

Potential task force members

Ellen Brooks - Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Adrienne Cain - Baylor University

Erica Fugger - Columbia University

Kristen La Follette - California State University Monterey Bay

This task force proposes to take on the role of reaching out to new professionals (to include students, interns, early-career oral historians, and oral historians who are still looking for their first professional jobs) and creating a nurturing space for them within the Oral History Association community.

There is a distinct need to seek out and engage those individual who are new to oral history and OHA as they might struggle to orient themselves in the field and organization. Many newcomers to the Annual Meeting often find themselves overwhelmed trying to navigate the program and encounter trouble diving into the networking and communication aspects of the Meeting. Those newcomers who do not make meaningful connections during the Meeting have noted they do not feel a part of the organization and often do not remain OHA members or attend future Annual Meetings. Outside of the Annual Meeting, new professionals and members might struggle to gain footing within the organization or to feel a sense of belonging to the community. New professionals are also apt to have many questions and are often in need of advice from more experienced professionals. Dedicating a task force to these issues will allow OHA to make a positive and lasting impression on these newcomers which will in turn lead to more individuals excited to join the organization as well as the retention of current members. In this way, the task force aims to guide and assist our new colleagues while at the same time helping OHA grow as strong, well-rounded organization.

The main objectives of this task force will be to:

- Welcome new professionals and new OHA members to the community (in conjunction with the Membership Committee).
- Advocate for new professionals, within OHA as well as in the public sphere. This will include creating opportunities for new professionals to share concerns and communicate their needs with the larger OHA Community. This will also include raising the visibility of new professionals and their projects within and outside of OHA.
- Provide resources and advice for those new to the field.
- Bridge the gap between new professionals and other OHA Members. Specifically to create networking opportunities for new professionals and facilitate collaboration across the board.

How we will achieve these objectives:

- By facilitating the Mentorship Pairing Program and other mentorship related events and programs (such as Mentor/Mentee meet and greet, Speed Networking) at the OHA Annual Meeting.
- By working with the Membership Committee to be sure that all new members are provided with helpful resources for navigating the organization and other resources for new professionals, if applicable.
- By developing useful resources and programming which respond to the needs expressed by new members
- By utilizing social media and other online resources to attract new members and to facilitate informal conversations outside of regularly scheduled meetings or face-to-face interactions.
- By soliciting feedback from newcomers and new professionals annually, correlating the results of this feedback and reporting back to the Council with suggestions for new initiatives that will help improve the experience of the new professional within the organization.