

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 3, 2023, MEETING OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

ATTENDANCE

This scheduled meeting of the Board of Regents (“Board”) of the Smithsonian Institution (“Smithsonian”) was held on Monday, April 3, 2023. The Board conducted a site visit to the Suitland Collections Center, a morning business meeting, and an afternoon strategic session at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. Regents present were:

The Chief Justice ¹	Mr. John Fahey, Vice Chair
Senator Catherine Cortez Masto	Mr. Roger W. Ferguson, Jr.
Senator Gary Peters	Mr. Michael Govan
Representative Doris Matsui	Dr. Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey, Chair
Representative Adrian Smith	Mr. Michael Lynton
Ambassador Barbara M. Barrett	Ms. Denise O’Leary
Mr. Steve Case	Mr. Franklin D. Raines

Ms. Kathryn Hall, Investment Committee Chair
Mr. Jorge Puente, Smithsonian National Board Chair

Vice President Kamala D. Harris, Senator John Boozman, and Representative Garret Graves were unable to attend the meeting.

Smithsonian and Regent staff present by invitation of the Board were:

Lonnie G. Bunch III, Secretary	Cathy Helm, Inspector General
Greg Bettwy, Chief of Staff to the Secretary	Becky Kobberod, Head of Digital Transformation ¹
Monique Chism, Under Secretary for Education	Jeremy Marcus, Office of Representative Matsui
Ronald Cortez, Under Secretary for Administration	Julissa Marengo, Assistant Secretary for Communications and External Affairs and Chief Marketing Officer
Robert M. Dow, Jr., Counselor to the Chief Justice	Meroë Park, Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer
Farleigh Earhart, Acting General Counsel	Brandie Smith, John and Adrienne Mars Director of the Smithsonian’s National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute ²
Kate Forester, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Regents	Robert J. Spiller, Assistant Secretary for Advancement
Mallory Gianola, Special Assistant to the Regents (recorder)	Ellen Stofan, Under Secretary for Science and Research
Kevin Gover, Under Secretary for Museums and Research	Caitlyn, Stephenson, Office of Senator Peters
Logan de La Barre-Hays, Office of Representative Graves	Josh Yearsley, Office of Senator Cortez Masto

¹ Participated in the afternoon strategic meeting only

² Participated in the lunch program only

MORNING SESSION

A NATIONAL INSTITUTION: COLLECTIONS STORAGE AND SPACE PLANNING

A National Institution: Collections Storage and Space Planning

The overarching theme of the April 3, 2023, meeting of the Board of Regents, was the national reach of the Smithsonian. Regents, liaisons, and Smithsonian leadership participated in a tour and overview of the Suitland Collections Center in Suitland, Maryland. The campus serves as the Smithsonian's principal off-site storage and conservation facility, and is divided into four separate sectors, each developed independently over time: the Museum Support Center, the National Museum of the American Indian's Cultural Resources Center, the Smithsonian Gardens' Greenhouse, and the Paul E. Garber Facility. The program focused on the current and long-term requirements for stewardship of the Smithsonian's vast collections, especially as the Institution continues to explore ways to reach audiences beyond Washington, D.C.

REGENTS' BUSINESS SESSION

Call to Order of the Morning Business Session

Chair Risa Lavizzo-Mourey called the morning business session to order at 11:08 a.m.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report of the Chair of the Board

The meeting of the Board of Regents began with the Report of the Chair of the Board and Executive Committee. Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey began her report by acknowledging the final Regents' meeting for Steve Case, who will conclude his second term on the Board at the end of April. She also reminded the Board that Nancy Yao has been named the founding director of the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum and is expected to join the Smithsonian on June 5.

Executive Committee Approvals

Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey then briefed the Board on two actions taken by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Board, pursuant to Board Bylaw 3.01, between the January and April meetings. The Executive Committee approved the 2023 Regent committee member assignments for the newly appointed Congressional Regents. Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey noted that the Executive Committee's approval was requested on behalf of the Board to allow for their participation in Regent committee meetings prior to the April Board meeting. The Executive Committee also approved the fiscal year 2024 federal budget request to Congress because the submission to Congress was scheduled to be delivered on March 9, 2023, prior to the April 3, 2023, Board meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda (“Agenda”) was presented for the Board’s approval. Action items listed on the April 3, 2023, Agenda included: the approval of minutes from the January 30, 2023, Board meeting; appointments and reappointments to four (4) Smithsonian Institution Advisory Boards; amendments to the Bylaws of the National Museum of African Art Board; and gifts and naming recognition. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted to adopt the Agenda, constituting the approval of all action items listed therein.

