

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
January 25 - 27, 2012
Chicago, Illinois**

**Action: Petition to Form Students and New Archives
Professionals (SNAP) Roundtable
(Submitted by: SAA Member Rebecca Goldman)**

A request to form a Students and New Archives Professionals (SNAP) Roundtable was submitted via email by SAA member Rebecca Goldman on December 21, 2011. Nancy Beaumont confirmed on December 22 that the requisite 50 member signatures were received electronically. Goldman also stated her willingness to lead the SNAP Roundtable's first meeting at the 2012 Annual Meeting, per the requirement that states: "Someone who is willing to run the first meeting of the Roundtable (usually the person preparing the petition) must also be identified."¹ The proposal, including Statement of Purpose, Goals, and Statement of Need, follows.

Statement of Purpose

The Students and New Archives Professionals (SNAP) Roundtable will advocate for and address the needs of new archivists within SAA and the archival profession.

Examples of new archivists include (but are not limited to):

Current graduate students in archives programs

- Archivists still searching for their first professional position;
- Archivists currently in their first professional position;
- Archivists with less than 5 years of full-time (or equivalent) professional experience;
- Related professionals, such as librarians and records managers, who are interested in becoming archivists or have recently taken on archival responsibilities.

While SNAP will encourage people who identify as new archivists to take on leadership roles within the roundtable, we hope that others with an interest in the needs of new archivists, such as archival educators and internship supervisors, will join and participate in the group.

¹ Staff note: As of January 4, 2012, SAA Headquarters (saahq@archivists.org) received 102 member signatures verified by SAA staff. Staff also verified the petition as complete, fulfilling all requirements for forming a new roundtable.

Although many new archivists are also new SAA members, we want to clarify that this group is not a new members roundtable. Our goal is to support new archivists whether or not they are new SAA members, and experienced professionals who are new to SAA have very different needs from archivists who are new to the profession. This group is also not specifically for young archivists. New archivists of any age will be welcome and encouraged to join.

Goals

1. Advocate for students, interns, new professionals, early-career project archivists, and archivists who are still looking for their first professional jobs. Provide a forum for new archivists to share their concerns and learn from each other. Promote awareness of the needs of new archivists within SAA and the archival profession. Raise the visibility of new archivists within SAA and the skills and expertise we bring to the profession.
2. Provide a formal channel for representing the needs of new archivists on issues that affect new archivists, such as dues increases, participation in the Annual Meeting, policies on educational standards, and employment opportunities and compensation.
3. Bridge the gap between participation in SAA student chapters and participation in SAA. Help new archivists to move from leadership positions within SAA student chapters into leadership positions within SAA sections and roundtables.
4. Facilitate and encourage remote participation in the group through social media and other online resources. Provide a model for other SAA sections and roundtables for successfully engaging members online.
5. Support new archivists as they begin their archival careers and as they move from entry-level positions into mid-career or managerial positions. This can be accomplished through mentoring, facilitating networking, and making recommendations to the Education Committee for relevant training and workshops. The roundtable will coordinate with SAA sections and roundtables, as well as external organizations, to support new archivists and promote relevant services to its members.

Statement of Need

At the 2011 business meeting at the Annual Meeting, SAA announced that 27% of its members are students. Add to that the number of members who are new professionals or still looking for their first professional job, and the proportion of new archivists among SAA's membership represents a significant constituency. Yet SAA does not have a group to directly address the needs of the newest members of our profession.

New archivists face many challenges as they enter the profession. They may not yet have specialized interests in the field that are addressed by existing sections and roundtables. Many cannot afford to attend SAA's annual meeting or workshops. Many new professionals don't yet have a wide network of connections they can draw upon to help with advice about issues relating to practice as well as help finding jobs. Some new

archivists are also professionally or geographically isolated, making it difficult for them to find peers they can talk to about their problems.

While SAA as a whole and many of its members want to help new archivists as they transition in their careers, without a formal communication channel it can be hard to get information to and from new archivists. Navigating among SAA's many groups and opportunities can also be challenging, and some new archivists may be reluctant to participate in the community or unsure about how to fully utilize the resources available to them. New archivists are also often unaware of relevant programs and resources offered by SAA sections and roundtables.

