



**2026 MAS Summer Council Meeting
27 July, 2026, 11:00-13:00 EDT, via Zoom**

Andrew Herzing	President 2024-2026
Assel Aitkaliyeva	President-Elect 2025-2026
Jordan Hachtel	Secretary 2026-2028
Dale Burns	Treasurer 2025-2026
Megan Holtz	Director 2024-2026
Jessica Riesterer	Director 2024-2026
Aurélien Moy	Director 2025-2027
Debangshu Mukherjee	Director 2025-2027
Andres Marquez Rossy	Director 2026-2028
Shize Yang	Director 2026-2028
Steve Seddio	Commercial Director 2023-2026
	M&M2026 Co-Chair
Thomas Lam	AReS 2024-2026
John Fournelle	Archivist since 2010
Brad De Gregorio	Awards since 2020
Josh Taillon	Computer Activities since 2024
Katherine Jungjohann	Education Committee Chair 2026-
Michelle Thompson	Goldstein Scholar Coordinator
Vin Smentkowski	Fellows since 2022
Rhonda Stroud	Finance since 2025
Heather Lowers	International Liaison since 2018
Emma Bullock	Membership since 2020
Joe Boro	Social Media since 2024
VACANT	Strategic Planning since 2023
Anette von der Handt	Topical Conferences since 2024
Ed Vicenzi	MAM Editorial Board

In attendance: Joe Boro, Steve Seddio, Andy Herzing, Assel Aitkaliyeva, Thomas Lam, Andres Marquez Rossy, Shize Yang, Debangshu Mukherjee, Will Nachlas, Dale Burns, Megan Holtz, Aurélien Moy, Brad De Gregorio, Jordan Hachtel

ACTION ITEMS

- **Andy Herzing:** Raise the outstanding questions about the proposed MSA direct-staffing model at the MSA Council meeting, including the effect on MAS, programming opportunities, IT costs, employer responsibilities, inclusion of additional M&M support staff, staff-retention risk, and support from the affected employees.
- **Andy Herzing (and all council):** Review the Spring Council Meeting minutes so that approval can be completed by email.
- **Andy Herzing:** Follow up with Katie about whether or not more mentors are needed and how they would volunteer.
- **Andy Herzing:** Distribute the Goldstein Scholars promotional poster for display at council members' institutions.
- **Andy Herzing:** Discuss with MSA at M&M opportunities for joint presentations and support for programs such as the Early Career Scholar initiative.
- **Brad De Gregorio:** Identify MAS-awards-related talks so they can be highlighted through social media.
- **Dale Burns:** Calculate whether the AReS budget requires additional funding based on the increased number of tour speakers and travel costs.
- **Dale Burns:** Finalize the 2025 M&M co-sponsorship payment.
- **Jordan Hachtel:** Contact SEMS to obtain photographs of the AReS tour speakers.
- **Jordan Hachtel:** Redistribute Meeting Minutes to enable further review
- **Steve Seddio:** Solicit prospective sustaining members on the M&M exhibit floor.
- **Will Nachlas:** Submit any remaining FIGMAS special-funding requests before the M&M Business Meeting.

1. Call to Order - Andy Herzing

- a. Andy called the meeting to order at 11:05 EDT.
- b. Andy noted that several committee reports had been received as slides and that some updates would be deferred to the M&M Business Meeting.

2. Approve Agenda - Andy Herzing

- a. The agenda was reviewed, with additions and discussion as needed.

3. Presidential Opening Remarks - Andy Herzing

- a. MSA Management Proposal (more details [here](#))
 - i. Andy presented MSA's review of its society-management staffing model.
 - ii. Current model: MSA contracts with an external management company for staffing and operational support.
 1. The arrangement provides approximately 1.5 full-time-equivalent positions across three staff members, plus approximately 0.7 FTE for marketing, administrative, and operational support.
 2. The primary staff members discussed were Ashley, Maeve, and Caitlin.
 - iii. Proposed direct-staffing model: MSA would employ the relevant staff directly, allowing their allocated time to be dedicated to MSA rather than divided among multiple clients.

