



american
institute for
conservation

**50 Years of Preserving
Cultural Heritage**

American Institute for Conservation (AIC)

Strategic Plan 2023-2025

**Approved by the AIC Board of Directors
December 1, 2022**

Mission

We are the national membership organization supporting conservation professionals in preserving cultural heritage by establishing and upholding professional standards, promoting research and publications, providing educational opportunities, and fostering the exchange of knowledge among conservators, allied professionals, and the public.

Core Values

Community: Our joy and strength come from working together; we are committed to fostering a welcoming, accessible, respectful, and active community within our profession and with the wider world through collaboration with new and existing partners. We believe that we are stronger advocates for ourselves and the field when we use our collective voice.

Diversity: We embrace diversity in our membership, our partners, our initiatives, the objects and sites we preserve, and the collections and clients we serve.

Equity, Inclusion, and Access: We support equity and equitable decision-making for our members and our partners, and we strive to provide an inclusive environment and accessible opportunities for all members, especially those who are underrepresented or marginalized.

Professional and Personal Growth: We are dedicated to helping our members learn, grow, contribute, create, and thrive throughout their careers.

Sustainability: We advocate for sustainable practices to fight the impacts of the climate crisis, preserve heritage at risk, and improve our field.

Accountability: We value good governance and financial responsibility; we invest in our members and are committed to doing so ethically, sustainably, and transparently. We are committed to listening to our members and responding to their input.

Strategic Priorities (with Related Actions)

1. Welcome, Value, and Support Members at All Career Stages

- Understand members and what they need
- In partnership with FAIC, establish a process for program development and implementation, with a focus on programs for every career level
- Centralize existing member resources and maximize their discoverability
- Understand and consider relevant international trends in the field

2. Integrate Sustainability into All that We Do

- Investigate and work to reduce the environmental impact of the Annual Meeting
- Integrate environmental sustainability into the Code of Ethics
- Promote sustainable collections care
- Centralize sustainability-related resources
- Continue to encourage the development and dissemination of feasible best practices to reduce climate impact

3. Promote and Invest in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access

- Create a board diversity plan
- Conduct an accessibility audit of AIC programs, platforms, and services
- Encourage opportunities for members to engage in community-centered work through FAIC programs, such as the existing Community Partnership Project
- Support AIC volunteers by examining AIC volunteer culture; identify improvements to dismantle barriers and to mitigate burn-out
- Promote equity for our members, both those in private practice and those employed by institutions

4. Strengthen Communications

- In collaboration with FAIC, build a strategic and coordinated media strategy that expands the value and visibility of the conservation profession, conservation research, and the preservation of cultural heritage.
- Align communications across all internal groups and membership as a whole, avoiding information and communication silos; value transparent and frequent communication
- Reinforce the code of conduct and emphasize the importance of kindness and respect
- Provide communications and storytelling training, in partnership with FAIC
- Encourage and support AIC members in publishing their work through AIC and FAIC publication venues

5. Continue to Invest in Our Mission with Good Governance

- Focus on excellence in member services; as a 501(c)(6) professional membership organization, member service is at the heart of everything we do
- Advocate for the field
- Maintain the fiscal health of the organization

- Keep the core value of accountability in mind; check decisions against the organization's core values and current strategic goals and periodically survey members about their satisfaction with governance

Situation Analysis

The strategic priorities identified above were informed by the following situation analysis, which was conducted by members of the AIC staff and board of directors. It includes AIC member feedback, provided during formal strategic planning conversations conducted in 2021-2022, and it briefly summarizes knowledge of external opportunities and threats, as well as internal strengths and weaknesses.

Relevant External Conditions

- Inflation, supply chain issues, and the COVID-19 pandemic have created unprecedented uncertainty in global financial markets, and a global recession seems likely, with a strong possibility of reduced funding for the arts and preservation. New and flexible funding streams are required for AIC to be nimble and responsive over the next 3 year term.
- Climate impact poses a rapidly increasing threat to the planet, its people, and its many cultural heritage sites. A focused commitment to environmental sustainability and at-risk heritage is necessary.
- Global conflicts are an additional increasing threat that continue to have profound impact on people and their cultural heritage.
- Public awareness of cultural heritage preservation and its varied practitioners remains low, and a strong focus on outreach, advocacy, and storytelling is required.
- Cultural heritage continues to be valued and appreciated for its ability to foster personal and collective well-being, enhance teaching and learning, and advance cultural understanding. AIC and its members preserve this key societal good, and we need to link our work to it in the minds of policy makers and the public.

Relevant Internal Conditions

- AIC members and member leaders are highly active and, to advance member-led work, they are seeking more transparency and frequency in communications, broader access to volunteer leadership opportunities, and clearer operational guidelines.
- Members feel ill equipped as public advocates and as advocates within their institutions; in addition to technical skills, they have identified a need for expanded training to include a variety of “soft” skills—such as communications, leadership, and a variety of business practice topics.
- Programmatic offerings have focused on mid-career members to the possible exclusion of early and late career members; to welcome, support, and retain members across the career spectrum, programmatic gaps need to be identified and addressed.
- Members expressed a strong desire to improve the internal climate by supporting and increasing diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging through a variety of means including close attention to professional conduct, examining barriers to volunteering as

well as methods to prevent volunteer burnout, and the application of a DEIA lens to all organizational structures and activities.

- Staff capacity and burnout are also considerations. Additional activities require more staff time and new knowledge/skills/abilities. Staff retention is important for institutional knowledge and efficacy. A workplace culture that rejects constant overtime is a priority.
- Support for association memberships is declining in newer generations, as other community-building options are available online.

Non-discrimination Statement

AIC is an equal opportunity organization, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination, and is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons. In our internal operations and provision of services, we will not allow discrimination based on age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, national origin, disabilities, race, size, religion, sexual orientation, political orientation, marital status, veteran status, socioeconomic background, or any other status protected by applicable law.