See attached Actions 2023.04.01 (Minutes of the Board of Regents, Appendix A).

QUESTIONS ON WRITTEN COMMITTEE REPORTS

Questions on Written Committee Reports

Next, Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey provided an opportunity for Regent committee chairs and Smithsonian staff to answer questions about the written reports distributed ahead of the meeting by the Advancement Committee, Facilities Committee, Smithsonian National Board, and Office of Government Relations.

Written Report of the Advancement Committee

Written Report of the Advancement Committee

The Advancement Committee held a meeting on January 11, 2023. During the meeting, the Committee reviewed notable gifts and grants, received an update on fundraising for the two new museums, reviewed Campaign progress, and discussed the Ignite Tomorrow Campaign at the National Air and Space Museum. The Committee also was briefed on the progress of fiscal year 2023 fundraising. As of January 31, 2023, the Smithsonian had raised \$107.6 million towards its \$265 million goal.

Written Report of the Facilities Committee

Written Report of the Facilities Committee

The Facilities Committee conducted a meeting on March 10, 2023. During the meeting, the Committee engaged in a strategic discussion on the progress of site selection for the new museums, was briefed on the Smithsonian’s fiscal year 2023 and 2024 Capital and Maintenance budgets, and received an update on a potential right of first offer related to Capital Gallery. The Committee also received information on the Smithsonian’s climate resiliency and sustainability plans and major capital projects, including construction of Pod 6 at the Museum Support Center; revitalization of the building envelope and infrastructure at the National Air and Space Museum – Mall Building; and revitalization of the Historic Core.

Written Report of the Smithsonian National Board

Written Report of the Smithsonian National Board

The Smithsonian National Board (“SNB”) held its winter business meeting on February 3, 2023. In light of the March 2023 Smithsonian Volunteer Leadership Weekend Events in Los Angeles, CA, the business meeting was hosted virtually. The meeting focused on discussions highlighting the Smithsonian Campaign for Our Shared Future, the Office of Advancement’s Smithsonian Legacy Challenge, and recent work at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. National Board members also received reports from working group and committee chairs.

Written Report of the Office of Government Relations

Written Report of the Office of Government Relations

The Office of Government Relations (“OGR”) reported that on March 9, 2023, the President released the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget. For FY 2024, the Smithsonian’s total request to fund essential operating expenses, priority program increases, and revitalization of the Institution’s physical infrastructure is \$1,241.0 million. The total amount includes \$976 million for Salaries and Expenses and \$265.0 million for Facilities Capital.

Congressional Briefings and Smithsonian Related Legislation

OGR provided a “Smithsonian 101” briefing for the new House Majority Staff on the House Appropriations Committee. OGR also engaged in five Congressional briefings between the January and April Board meetings. The briefings focused on the new museums, revitalization of the Castle, the fiscal year 2024 budget request to Congress, and the 2023 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The Office of Government Relations is tracking two pieces of legislation related to commemorative Congressional Gold Medals, including H.R.703 and H.R.640/S.137. Both bills direct a medal to go to the Smithsonian for display and research.

Congressional Engagement

The Office of Government Relations continues its congressional engagement, hosting and participating in a variety of programs and events. Most notably, monitoring appointments to key committee positions in the 118th Congress, engaging new Chairs and Ranking Members, and coordinating with House and Senate Leadership on the appointment and reappointment of Congressional Regents. On March 8, 2023, the Office of Government Relations, the Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum Advisory Council, and the Office of Special Events hosted a breakfast on International Women’s Day in the Capitol Visitor Center to commemorate the holiday and raise awareness of the SAWHM efforts.

