

Executive Board Meeting

11 Aug 2009
Agenda item no. 16.1

Prepared by: Deborah Tout-Smith
Date: 11/8/2009

Topic: **Global Curator program**
Report on the first year of the Global Curator program: a joint program between the Curators' Committee of the American Association of Museums and the Historians' Special Interest Group of Museums Australia

Recommendation

That ICOM Australia continue to support this initiative, which is also endorsed by the American Association of Museums; and that ICOM Australia provide sponsorship of \$1200 for the 2010 program.

Background

The Global Curator

In 2009 the Museum Historians' Special Interest Group (SIG) of Museums Australia and the Curators' Committee (CurCom) of the American Association of Museums joined forces to offer a new international exchange program for their members: the Global Curator program. Members of each organization have formed an international committee to organize the program.

The program offers a bursary to museum curators or independent museum professionals whose major job responsibilities are the care and interpretation of museum collections. Collections may be of any genre. Global Curator exchanges take place on an individual basis, rather than being dependant on institutional relationships, and provide professional development and networking opportunities for established curators.

In its first year, the Global Curator program awarded an AUD \$2,000 bursary to a member of the Curators' Committee of the American Association of Museums to attend the Museums Australia annual conference to be held in Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, May 17-20 2009. The successful applicant, Trevor Jones from the Mountain Heritage Center at Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina, also received free conference registration and free attendance at selected conference events, and presented a paper at a Museum Historians' SIG session during the conference.

In exchange, a US \$1,500 bursary was given by CurCom to Carla Pascoe, History & Technology Department at Museum Victoria and PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne, to attend the AAM annual meeting, to be held in Philadelphia, PA, 30 April-4 May, 2009. She attended the AAM annual conference, gave a presentation at the CurCom luncheon, and received tickets to the two events that CurCom sponsors at the AAM Annual Meeting.

Issues

The program was considered a great success by the organisations and individuals involved. However, some difficulty was encountered during the exchange of monies, and the Global Curator committee has recommended that for the 2010 year the selection process remain the same (the receiving organization selects the successful applicant), but that the money is paid by the originating rather than the receiving country.

It was also noted that each recipient was considerably out-of-pocket, so additional funding is being sought for the 2010 program. The committee feels that it would be helpful to run the program for an additional year before expanding it as initially planned, in order for the model to be ironed out.

The Museum Historians' Special Interest Group has agreed to provide \$2000 for the 2010 program; the Curators' Committee is also supporting the 2010 program again. ICOM (USA) will also be contacted about program, with a view to either funding or an expression of support.

Expansions for 2011 may include ICOM Australia playing an organisational role - for instance, managing a pool of finances and advising about the establishment of more formalized operating guidelines. Organisations such as the Social History Curators Group and the UK Museums Association will be contacted in future to expand the program.