

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 9, 2019, STRATEGY, INNOVATION, AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Strategy, Innovation, and Technology Committee (“Committee”) of the Board of Regents (“Board”) of the Smithsonian Institution (“Smithsonian”) held a meeting on December 9, 2019. Participating were Committee Chair Michael Lynton* and Committee members Senator John Boozman,* Representative Doris Matsui,* Rod Adkins,* Steve Case,* Michael Govan,* Dr. Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey,* and Greg McAdoo.*

Also present by invitation of the Committee were Secretary Lonnie Bunch; Chief of Staff to the Secretary Greg Bettwy; Chief Information Officer Deron Burba;* Provost and Under Secretary for Museums, Education, and Research John Davis; Deputy Chief of Staff to the Regents Kate Forester; Special Assistant to the Regents Mallory Gianola (recorder); Deputy General Counsel Lauryn Guttenplan; Inspector General Cathy Helm;* Assistant Secretary for Communications and External Affairs Julissa Marengo; Senior Program Officer for the Office of the Provost Amy Marino; Acting Under Secretary for Finance and Administration/Chief Operating Officer Mike McCarthy; and Chief of Staff to the Regents Porter Wilkinson.

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Michael Lynton called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. Before reviewing the agenda, Mr. Lynton recognized the final Committee meeting of Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson. He expressed the Committee’s appreciation for her service and contributions to the Smithsonian and the Board of Regents as a Regent Emerita, including her distinguished leadership as a former Chair of the Committee.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 26, 2019, COMMITTEE MEETING

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the draft minutes of the September 26, 2019, Committee meeting were approved without modification.

APRIL 2020 STRATEGIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

Chief of Staff to the Regents Porter Wilkinson provided a brief update on the proposed agenda for the strategic meeting of the Board of Regents. Since 2016, the Board has devoted one meeting a year to serve as the Regents’ strategic meeting. The April 2020 meeting will focus on the overall strategic direction of the Smithsonian, Secretary Bunch’s priorities and vision for the Institution, and the Regents’ role in advancing the Secretary’s goals, mission, and future strategic direction.

* *Participated by telephone*

THE SECRETARY’S STRATEGIC VISION FOR THE INSTITUTION

Secretary Lonnie Bunch led a discussion on his priorities and vision for the Smithsonian. The Secretary noted that reaching one billion people a year with a “digital first” strategy and understanding and impacting 21st-century audiences are among his top priorities. He shared his thoughts on increasing and enhancing the Smithsonian’s online presence in traditional and unconventional ways that will better achieve the Smithsonian’s strategic direction. Secretary Bunch also emphasized the Smithsonian’s commitment to lifelong learning for all people.

As part of his remarks on the overall strategic direction of the Smithsonian, the Secretary focused on education at the Smithsonian. He will continue to encourage education partnerships with all Washington, D.C., metropolitan area K–12 students, and focus on evolving the use of the Smithsonian’s collections and resources through information and technology for teaching and learning. The Smithsonian will continue to explore new ways to share knowledge with the public through compelling exhibitions, education programs, and media, in science, art, history, and culture. The Secretary also acknowledged the opportunity to engage with the Smithsonian’s audiences, stakeholders, and strategic partners to advance the reach, relevancy, and impact of the Institution.

EARTH OPTIMISIM 2020 INITIATIVES

Provost and Under Secretary for Museums, Education, and Research John Davis briefed the Committee on plans for the second Earth Optimism Summit (“Summit”), to be hosted by the Smithsonian’s Conservation Commons in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, April 23-25, 2020. The Summit will continue the global conversation started at the first Earth Optimism Summit in 2017, and aims to promote planetary well-being through stories of success in conserving natural and cultural resources. Dr. Davis reviewed the agenda and three-day programming, which will feature scientists, thought leaders, philanthropists, conservationists, and civic leaders as they highlight complex conservation problems on a global scale. The Smithsonian is also preparing for the yearlong Smithsonian-wide initiative Earth Optimism 2020, which will focus around convening discussions and sharing solutions to preserve biodiversity, protect natural resources, and address climate change. The Provost encouraged Committee members to attend and noted that the opening gala, which is co-hosted with the Earth Day Network, would take place at the National Museum of Natural History.

REPORT OF THE PROVOST AND EXHIBITION CALENDAR

Next, Dr. Davis provided the Committee with personnel updates. Dr. Davis reported on six competitive executive searches currently underway at the Institution, including the Director of the Office of International Relations, Director of the Archives of American Art, Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Director of the National Museum of African Art, Director of the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives, and the Ira Rubinoff Director of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama.

The Committee then reviewed the calendar of upcoming exhibitions, with a focus on programming that might generate greater than normal stakeholder interest. Dr. Davis detailed two upcoming exhibitions. The first exhibition, *We Return Fighting: The African American Experience in World War I*, opened on November 13, 2019, at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and examines what fighting in the first global war meant for African Americans. The second exhibition, *Age-Old Cities: A Virtual Journey from Palmyra to Mosul*, will open at the Freer|Sackler in January 2020, and will immerse visitors in the history and splendor of three cities of the Middle East major centers of world heritage—Mosul, Aleppo, and Palmyra. These centers of world heritage will be experienced through large-screen projections, virtual reality experiences, videos, first-person narratives, and archival documents and images.

COMMITTEE CHARTER REVIEW

The Committee performed a provision-by-provision review of its Charter per its mandate to annually review and assess the Charter and evaluate its own performance. No modifications to the Charter were proposed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, and no executive session requested, the meeting was adjourned at 12:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Michael M. Lynton, Chair