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Report of the Governance and Nominating Committee

Chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee Roger W. Ferguson, Jr. gave the Committee’s report and presented three action items for the Board’s consideration: (i) the deaccession and return of Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, (ii) a nomination to the Order of James Smithson, and (iii) proposed amendments to the Bylaws of the Board of Regents.

Deaccession and Return of Benin Bronzes to Nigeria

First, the Board of Regents was asked to consider the deaccession of 13 Benin Bronzes, a name that is used to cover a variety of artifacts ranging from brass plaques, carved elephant tusks, ivory leopard statues, and wooden heads. Mr. Ferguson presented the Committee’s recommendation to the Board that the artworks in the National Museum of Natural History (“NMNH”) collection be transferred to the National Commission of Museums and Monuments, as the representative of the Federal Government of Nigeria. It was noted that the return of the bronzes follows the Smithsonian’s new Shared Stewardship and Ethical Returns Policy and the recent return of 29 Benin Bronzes from the collections of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art to Nigeria. The Regents are responsible for approving the deaccession due to the value of the collection pursuant to Smithsonian Directive 600, Collections Management. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board approved the proposed deaccession.

See attached Actions 2023.04.02 (*Minutes of the Board of Regents, Appendix A*).

Order of James Smithson

Next, Mr. Ferguson presented a nomination to the Order of James Smithson, which was established by the Regents in 1983 to recognize inspirational and impactful contributions to the Smithsonian. At its meeting on March 6, 2023, the Governance and Nominating Committee voted to recommend that the Board award Robert P. Kogod with the Order of James Smithson, in appreciation for his exceptional, long-standing support and significant contributions to the Institution. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted to approve the nomination of Robert P. Kogod to the Order of James Smithson.

See attached Actions 2023.04.03 (*Minutes of the Board of Regents, Appendix A*).

Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws of the Board of Regents

To conclude, Mr. Ferguson presented proposed amendments to the Bylaws of the Board of Regents. In January 2023, the Board of Regents approved the restructuring of the Strategy, Innovation, and Technology (“SIT”) Committee to further focus on the Smithsonian’s digital transformation. The refocus included adjusting Regent and non-Regent membership and amending four duties and responsibilities in the SIT Committee’s Charter. Mr. Ferguson informed the Committee that as a result, conforming changes to the Bylaws of the Board of Regents are necessary to reflect the updated duties and responsibilities removed from the Strategy, Innovation, and Technology Committee and reassigned to the Governance and Nominating Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Executive Committee. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board approved the proposed amendments to §4.05, §4.06, and §4.08 of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents.

See attached Actions 2023.04.04 (*Minutes of the Board of Regents, Appendix A*).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board moved into an executive session at approximately 11:22 a.m. to discuss business and personnel matters.

**Executive Session:
Advisory Board
Reappointments**

Chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee Roger W. Ferguson, Jr. led a discussion regarding reappointments to Smithsonian Advisory Boards. He presented one action item for the Board’s consideration: the reappointment of Steven G. Hoch as Chair of the Advisory Board of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (“STRI”) for a two-year term of leadership service. The reappointment was proposed to ensure a continuity of board leadership during a period of transition in STRI executive leadership and as the STRI Advisory Board engages in deliberative succession planning. Mr. Ferguson noted that the two-year term of leadership service would not exceed the officer term limitation, but it would exceed the membership term limitation set forth in the Advisory Board Bylaws of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute and the Smithsonian’s best practice guidelines for maximum service for board members. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted to approve the leadership term extension.

See attached Actions 2023.04.05 (Minutes of the Board of Regents, Appendix A).

Following the executive session, the Board adjourned to the luncheon program at approximately 11:38 a.m.

LUNCHEON PROGRAM: A NATIONAL INSTITUTION: SMITHSONIAN SCIENCE

**Luncheon Program: A
National Institution:
Smithsonian Science**

Regents and Smithsonian staff convened at the National Museum of American History for a luncheon program, the first in a series highlighting efforts to advance One Smithsonian. During lunch, the Secretary led a panel discussion with Director of the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute Brandie Smith, Assistant Secretary for Advancement Rob Spiller, and Under Secretary for Science and Research Ellen Stofan. The Regents had an opportunity to hear how they are collaborating on a pan-Institutional level and harnessing Smithsonian expertise to elevate science in the global discourse.

