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Winterthur Conference - June 15 and 16, 1973

GENERAL COMMENT

From reading a few of the replies to agenda questions, and from recent discussions at the AIC meeting in Kansas City, there appears to be a consensus that the training programs (those now operating and the planned Winterthur program) as a whole could be greater than the sum of the parts if a means can be devised to recognize and develop the special strengths of each program and to help organize the exchange or rotation of students among the individual programs. The need for "a central reference point," "an established arrangement of interchange," and for "long-range careful planning on a national and perhaps international level" have been specifically mentioned. No one of the existing training organizations can undertake to plan for the others.

To provide a forum for coordinated planning and voluntary cooperation, it is recommended that an advisory board (or Institute) be created by agreement among the concerned organizations.

To insure a direct relationship to existing efforts on the national and international level, the membership of this board should

include, but not be limited to, those members of the International Centre Committee of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation which have a major interest in museum conservation. The expenses of meetings and the modest staff required to make the work of this board effective could appropriately be proposed for funding under the National Museum Act.

The planning and advisory functions of this board should not be limited to the initial training of conservators. In the long run, the board's agenda should perhaps include consideration of priorities, feasibility, and funding in at least the following related areas:

1. Training of practical conservators and scientists, conservation technicians, and advanced training in specialized areas for practicing conservators.
2. Promotion and coordination of research.
3. Diffusion of knowledge through strengthening existing programs and developing a data storage and retrieval system for current information on conservation research, practices, and materials.

Each of these areas has an international dimension, and a relationship to parallel efforts in the field of historic preserva-

tion. Many will require special studies. The board's function would be to recommend such studies and comment on the results as part of its general function to provide an orderly approach to the overwhelming problems of museum conservation.

Peter G. Powers

June 14, 1973