1. Pros of the current model: No transition cost and continued operational continuity, and continued access to Virtual, Inc. infrastructure and broader organizational resources.
 2. Cons of the current model: Limited scalability and divided staff attention, higher annual cost (\$506,000)
 3. Pros of the proposed model: More committed staff time and stronger alignment with the society, with direct control over staffing decisions. Also, the retention of all hotel-commission and marketing revenue that is currently shared with Virtual, Inc. The cost would also be lower (\$503,000 in 2027 and \$458,000 from then on, plus additional revenue).
 4. Cons of the proposed model: MSA assuming direct employer responsibilities (hiring/firing/performance evaluation, promotion) and reduced access to the larger management company's resources. Also a one-time transition cost of \$170,000 to buy out workers.
- iv. Jordan asked how much influence MAS would have over the decision.
1. Andy explained that MAS would have a Council vote and that its views would be taken seriously.
- v. Andres supported the three primary staff members but noted that M&M there are many others, and whether they would be hired directly by MSA too and how their inclusion would affect the financial analysis.
1. Andy agreed to raise the question at the MSA Council meeting.
- vi. Joe asked about the operational risk if a direct employee left, noting that volunteers might then need to manage a rapid hiring process.
1. Andy agreed that staff turnover was a significant concern and would ask how MSA planned to mitigate it.
- vii. Joe also asked whether Ashley, Maeve, and Caitlin supported the proposed transition.
1. Andy said he would follow up. Andres reported that the staff members were strongly committed to the society and were the ones specifically requesting direct employment.
- viii. Debangshu asked about employment classification, travel reimbursement, benefits, and overhead costs.
1. Andy agreed to follow up.
- ix. Joe observed that approximately \$500,000 seemed low for three full-time employees with benefits.
1. Jordan noted that the current cost covers only a portion of their time and that the lower ongoing estimate therefore also seemed unexpectedly low.
 2. Andy presented a cost breakdown ([here](#)), but the discussion did not fully resolve how all benefit, overhead, and support costs were incorporated.
- x. Steve asked where the staff members lived so that regional cost-of-living differences could be considered.

1. Andres reported that Maeve lives in Northern Virginia, Ashley in Ohio, and Caitlin in Kansas City.
2. Andres said the salary assumptions had been reviewed with the three staff members and were consistent with their expectations, although he was unsure whether all other M&M support personnel were included in the estimate.
- xi. Council members generally agreed that direct hiring could benefit the staff and society, while emphasizing that the full cost-benefit analysis should be carefully vetted.
- xii. **ACTION ITEM:** Andy agreed to raise these questions at the MSA Council meeting on Saturday (August 1st 2026):
 1. How the proposed change would affect MAS?
 2. What additional programming opportunities MSA anticipates with the more dedicated staff time?
 3. How IT infrastructure costs would be handled?
 4. How MSA would manage its new employer responsibilities?

4. Secretary Report - Jordan Hachtel

- a. Andy had not yet reviewed the Spring Council Meeting minutes and requested time to do so before approval.
- b. Approval of the Spring minutes was tabled and will be completed by email.
- c. **ACTION ITEM:** Jordan agreed to re-distribute the Spring Council Meeting Minutes for further review.

5. FIGMAS Update - Will Nachlas

- a. Will presented a detailed update on FIGMAS purchases and activities supported by MAS funding since October 2025.
- b. He showed a storage chest that will house the individual specimens and their documentation so that the collection remains organized and accessible (in the event he is hit by a bus on his bike ride into work).
- c. Will emphasized the lack of suitable primary standards for calibration of chemical microanalysis measurements as the primary motivation of the work.
- d. Proof-of-concept work used MgO, MgAl₂O₄, and Al₂O₃ to evaluate consensus k-ratios.
 - i. Thirty laboratories received identical crystals and compared measurements of the same materials; the resulting interlaboratory k-ratios were reported in an M&M paper.
- e. The proposed solution is a universal standard mount paired with a curated consensus k-ratio database.
- f. Project goals include:
 - i. Identifying materials representing the 20 most abundant terrestrial cations and establishing universal k-ratios for each element.
 - ii. Preparing polished mounts for distribution.
 - iii. Curating a database for reporting experimental k-ratios.
- g. Will has produced 81 acrylic mounts with 41 specimen positions and is experimenting with centrifugation-based densification methods to form high-purity

crystal material that fits the mounts.