AFTERNOON SESSION

REGENTS’ STRATEGIC SESSION

**Call to Order of the
Afternoon Strategic
Session**

The Chancellor called the afternoon session to order at 1:00 p.m.

STRATEGIC DISCUSSION: A NATIONAL INSTITUTION: THE INCREASE AND DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE BEYOND THE BELTWAY

**A National Institution:
The Increase and
Diffusion of Knowledge
Beyond the Beltway**

To begin the afternoon session, the Secretary and members of his leadership team led a discussion on the ways the Smithsonian is expanding its reach beyond Washington, D.C. to the broader national audience. The discussion was framed with an overview of the strategic plan implementation, followed by a deep dive on

two strategic focus areas: education and digital transformation.

**Strategic Plan
Implementation**

Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer Meroë Park first briefed the Board on the Initiative Tracking Dashboard, which is guiding progress toward enacting the Strategic Plan and tracking efforts for each of the 23 pan-Institutional initiatives. Deputy Secretary Park explained that the Dashboard is a living resource, designed to ensure transparency and foster collaboration. From the Dashboard, initiative snapshots can be downloaded by Smithsonian staff and used to support pan-institutional and unit-specific planning, fundraising, federal resource requests, and cross-collaboration efforts. The Deputy Secretary informed the Board that individual initiatives will be briefed at Regent committees and to the full Board throughout the year.

**Education: Creating Our
Shared Future Through
Education**

Next, Under Secretary for Education Monique Chism updated the Board on how the Smithsonian is building and enriching a national culture of learning. Dr. Chism reviewed annual metrics from the Smithsonian’s education outreach in fiscal year 2022, including education programs that reached 5.9 million participants and the distribution of 13.7 million educator-created publications. The Board discussed two education focus areas as part of the Strategic Plan: Reach Every Classroom and Smithsonian, Where I Live. Dr. Chism showcased ways the Smithsonian is prioritizing direct engagement with pre-K–12 classrooms nationwide to provide services and resources that support a well-rounded education, cultivate creativity and imagination, and ignite a passion and appreciation for lifelong learning. Dr. Chism also highlighted case studies and major activities that the Office of the Under Secretary for Education has launched to engage with and amplify the voices of rural Americans to better serve local communities, raise the visibility of their cultural stories, exchange resources, and join in conversations about our shared future.

**Virtual Smithsonian:
Accelerating Progress on
Digital Transformation**

To close the strategic discussion, Head of Digital Transformation Becky Kobberod updated the Board on how the Institution is adapting the Virtual Smithsonian strategy and capturing opportunities enabled by digital technology. Ms. Kobberod reviewed annual metrics from the Smithsonian’s virtual engagement in fiscal year 2022, including 168 million website viewers and 19.8 million social media followers. The Board discussed two focus areas as part of the Smithsonian’s digital transformation: social media and audience and data. Ms. Kobberod showcased ways the Institution is leveraging and expanding social media capabilities to amplify and enhance content and ensure the Smithsonian is competing in a rapidly changing digital landscape. Ms. Kobberod also shared new social media technology that has been implemented for pan-Smithsonian collaboration and tracking, and she highlighted recent collaborations and social media campaigns that have utilized audience-centered data to better serve unit-specific audiences.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

**Executive Session:
Regents-only**

The Board moved into a Regents-only executive session at approximately 1:34 p.m. to discuss personnel matters and agendas for future Board meetings.

The executive session adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

STRATEGIC REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Strategic Report of the Secretary

Secretary Bunch updated the Board on the state of the Smithsonian Institution.

MOU between Smithsonian and U.S. Department of State

The Secretary first updated the Board on a new Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) with the United States Department of State. The MOU will serve to execute projects related to education and exchange, history, art, culture, science, research, and other similar activities. The Secretary reviewed potential areas of collaboration and highlighted how the MOU will provide increased access to Smithsonian content and resources.

