

## MINUTES OF THE MAY 8, 2025, ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Advancement Committee (“Committee”) of the Board of Regents (“Board”) of the Smithsonian Institution (“Smithsonian”) conducted a videoconference meeting on May 8, 2025. Participating were Committee Chair Christine Udvar-Hazy and Committee members Jane Abraham; Don Chen; Kathy Hopinkah Hannan; Allan M. Holt; Cheryl Neal; Denise O’Leary; Jorge Puente; Franklin D. Raines; and David M. Rubenstein.

Present by invitation of the Committee were Secretary Lonnie Bunch, Chief of Staff to the Secretary Greg Bettwy, Counsel to the Inspector General Epin Christensen, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Regents Kate Forester, Special Assistant to the Regents Mallory Gianola (recorder), Under Secretary for Museums and Culture Kevin Gover, Director of Campaign Strategy Laura Gleason, Director of the Office of Academic Appointments and Internships Roshni Lal, Director for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Advancement Joanne Leese, Assistant Secretary for Communications and External Affairs and Chief Marketing Officer Julissa Marenco, Chief Legal Officer Jennifer McIntyre, Assistant General Counsel Anne Nelson, Director of Investment Operations Allen Rumanyika, Assistant Secretary for Advancement Robert Spiller, and Counselor and Chief of Staff to the Regents Porter Wilkinson.

### CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Committee Chair Christine Udvar-Hazy called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

### WELCOME FROM THE SECRETARY

The Secretary provided a welcome to the group and a brief update on the Smithsonian’s operating environment and budget. Secretary Bunch reported that on May 2, the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) released the President’s fiscal year 2026 “Skinny Budget,” which provided topline discretionary spending requests to the U.S. Congress. Funding details for the Smithsonian were not included. The Secretary informed the Committee that the full FY2026 budget was expected to be released in early June, which would include funding information for the Smithsonian. Secretary Bunch emphasized that given the potential for reduced federal funding, fundraising is more critical than ever to ensure the Smithsonian can continue to advance the strategic priorities outlined in the *Our Shared Future: Smithsonian 2027* strategic plan. The Secretary restated his commitment to ensuring the Smithsonian remains a trusted source of knowledge, discovery, and inspiration for all.

### REVIEW OF THE JANUARY 14, 2025, MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the draft minutes of the January 14, 2025, Committee meeting were approved.

## REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF GIFTS

Joanne Leese, Director of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Advancement presented three gifts and one policy exception for the Committee's review and recommendation to the Board of Regents. The motions presented to the Committee included a policy exception for an estate gift to the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum; the naming of a space at the National Zoological Park and Conservation Biology Institute; the establishment of a quasi-endowment to support the National Museum of American History; and a gift to the National Air and Space Museum. Ms. Leese noted that all proposed actions except for the one noted adhered to applicable Smithsonian directives and the Institution's guiding principles, policies, and procedures, as set forth by the Board of Regents.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the following actions were approved for recommendation to the Board:

**VOTED** that the Advancement Committee recommends that the Board of Regents recognizes the generosity of the late Lauren Smith and authorizes the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum to allocate the gift, and future distributions from the estate, to support its exhibition expenses associated with commemorating America's 250th.

**VOTED** that the Advancement Committee recommends that the Board of Regents recognizes the generosity of John and Adrienne Mars to the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park and Conservation Biology Institute and names the John and Adrienne Mars MinShan Mountains Abode for 10 years.

**VOTED** that the Advancement Committee recommends that the Board of Regents creates a quasi-endowment for the benefit of the National Museum of American History to support the agriculture collections. Further, the Advancement Committee recommends that the Board of Regents authorizes the transfer of the funds identified for this purpose.

**VOTED** that the Advancement Committee recommends that the Board of Regents recognizes the generosity of Charles and Lisa Simonyi to the National Air and Space Museum and accepts the gift.

