

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

**Annual Report: Cultural Property Working Group  
(Prepared by Co-Chairs Jeannette Bastian and Marisol Ramos)**

**Officers:** Jeannette Bastian, Co-Chair  
Marisol Ramos, Co-Chair

**Members:**

Banks	Elizabeth	National Park Service
Calahan	Lisa	The Black Metropolis Research Consortium
Krebs	Allison	University of Washington
Leopold	Robert	Smithsonian Institution
Mooney	Philip	The Coca-Cola Company
Nguyen	Lisa	Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University
O'Neal	Jennifer	Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American Indian
Thibodeau	Sharon	
White	Kelvin	University of Oklahoma
McCrea	Donna	University of Montana (Council Liaison)

**Report from Annual Meeting:** Number of attendees: 15, including the 9 working group members.

Election results: N/A.

Summary of meeting activities: The Cultural Property Working Group (CPWG) had its second face-to-face meeting at Chicago 2011 in August and one meeting via conference call in April 2011.

The meeting covered the following issues:

- Introduction of co-chair; governance of the Working Group: Marisol Ramos was introduced as the co-chair, with Jeannette Bastian, of CPWG.
- Jeannette discussed establishing a governing structure for the CWPG that included rotating co-chairs with differential year appointments for the membership, i.e., 2-year and 3-year appointments. Robert and Sharon recommended 2-year appointments. Membership should include representatives from specific Roundtables. The Roundtables include: Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage, Archivists

and Archives of Color, Native American Archives, Human Right Archives, and NARA (government) – informal recommendation.

- Review of the past year: Assessment/viability of current project on Culturally Sensitive and Archival practices
  - Recap of last year’ activities primarily revolving around the Cultural Sensitivity framework developed by Kelvin White (posted on the CPWG wiki) and the efforts of Working Group members to match core archival activities to the framework. Marisol presented the efforts of the Access group in conceptualizing Access in terms of the framework and other members of the Working Group discussed the difficulties they had encountered. Discussion turned to whether this exercise was something that the Working Group should be doing at this time or whether there were some other steps that needed to be done first. The group concluded that there needed to be preliminary steps to creating a cultural sensitivity framework for core archival activities. These steps might include developing case studies and scenarios, possibly case studies that specifically addresses sections of the framework, i.e. preservation, appraisal. Other types of research were also suggested including a more extensive bibliography. Members agreed that many institutions were facing cultural sensitivity issues but were also often working in a vacuum.
- Goals for next year
  - Developing a set of principles around Cultural Sensitivity: This project is on hold for the moment.
  - Cases Studies
    - Marisol Ramos, Lisa Nguyen and Lisa Callahan volunteered to add to the CPWG’s wiki three cases studies on.
      - Lisa Nguyen: Ownership/ stewardship/custody
      - Marisol Ramos: Access, acquisition, provenance
      - Lisa Callahan: Donor relations
    - Deadline: May 2012
- At noon, members of CPWG and IPWG met to discuss ways to collaborate since there are overlaps between the two working groups’ charges.
  - It was decided during the meeting to try to put together a panel for the 2012 annual meeting in San Diego on cultural property, intellectual property and privacy using as a case study UConn’s experience with the Puerto Rican Civil Court Legal Documents.
    - Unfortunately we were unable to find speakers for this panel. It was decided to try again for the SAA Annual Meeting in 2013.

**Report of activities after Business Meeting:** Over the past several months, Marisol Ramos and Jeannette Bastian, CPWG co-chairs, have been engaged in discussions with SAA President Gregor Trinkaus-Randall and with CPWG Council liaison Donna McCrea about creating a more detailed charge for this Working Group.

We felt that the ambiguity of the CPWG charge was making it difficult to move forward with some of the ideas we have all discussed at our meetings. We specifically requested that the charge be expanded to include wording that more closely mandated designing

and proposing a cultural sensitivity framework.

As the discussions progressed things began to seem less clear, in particular when Donna, going through a couple of recent years of Council minutes, found that a number of Council-proposed actions had been assigned to CPWG but no one had informed us. Some of these involved the American Library Association's Traditional Cultural Expressions as well as objectives under SAA's Diversity Strategic Priority.

At this point, the CPWG co-chairs have requested that the Council revisit the formation of this Working Group (see 0112 Agenda Item III.F.), decide what outcomes it would like the Working Group to work towards, and based on these outcomes decide whether we should be a Working Group or a Task Force. We also asked the Council to reconsider the need for the Working Group in light of other overlapping SAA groups. Donna will be leading the discussion on the request at the next Council meeting in January 2012.

**Completed Projects/Activities:** None.

**Ongoing Projects/Activities:**

- Selected Bibliography of cultural property literature available in CPWG wiki (ongoing)
- Adding three (3) Case studies to CPWG wiki (deadline May 2012)
- Development of a set of culturally sensitive best practices for archives. (On hold, under review.)

**Questions/Concerns for Council Attention:** See 0112 Agenda Item III.F. We require better communication with the Council. The fact that tasks regarding Diversity issues were assigned to CPWG and placed in the SAA strategic planning document without notifying the chairs and, that most recently in the Nov/Dec 2011 *Outlook* issue, CPWG was asked to comment on the International Council on Archives Access to Archives document, but we were never informed directly, is a big issue that is affecting the effectiveness of this Working Group to do its job.