Congressional Engagement

Next, the Secretary briefed the Board on engagement with Congressional Regents and other Members of Congress. The Secretary reviewed how the Institution is forging new relationships with the 118th United States Congress, specifically congressional committees and caucuses that have shared interests with the Smithsonian. The Secretary will expand on the discussion at the June meeting and further outline priorities for enhancing Congressional engagement.

The Exhibit: Finding the Next Great Artist

The Secretary also updated the Regents on a partnership with the Smithsonian Channel, MTV, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. The three units collaborated on a first-of-its-kind docu-competition series, *The Exhibit: Finding the Next Great Artist*, which premiered on March 3 on MTV and on March 7 on the Smithsonian Channel. The series follows seven diverse artists as they vie for a cash prize and a career defining exhibit at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. The Secretary informed the Board that feedback from the six-episode series was positive, and the Board agreed that the pilot provided a good opportunity to explore different ways to push Smithsonian content beyond the walls of the physical museums.

Administrative Matters

To close, the Secretary provided updates on administrative matters, including working with the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest federal employee union that represents 750,000 Federal and D.C. government workers. The Secretary also informed the Board about a targeted email attack related to a fraudulent payment at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (“SAO”). A thorough review of financial operations at SAO is underway, as well as an assessment of policies and practices, which will be brought to the Audit and Review Committee. The Secretary also announced that on March 29, the Partnership for Public Service and Boston Consulting Group joined the Washington Post to release the 2022 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government. The Smithsonian Institution ranked the 9th Best Place to Work in the Federal Government, among mid-size agencies. The Board then received an update on the Smithsonian’s hybrid telework approach. By June 1, 2023, all Smithsonian units are expected to have telework eligible staff on site at least two or three days per week.

REGENT RETROSPECTIVE

Regent Retrospective

To conclude the afternoon session, the Board asked departing Regent Steve Case to provide a retrospective on his 12-year tenure on the Board. Mr. Case shared his aspirations for the Smithsonian as the Institution continues to transform its approach to exhibitions, educational programming, research findings, and digital content. The Regents applauded Mr. Case for his commitment to digital innovation and his transformational leadership, extraordinary commitment to the Institution, and exceptional service on the Board of Regents.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: “GATEKEEPER” REPORTS

Executive Session: “Gatekeeper” Reports

The Board concluded the April 3, 2023, meeting with an opportunity to hear from each of the Smithsonian’s Gatekeepers.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at approximately 3:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lonnie G. Bunch, III
Secretary

APPENDIX A: ACTIONS OF THE APRIL 3, 2023, MEETING OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

VOTED that the Board of Regents adopts the Consent Agenda, which constitutes the approval of all action items listed therein. [2023.04.01]

VOTED that the Board of Regents approves the minutes of the January 30, 2023, meeting of the Board of Regents.

VOTED that the Board of Regents approves the proposed slate of candidates for appointment or reappointment to four (4) Smithsonian Institution Advisory Boards.

VOTED that the Board of Regents approves the proposed amendments to the bylaws of the National Museum of African Art (“NMAFA”) Board.

VOTED that the Board of Regents recognizes the generosity of NIKE, Inc. and accepts the terms of the sponsorship agreement.

VOTED that the Board of Regents creates a quasi-endowment for the benefit of the National Museum of Natural History to support the Anthropology Department and library, specifically for Polynesian accessions. Further, the Board of Regents authorizes the transfer of the funds identified for this purpose.

VOTED that the Board of Regents approves the Secretary’s request to deaccession thirteen (13) works of art from the Benin Kingdom Royal Court, known as Benin Bronzes, in the collection of the National Museum of Natural History and return and transfer title of the objects to Nigeria’s National Commission for Museums and Monuments, as the representative of the Federal Government of Nigeria. [2023.04.02]

VOTED that the Board of Regents approves the nomination of Robert P. Kogod to the Order of James Smithson. [2023.04.03]

VOTED that the Board of Regents approves the proposed amendments to §4.05, §4.06, and §4.08 of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents. [2023.04.04]

VOTED that the Board of Regents approves the reappointment of Steven G. Hoch as Chair of the Advisory Board of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute for a two-year extension of leadership service, effective June 28, 2023. [2023.04.05]