## NOTABLE GIFTS AND GRANTS

In addition to gifts that require approval by the Board of Regents, the Committee had an opportunity to review and ask questions on the notable gifts and grants received since the January 2025 Committee meeting.

## OFFICE OF ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS AND INTERNSHIPS

Roshni Lal, Director of the Office of Academic Appointments and Internships, led a discussion on the Smithsonian's Institution-wide internship priorities including an overview on benchmarking, best practices, and fundraising goals. The Office of Academic Appointments and Internships ("OAAI") coordinates central management and administration for internships, fellowships, and research associates, throughout the Smithsonian's 21 museums, education and research centers, offices, and the Zoo. Dr. Lal outlined the mission of OAAI to facilitate comprehensive, intentional, and transformative internships and fellowships that inspire academic, career, and identity enlightenment on a global level. In 2024 OAAI facilitated 209 Smithsonian fellowships with individuals hailing from 31 states, the District of Columbia, and 37 countries; OAAI also facilitated 850 Smithsonian internships with individuals hailing from 46 states, the District of Columbia, one U.S. Territory, and 39 countries. Dr. Lal informed the Committee that OAAI is committed to offering all internships as paid experiences by the end of the Smithsonian Campaign for Our Shared Future, which will require both endowment fundraising and securing ongoing annual support. The Committee reviewed examples of funding strategies and potential donor opportunities, some of which would permit donors to allocate their gift to a specific discipline, geographic location, field of study, or preferred unit. The Committee agreed that fundraising would be essential to providing critical support to cultivate emerging scholars, advance innovative research, and sustain the Institution's role as a premier center for academic excellence.

## ADVANCEMENT UPDATE

Mr. Spiller first reported on the Smithsonian's fundraising progress for fiscal year 2025. As of March 31, 2025, the Smithsonian had raised \$232.4 million towards its \$315 million goal. Mr. Spiller informed the Committee that the Office of Advancement anticipates exceeding the FY2025 fundraising goal and attributed the success in part to an increase in leadership and principal gifts of \$1 million and above. The Committee also discussed recent notable gifts that illustrate the importance of long-term relationship building.

Next, Mr. Spiller updated the Committee on Campaign planning, reviewed the Campaign dashboard, and shared details on recent and upcoming Campaign events. As of March 31, 2025, the Smithsonian had raised \$2.29 billion towards its \$2.50 billion Campaign goal. Mr. Spiller noted the successful Campaign event the Smithsonian hosted in Houston, Texas in April. Campaign events are also being planned throughout the country, including Philadelphia and Boston. The Office of Advancement is also partnering with the Secretary on a new program entitled *Understanding America*, which will provide a lens into the country through a single topic such as laughter and leadership. This program will launch in Los Angeles at the Hammer Museum, on June 18. The program will travel around the country, stopping in New York and San Francisco later in 2025.

To conclude, Laura Gleason, Director of Campaign Strategy, provided an update on building and sustaining meaningful relationships with individuals capable of transformative philanthropy. The Committee undertook a robust discussion on programming events and fundraising opportunities, specifically inviting high-net-worth individuals to invest in initiatives that shape the future of science, culture, and the arts on a global scale through strategic engagement, curated experiences, and clear impact reporting. Ms. Gleason noted that this approach is highly personalized, rooted in shared values, and aligned with the Smithsonian's mission to promote discovery, education, and preservation. Ms. Gleason also reviewed the proposed dates and locations of upcoming cultivation events, including smaller events and salon dinners across the country in 2025 and 2026.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no request for an executive session and with no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Udvar-Hazy, Chair

#### **EMAIL BALLOT**

By email ballot completed on January 25, 2025, the Advancement Committee voted to recommend that the Board of Regents approve a motion accepting a gift for the National Air and Space Museum. At the request of the donor, the gift will not be publicly announced, and details will remain confidential. The gift required approval prior to the next scheduled Advancement Committee meeting to facilitate approval by the Board of Regents at its meeting on January 27, 2025.