Several peer professional associations in archival and allied fields have already formed subgroups for new professionals. These groups provide a valuable arena for networking, supporting career development, transitioning members to leadership roles in the organization, and providing a forum to discuss relevant issues. Examples include:

- Archives & Records Association, UK & Ireland (ARA), New Professionals group;
- American Library Association (ALA), New Members Roundtable;
- American Association of Museum (AAM), Emerging Museum Professionals group;
- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), New Members Discussion Group

As part of the process of preparing this petition, we established a blog (<http://newarchivistsroundtable.wordpress.com>) to solicit feedback from prospective members. Comments on the blog revealed broad interest in a roundtable for new archivists, from both new and experienced archivists. These commenters cited the difficulty of getting involved in SAA as a new archivist, the desire for programs and services tailored to new archivists, and the perception that SAA could do more to meet the needs of students and new professionals.

Our efforts to include as many archivists as possible in preparing this petition will ensure that the SNAP Roundtable has a large and active membership from the beginning. Although this petition is being submitted by one person, the process of preparing it has been a group effort that involved archivists at all stages of their careers. Since the roundtable planning blog was started in July 2011, it has received over 100 comments. The petition itself, which began as a Google Doc that anyone could read and comment on, received 40 comments from at least 15 different people during the week that it was open for editing. We have a demonstrated need for this roundtable and a demonstrated desire to get it started. Please help us make SAA an organization that is responsive to the needs of all its members.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the SAA Council approve the petition to form a Students and New Archives Professionals (SNAP) Roundtable with the following Statement of Intent and Goals:

Statement of Intent

The Students and New Archives Professionals (SNAP) Roundtable will advocate for and address the needs of new archivists within SAA and the archives profession.

Goals

- 1. Advocate for students, interns, new professionals, early-career project archivists, and archivists who are still looking for their first professional jobs. Provide a forum for new archivists to share their concerns and learn from each other. Promote awareness of the needs of new archivists within SAA and the archives profession. Raise the visibility of new archivists within SAA and the skills and expertise we bring to the profession.**
- 2. Provide a formal channel for representing the needs of new archivists on issues that affect new archivists, such as dues increases, participation in the Annual Meeting, policies on educational standards, and employment opportunities and compensation.**
- 3. Bridge the gap between participation in SAA student chapters and participation in SAA. Help new archivists to move from leadership positions within SAA student chapters into leadership positions within SAA sections and roundtables.**
- 4. Facilitate and encourage remote participation in the group through social media and other online resources. Provide a model for other SAA sections and roundtables for successfully engaging members online.**
- 5. Support new archivists as they begin their archival careers and as they move from entry-level positions into mid-career or managerial positions. This can be accomplished through mentoring, facilitating networking, and making recommendations to the Committee on Education for relevant training and workshops. The roundtable will coordinate with SAA sections and roundtables, as well as external organizations, to support new archivists and promote relevant services to its members.**

Support Statement: The roundtable petition meets all submission requirements for Council consideration in approving a new SAA roundtable.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: The work of the proposed roundtable would assist in achieving the following strategic priorities:

- Technology, Desired Outcome #1:** We hope to work with the Committee on Education to recommend education and training to meet the needs of students and new professionals. Since many of our prospective members will be new professionals or job seekers, we are sensitive to the evolving technology skills required of archivists in the current job market.

- **Technology, Desired Outcome #3:** Our blog has demonstrated how social media can be successfully used to engage SAA members, and we plan to explore new technologies to engage members who are unable to attend the Annual Meeting.
- **Diversity, Desired Outcome #1:** As new and aspiring professionals, we are in an excellent position to recommend how an expanded Mosaic scholarship program could attract and serve prospective archivists. The proposed roundtable itself would also be another method for SAA to help support Mosaic scholarship recipients.

Fiscal Impact: Dedicated meeting space at the Annual Meeting going forward.