- h. Strategic Initiative Funding and Purchases
 - i. Will summarized the project expenditures and reported that the effort is slightly over budget because some crystals had to be purchased in large quantities and incurred import fees.
 - ii. KTP from Raicol: a rough-cut cube was purchased for approximately \$1,150.
 - iii. SiO₂ from NDK: Will visited the company's headquarters and observed the crystal-growth process. The project purchased N-grade material; substantially higher-grade material was available at roughly ten times the cost.
 - iv. AlPO₄ from Bruce Chai/Allied Photonics: approximately \$6,500 of legacy stock was purchased because the material is no longer routinely synthesized.
 - v. Mg₂SiO₄ from Oxide Corporation: the company supplied offcuts rather than production-grade crystals. Dale assisted with the purchase; at the time of the meeting, there was concern that the FedEx shipment might have been lost.
 - vi. Al₂O₃ and YVO₄ through Jim Harper Consulting: Jim's industry contacts have helped identify these and several other candidate materials.
 - vii. ZnS, CdS, and YIG were also sourced through Jim Harper.
 - viii. Additional materials included a gem-quality corundum boule and window for Al₂O₃ and spinel boules for MgAl₂O₄ from WorldGemsCompany.
 - ix. Specialized wet-chemical preparation will require a high-quality mortar and pestle and quartz glass beads to preserve material purity.
- i. Will reported that the project now has 21 crystal pairs toward its goal of covering the 20 most abundant cations.
- j. Next steps include:
 - i. Evaluating metals, existing crystal stocks, CVD oxides, and van der Waals materials.
 - ii. Purchasing ICP-OES measurements for Phase 2 crystals.
 - iii. Conducting single-crystal X-ray diffraction on Phase 2 crystals.
- k. Thomas suggested that a FIGMAS representative present at AReS or participate in an AReS round robin.
 - i. Will was receptive but noted that a presentation would be more useful closer to the project's concluding stage, when materials are ready for distribution.
 - ii. Will stated his M&M presentation on the project was scheduled for Monday.
- l. Jordan suggested using national user facilities and rapid-access proposal mechanisms for additional analysis.
 - i. Will said he was already in contact with NIST researchers and would explore opportunities at other NSRCs.
- m. Andy asked that any additional special-funding requests be submitted before the Business Meeting so that a complete budget could be presented to the membership.
 - i. Will did not anticipate additional immediate requests but agreed to confirm before the meeting.
 - ii. **ACTION ITEM:** Will will confirm with Andy whether or not there are any additional special requests for FIGMAS
- n. Dale asked whether FIGMAS would require more than the currently discussed

\$10,000.

- i. Will said additional resources would be useful, but that the long-term goal is to secure a larger grant from an institution like the NSF supporting a more aggressive effort.

6. Treasurer's Report - Dale Burns

- a. Dale presented the Treasurer's report ([here](#))
- b. Dale reported that the budget had changed little since the Spring Council Meeting.
- c. Budget
 - i. Three of four corporate sponsors had been contacted and had either paid or were in the process of paying.
 - ii. Will planned to follow up with Cameca at M&M.
 - iii. New costs came from regional-conference reimbursements that were being processed, and M&M expenses were expected soon.
- d. Balance Sheet and AReS
 - i. Dale reported that AReS expenditures were approximately 10% over budget, in part because travel expenses delayed from prior years had finally posted.
 - ii. Andy asked whether the remaining budget was sufficient given the larger number of tour speakers and higher travel costs.
 - 1. **ACTION ITEM:** Dale will perform a quick calculation to determine whether additional AReS funding is required.
- e. Dale said he will prepare for M&M and finalize the 2025 M&M co-sponsorship payment.
 - i. **ACTION ITEM:** Dale will finalize the 2025 M&M Co-Sponsorship payment

7. Finance - Rhonda Stroud

- a. Rhonda was not in attendance. She reported by email that there were no updates for this meeting.
- b. A finance update will be prepared for M&M, although Rhonda will not be available to present it; Andy or another Finance Committee member will provide the report.

8. M&M Journal Representative - Ed Vicenzi

- a. Ed was not in attendance and provided no update.

9. Membership - Emma Bullock

- a. Emma was not in attendance but provided update slides ([here](#))
- b. The previously reported membership-count discrepancy was corrected.
 - i. The Winter Meeting total had been inflated because members whose memberships expired in 2025 were still being counted.
 - ii. Under the new system, conference registrants must activate their membership after registration.
 - iii. Virtual, Inc. is establishing a process to prompt registrants to complete activation. They can activate memberships manually but prefer not to.
- c. Current membership totals are in line with previous years.
- d. The new-member list was circulated and approved by email.
- e. Thomas suggested that Delmic may be interested in becoming a sustaining member and recommended that MAS go to their booth at M&M.

10. Education - Katherine Jungjohann

- a. Katie was not in attendance and did not present an update
- b. Andy mentioned that he wasn't sure if they had enough volunteers for Mentors for MwaM so he would follow up to verify.
- c. **ACTION ITEM:** Andy will follow up with Katie about the numbers of mentors and mentees, and if there is a need for more.

11. Goldstein Scholars - Michelle Thompson

- a. Michelle was not in attendance and will not attend M&M, but she provided slides for the update ([here](#)).
- b. She has made substantial progress re-establishing the program, including bringing two new participants into the process.
- c. Michelle asked Council members to advertise the program at their institutions.
 - i. **ACTION ITEM:** Andy will distribute the promotional poster for display at Council members' institutions.

