

Science History Institute Liaison 2020 Final Report

Chair: John Baltrus

Chair-elect: Annette Wilson

The Science History Institute Liaison represents the Pittsburgh Conference on the Institute's Heritage Council, which is an advisory group of approximately 30 members representing a broad collection of affiliated domestic and international scientific organizations. The liaison is also a member of the Heritage Council's Instruments and Artifacts Committee (IAC), which supports the Institute's Museum and instrument collections efforts by providing advice and expertise. The Heritage Council typically meets twice a year (Fall and Spring) in Philadelphia with the IAC usually conducting their meetings as an afternoon breakout from the Heritage Council meeting, and if needed, the evening prior to Heritage Council Meeting, in addition to usually one phone conference meeting between the two in-person meetings.

For the 2020 Conference year, I did not attend the Fall Heritage Council Meeting due to other travel planned near that time plus the Heritage Council plans to have a full program surrounding the celebration of the International Year of the Periodic Table that would not have permitted time for a IAC Meeting during the same day. The Spring 2020 Meeting of the Heritage Council was cancelled due to the pandemic.

I continued to serve as co-chair of the IAC. We did meet by phone on November 22, 2019 and plan to do so again sometime in May. The current primary efforts of the IAC are to provide information and advice on what to do with instruments stored by the Institute in a warehouse in NJ. Several of these instruments once appeared in one of the Antiquities Museums at Pittcon. Their storage is expensive and some, because of size and condition, are unlikely to ever be displayed at the museum. Members of the IAC have been asked to help identify the historical significance of the instrumentation, which is catalogued along with photos in an Excel spreadsheet. Items of little historical value and duplicates are likely to be de-accessed. Another effort of the IAC is to find the best way to document instrumentation that is "too big to collect". The Institute has been offered such large instruments, but has no place to store them, yet alone display them. The best way to digitally document this instrumentation is being discussed.

The liaison also assists with communications with the Institute when requested by either party. Typically, that includes some of the logistics of the Pittcon Hall of Fame display and with the presentation of the Pittcon Heritage Award at Pittcon. This year went smoothly on both fronts. The Institute did not man a table at the Hall of Fame Display and were able to plan the layout of the panels without assistance. They also replaced all of the remaining panels that had their old logo at a cost of over \$10K. Their familiarity with the presentation of the award and the lack of programs this year meant no assistance was required for its presentation.

An issue arose with missed payments to the Institute that are used to offset their costs for presenting the Pittcon Heritage Award and with upkeep and manning of the Hall of Fame display. Per previous agreement, the Conference is to provide an annual \$10K grant to the Institute to help offset those costs (travel expenses for staff, award plaques, award dinner, Hall of Fame panel expense, etc.). When the payment for 2020 was invoiced by the Institute, they discovered the Conference never made a payment for Pittcon 2019. Further investigation by Pittcon showed no payment for Pittcon 2018 either.

I met with the named Pittcon Presidents at Pittcon 2020 to discuss the payments to the Institute, their history, perceived benefits, etc. An internal decision was reached regarding past and future payments:

Pittcon 2018 – no payment will be made since the Institute is apparently unaware that the payment was missed.

Pittcon 2019 – Payment of \$10K in full will be made shortly after Pittcon 2020.

Pittcon 2020 – Payment of \$5K will be made immediately after Pittcon 2020 and an additional payment of \$5K will be made after Pittcon 2021.

Pittcon 2021 and beyond – Pittcon will decrease its grant from \$10K to \$5K per year.

This payment plan was communicated to Sarah Reisert, the Institute's Award Coordinator, before leaving Pittcon. A warrant for \$15K, per the above plan, was submitted shortly after Pittcon 2020.

Timeline

October – Attend Fall Heritage Council Meeting

December – Check with Sarah regarding layout of Pittcon Hall of Fame

January – Participate in IAC Conference Call Meeting

February – Check with Sarah regarding logistics of Pittcon Heritage Award Presentation and shipment of programs (if any) to Conference Office so they can be put on the truck to the Conference. Check with Sarah on who should be invited to President's Reception (if there is one).

March – Coordinate with Pittcon president to make sure grant payment is made.

May – Attend Spring Heritage Council Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

John Baltrus
Pittcon 2020 Liaison