

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
January 23 – 26, 2013
Chicago, Illinois**

**Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct
Annual Report for 2012
(Prepared by: Phil Eppard, CEPC chair)**

With the approval by the Council of the revised Code of Ethics in January 2012, CEPC has begun planning for a series of ethics case studies that will serve as teaching tools to enable SAA members to better understand the Code and thoughtfully apply its principles. Discussion at our annual meeting in San Diego focused almost entirely on how to go about developing such case studies. The following principles were agreed upon:

- While recognizing the value of Karen Benedict's *Ethics and the Archival Profession*, we felt that it should not be updated and that an entirely new initiative was called for.
- The Benedict book should be digitized and made available through the HATHI Trust.
- Case studies should ideally be based on real situations that can be anonymized, rather than imagined ethical dilemmas.
- Case studies should be freely available online.
- Presentation of case studies should *not* include a definitive answer to the ethical problem in the case.
- CEPC will develop a template to guide individuals interested in writing a case study.
- There should be at least one case study for each section in the Code of Ethics.

Phil Eppard and Tim Pyatt met with the Publications Board the day after the CEPC meeting in August to discuss roles and responsibilities in preparation of the series of case studies. The Publications Board was supportive of CEPC's approach. It was agreed that CEPC would serve as an editorial board for the case studies, but that designated Publications Board members would also do a final vetting of the studies. The case studies

would be treated as “official SAA publications” and be available online, probably as PDFs.

The major area of uncertainty revolved around the proposal that comments could be made on the published case studies and that CEPC would monitor these comments. It was felt that this might be a difficult process for the Committee to manage, but a trial comment period should be experimented with to judge how difficult managing comments would be.

Progress on developing the template for preparing case studies has been slow since the annual meeting, but we are looking at existing models, including the Harvard Business School case studies. The goal is to work electronically to finalize the template over the next two months so that a formal call for case studies can be made by March.

Attached: 2012 Annual Meeting Minutes

Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct

SAA Annual Meeting, San Diego

August 7, 2012, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

San Diego Hilton Bayfront, Aqua 307

In attendance: Tim Pyatt, Phil Eppard, Tiffany Schureman, Elena Danielson,
Marc Brodsky, Sharon Silengo, Bill Landis

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Welcomed and introduced new members of CEPC – Tiffany Schureman, Sharon Silengo, and Marc Brodsky
- b. Thank you to outgoing members – Elena Danielson and Roger Meyers
- c. Introduced new CEPC chair – Phil Eppard

2. 2011 Minutes approved with changes – no one noted who was in attendance last year – Attendance at the 2011 meeting was – Elena Danielson, Phil Eppard, Tim Pyatt, Bill Landis, Tom Hyry, Nancy Beaumont, Robert Leopold, Jean Green, Nancy Freeman, Roger Meyers, and a guest whose name was not recorded

3. Report from SAA Council Liaison Bill Landis

Bill reported that Section E of the Uniform Guidelines was revised regarding the Social Media policy. Groups no longer have to get approval to be active in social media, such as blogs, Facebook or Twitter, but should notify SAA of the presence. He noted that the Advocacy Agenda has been posted online. The Standards Committee met and has endorsed ISO 16363 as an SAA Standard. There were also changes to the Governance Manual regarding representatives to other groups. The newly formed SNAP Roundtable has asked the Council to look at the SAA fees. There are now job descriptions for SAA officers so people know what is expected of them if they are elected to office. SAA had a profit last year of approximately \$14,000. Council had previously agreed that if there was a profit of over \$10,000 then it would go to the Technology Fund. This will help finish out the website and get us new membership software. He encouraged us to use our Drupal site.

Tim mentioned the recent complaint against the Atlanta History Center. After Nancy Beaumont reached out to them the researcher received his requested copies. Tim reminded us that CEPC and SAA do not enforce ethical and professional conduct; rather we establish guidelines and models for the profession.

4. Revision to Code of Ethics (approved January 2012)

Tim thanked Bill and Tom for getting it through the Council. Elena helped get it linked with the Core Values. Bill pointed out that the new Code was printed on pages 40 and 41 in the SAA 2012 Onsite Program. Someone had requested the old Codes be posted online, but it was decided we did not want that. They can look at the old Code in the SAA Archives. Elena said she would submit the new Code to a website that collects Codes of Ethics.

5. New Business

a. Ethics Case Studies

Tim and Phil are to meet with the Publications Board tomorrow (August 8) to discuss this project. Notes from the meeting are included as an appendix.

We then discussed *Ethics and the Archival Profession: Introduction and Case Studies* by Karen Benedict (referred to as the Benedict book). Several decisions came out of the discussion. The book should not be updated. We should have case studies available online. The case studies should be real case studies that can be anonymized. The case studies should not give a definitive answer to the case. We will allow comments to be made and monitor them. The Benedict book should be digitized and included with other out-of-print SAA titles made available through the HATHI Trust. We will come up with a submission template for the case studies. There should be at least one for each point in the Code at first.

We also discussed how we would be involved in the review process and how the Publications Board would handle this. Suggestions to the Publications Board would be that we are the reviewers and they would have input. We would like this to be a peer-reviewed publication.

b. CEPC Structure

Currently the appointment structure for the chair does not mirror how other committees manage chair appointments (although there are inconsistencies with other groups as well). Bill suggested that we wait until next year to recommend any changes because the Council is looking at the structure of all committees and may make changes. We decided we will wait.

6. New Business

CEPC would like to thank Tim Pyatt for assisting getting the new Code of Ethics to pass.

7. Adjournment

ADDENDA

Publications Board meeting with CEPC chairs 8/8/12

Tim Pyatt and Phil Eppard met with the Publications Board to discuss the proposed CEPC project to create case studies to accompany the revised Code of Ethics. The following actions and ideas were discussed:

1. It was agreed not to reuse portions of the Benedict book. It will be made available to the HATHI Trust and be placed "as is" online.
2. CEPC will solicit "real" case studies to complement the Code; in some cases names and institutions may have to be anonymized. Creating case studies based on real events by archivists not involved with the case (i.e., an archivist analyzing the public reports about the MLK Jr. papers and writing on the ethical aspects) would also be acceptable.
3. CEPC would serve as the editorial body for the case studies but also run content through "to be determined" Publications Board members for final vetting.
4. CEPC will create a template as well as create and/or solicit initial case studies that can be used as examples by other authors. Ideally CEPC will have seven cases related to various sections of the Code as a starter.
5. Publication model: CEPC would like the case studies to be "official SAA publications"; that was agreeable to the Publications Board. The model could be a cross between Campus Case Studies (PDFs) and the Interactive Archivist (WordPress blog). Tim and Phil leaned towards PDFs
6. Ability to comment on case studies -- there was some interest in having that as an option. Monitoring comments would be a challenge for a small committee like CEPC. Teresa Brinati suggested perhaps a trial period for comments to see how it worked.
7. Copy editing of case studies: would be done internally; unclear who would actually do that work.

Next steps: CEPC creates template and shares with Publications Board; will also start to solicit initial case studies to populate the site.