12. Awards - Brad De Gregorio

- a. Brad reported that the award plaques and cooling towels had been sent to the advance warehouse.
- b. He is preparing poster-judging scorecards for the MAS booth and an online voting form.
 - i. Only 20 posters require judging.
 - ii. The previous year included two student awards and two Creative Canvas awards. With only three Creative Canvas applicants this year, Brad recommended presenting one Creative Canvas award.
- c. Brad asked who would print the booth posters.
 - i. Andy agreed to print the Goldstein Scholars, Fellows, AReS, and Awards posters.
- d. Andy asked whether award-related talks could be highlighted on social media.
 - i. **ACTION ITEM:** Brad will identify the relevant talks for social-media promotion.

13. Fellows - Vin Smentkowski

- a. Vin was not in attendance and did not have any updates.
- b. Andy reminded council members on Vin's behalf to submit nominations for future Fellows.

14. AReS - Thomas Lam

- a. Thomas had prepared slides but recommended saving the detailed update for the Business Meeting.
- b. The AReS poster was complete. Thomas said that future speaker requests would more clearly ask for photographs suitable for promotion.
- c. **ACTION ITEM:** Jordan will contact SEMS to obtain photographs of the tour speakers.

15. Computer Activities - Josh Taillon

- a. Josh was not in attendance and did not provide any updates.

16. Social Media - Joe Boro

- a. Joe previewed the social-media update prepared for the Business Meeting.
- b. Four sticker designs were selected for the year, and noted that the per-sticker cost

- had actually decreased.
- c. MAS gained approximately 200 new followers during the year, compared with approximately 20 the previous year.
 - i. Joe showed the timelines of followers joining and noted that there were strong peaks at M&M 2025 and EUMAS, that he attributed to sticker distribution, and that there were very few un-follows afterwards.
 - d. Joe demonstrated the MAS Postmaker, a tool he developed to support recurring society posts.
 - i. The tool will create a monthly queue of papers using AI-assisted and heuristic selection methods.
 - ii. It can process an uploaded PDF and quickly generate table-of-contents graphics and other post assets.
 - iii. The planned content mix includes new publications, historical material, and other notable society content.
 - iv. He also said this was a tool that could eventually be distributed to MAS membership.
 - e. Joe noted that younger audiences increasingly use social media for content consumption rather than direct interaction and that concise, short-form videos may therefore be especially valuable.
 - f. He would eventually like to integrate the tool with the MAS website; estimated hosting costs would be less than \$50 per month.
 - g. Jordan suggested inviting members and users to submit short videos to increase engagement.

17. Nominations - Assel Aitkaliyeva

- a. Assel presented the slate of candidates for Director and Vin Smentkowski as the candidate for President-Elect.
- b. The Strategic Planning/Initiatives Chair position remains open, and no nominations had been received.
- c. Emma verified the eligibility of all candidates.
- d. Jordan moved to accept the nominations.
 - i. Dale seconded the motion.
 - ii. The nominations were accepted by unanimous voice vote.

18. International - Heather Lowers

- a. Heather was not in attendance and did not provide any updates.
- b. Andy reported that an Early Career Scholar candidate had been denied a visa and that organizers were working to arrange a virtual presentation.
- c. The presidents of EMAS and AMAS were unable to attend M&M, but a member of the EMAS Executive Council was expected to participate.

19. Topical Conferences - Anette von der Handt

- a. Anette was not in attendance and did not provide any updates.

20. M&M 2026 Update - Andy Herzing

- a. Andy presented the M&M 2026 Update ([here](#))
- b. Andy reported that there were few major changes and previewed the slides prepared for the Business Meeting.

- c. Registration was lower than the previous year.
 - i. Andy hoped that the International Microscopy Congress in Liverpool was the major factor.
 - ii. Visa difficulties may also have affected attendance; at least one Early Career Scholar was known to have been unable to travel.
- d. Steve suggested coordinating more closely with MSA on future presentations and seeking MSA support for programs such as the Early Career Scholar initiative.
 - i. **ACTION ITEM:** Andy will discuss these opportunities with MSA representatives at M&M.
- e. Andy reported that the social-event budget had sufficient room to add dessert options.

21. Sustaining Members - Steve Seddio

- a. Steve had ordered and received the sustaining-member appreciation plaques.
- b. **ACTION ITEM:** Steve will solicit prospective sustaining members on the M&M exhibit floor.

22. Next Meetings

- a. MAS Business Meeting at M&M.
- b. Fall Council Meeting in October.

23. Adjourn

- a. Jordan moved to adjourn the meeting.
 - i. Thomas seconded the motion.
 - ii. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 12:42 EDT.