “go to” leader for students in those areas and the importance of coordinating the “public facing” of the initiatives. Mr. Case stressed the importance of partnerships with outside organizations in efforts to better and more quickly disseminate

Smithsonian assets.

As a leading example of new educational initiatives, Dr. Johnson previewed the National Museum of Natural History's new 10,000-square-foot education center "Q?irus" (pronounced "curious"). The center will open in July 2013.

DIGITAL SMITHSONIAN

Dr. Clough presented a brief update on progress toward a "digital Smithsonian," noting that he would present a substantive report to the full Board at its June 2013 meeting. He noted that a lack of coordination is, not surprisingly, an issue, and said that an executive committee on digitalization was recently established to help address that problem. The committee has proven useful in disseminating information among top Smithsonian leadership, as well as in promoting better coordination among units, including Smithsonian Enterprises. He also said that staff is responding to recommendations from an external advisory committee chaired by Steve VanRoekel, the White House Chief Information Officer.

Dr. Clough noted that the Smithsonian recently completed a survey of museums, archives, and libraries to better understand digital efforts by these organizations in the United States and Europe. A complete digital inventory of Smithsonian digital outreach also was recently completed.

Dr. Clough announced that three Presidential innovation Fellows were selected to work at the Smithsonian, all of whom are experts in social media.

REGULAR EXHIBITION CALENDAR REVIEW

Dr. Kurin and Dr. Pell briefly reviewed the pan-institutional exhibition calendar, noting that exhibitions are currently undergoing an SD-603 review for sensitivity.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Jackson adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Ann Jackson, Chair