

## SAA Leadership Forum 2013 - Alison Stankrauff's Portion

The particular challenge you faced during your time as Chair of the Society of American Archivists College and University Archives Section can be termed as:

### **‘What I Learned NOT to Do’/Trial by Fire**

I’ll first speak about our recent election in June of this year.

Speaking bravely here:

We/I wasn’t planning ahead and/or staying on time like we should have been as a Section – nor I as C&U Chair.

I realized – when prompted – or rather jolted – by the announcements from Nancy Beaumont of SAA – that elections for all SAA Sections and Roundtables should be approaching, and to notify SAA of the results from each body, etc.

I’ve been a Roundtable Chair previously: of both the Issues and Advocacy Roundtable (2010 to 2012) and of the Lone Arrangers Roundtable (2008 to 2010). And Vice-Chair of the Records Management Section (2007 to 2008). Each time in these leadership positions, I did not experience any hiccup of any sort getting an election for the respective bodies together, and done in time. SO: I don’t pretend to have an excuse!

So: How did I surmount this challenge?! With much communication and good collaboration between myself, my excellent Vice-Chair (and now incoming Chair of the Section) Rachel Vagts of Luther College and the Nominating Committee, Ellen Engseth of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Bergis Jules, George Washington University.

Together we discussed, in rapid fire motion, viable candidates for the C&U slate – particularly keeping in mind just how important diversity of location, type of college and/or university (public vs. private, religious vs. secular, etc.), and demographic specificities of the candidates (ethnicity, gender) are for a balanced slate.

Ellen and Bergis literally ‘beat the bush’ to flush out potential candidates for the slate – all the while keeping myself and Rachel apprised of their successes – or when potential candidates turned them down.

In short fashion – despite these obstacles – we were able to run a successful election online. As a result, the SAA College and University Section leadership roster is full, replete, and ready for the coming 2013 to 2014 year.

There have been a couple of items that have proven to be good tests of my mettle as Chair of the C&U Section. One is our Section's contribution to updating the Guidelines for College and University Archives portion of the SAA Standards Portal. Prior to the 2012 annual meeting, these Guidelines had not been updated – or approved by SAA Council – since August 1999. These Guidelines: “Discuss the definition of college and university archives, as well as the administrative relationships, records management, core archival functions, facilities and equipment, and supporting services involved.” Working with Standards Committee member (and C&U member), Tom Sommer, we were able to get enough feedback from the Section membership to add content – and get these changes and additions updated by SAA Council in November. They are now online.

One other thing that was a challenge for me in my time as Chair of the C&U Section was an initiative of the Newsletter and Website Committee. This Committee produced a survey, which was distributed to the C&U membership directly before the 2012 annual meeting, and spearheaded by Newsletter and Website Committee Chair Michelle Sweetser. The purpose of the survey was to poll membership to see just what they want to see in both the newsletter and in the website content. And also just how they want to receive it (electronically via which formats, etc.). We – frankly – had a hard time getting hearty response from the Section membership. Also, the responses that we did get were, as they say, ‘all over the board’ – meaning some wanted their Section news and content in various – and different – electronic formats, either delivered to them – or just something they could access when they wanted to. Also, some still seemed to prefer receiving such content in hard copy!

### **My Take-Aways as a Leader?**

That I should not – even though I'd ‘done’ SAA elections previously as a Section and Roundtable Chair, Vice-Chair, Steering Committee member – feel that I've got the processes ‘in the bag’. That it's essential to stay on top of things in my own operations – and my own schedule!

And the power and value of great and close communication between the other leaders in the team. With that under my wing, this was able to fly very quickly and efficiently.

At the risk of sounding negative about my tenure as Chair of the College and University Archives Section: these are but ‘hiccups’ of the year to date for the C&U Section. Otherwise it's been an extremely smooth and successful year. And I've been honored to serve as C&U Chair!