

**Society of American Archivists
Council Conference Call
January 16, 2015
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm EST**

**External Representative Report:
International Council on Archives
Section of Professional Associations (SPA)
(Prepared by Becky Haglund Tousey, CA)**

The International Council on Archives' (ICA) Section of Professional Associations (SPA) Bureau (previously known as steering committee) met in Girona, Spain, on Sunday, October 12, 2014. I attended as a representative of both the Society of American Archivists and the Academy of Certified Archivists.

Other SPA Bureau members present were from Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Switzerland, Israel, Poland, France, Norway, and Spain. Those country associations not sending a Bureau representative were Mexico, Brazil, Korea, and China.

BACKGROUND

In June 2014 I was appointed by SAA to be its representative on ICA's Section of Professional Associations. SAA's previous representative to SPA was Gregor Trinkaus-Randall. I met with Gregor in August at the Joint Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. Gregor was very gracious in sharing his insights and observations from his time serving in this role.

In terms of membership, SAA is presumably the largest of the SPA's 80 member associations and is looked to as a leader among national professional associations. In addition to attending the SPA Bureau meeting, the SPA full membership meeting, and the ICA General Assembly, I also attended the Executive Committee meeting representing ICA's Section on Business Archives.

SPA BUREAU (formerly Steering Committee) MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

This was the shorter of the two yearly meetings of the SPA Bureau. Most of this meeting dealt with governance issues and reports from the Section chair. The next 2-day Bureau meeting will be held in May 2015 in Warsaw, Poland.

Organizationally ICA Sections now fall under the Programme Commission (PComm). In order to fund their activities, Sections must submit written budget requests to PComm. And PComm funds can be used for programmatic activities only, not for governance

meetings. This recent change in how Sections are funded, moving from a fixed annual allocation to submitting a budget request for specific programmatic activities, is one part of broader budget and governance changes being made by ICA's Executive Committee in order to improve the overall fiscal health of the organization. The result is that Sections no longer have the fiscal autonomy they once did.

This was the first year of the new funds-by-petition process where Section leaders submitted budget proposals to PComm. This new process needs improvement, particularly its timetable. Sections had to submit their 2015 budget requests in September, before the ICA meeting in Girona. So Section leaders had to make decisions about what program funds would be needed in 2015 with very little discussion and input from their membership. And related to this change, Section chairs are asking for more of a voice on the PComm board in order to have input into this and other PComm processes which directly affect the Sections.

The 80+ associations represented by SPA are Category B members in ICA. Members of these associations cut across all strands of the profession and are able to comment more freely about the impact of government policies on archives than are their counterparts working in national or other government archives. Thanks to these factors, SPA is able to make cross-cutting contributions within ICA on issues such as advocacy, professional competency, and the Universal Declaration on Archives.

As its primary deliverable in 2014, SPA produced an *Advocacy* brochure, available in both English and French. A limited number of paper copies were produced and distributed to attendees at the Girona annual meeting. A printable PDF version will be available on the ICA/SPA website soon. Advocacy is a strong strategic focus not just for SPA but across all of ICA, something that ICA has in common with SAA.

The day following the SPA Bureau meeting there was a SPA membership meeting, open to representatives of all 80+ professional associations. About 25 people attended. The new Advocacy brochure was shared and discussed. Attendees then broke up into small groups and presented sample "elevator speeches" to the whole group.

OTHER ICA ACTIVITIES AND TOPICS

Programme Commission: The PComm launched its annual Call for Projects in March 2014, but the quality of the proposals was disappointing. Of 17 proposals, only 3 were ultimately endorsed and funded. PComm concluded that there is difficulty in attracting projects that correspond to ICA's goal to support and develop reusable and reproducible outcomes and products that meet the needs of members around the world. They want to see improvement in the quality of proposals. ICA is a potential funding source for small projects – something about which SAA members should be made aware.

PComm recently adopted two key initiatives:

- African Strategy: To make a lasting positive contribution to archives/records management in under-resourced countries on the African continent.

- **New Professional Programme:** To help recent incomers to the archives and records management field access events and tools that PComm develops and promotes, and to encourage them to appreciate the challenge and rewards of working internationally.

Website: The ICA website has long been a hindrance to current and potential members due to its limited functionality and lack of user friendliness. Responsibility for the website redevelopment was moved from the Secretariat (head office) to PComm. At the time of the meeting, ICA staff were finalizing negotiations to migrate the website into Drupal. Assuming ICA agrees on a contract with Drupal, the migration will occur in 2015.

Working Groups: ICA is continuing to authorize and strengthen a growing number of expert Working Groups.

- Groups established in 2013: Archival Descriptions, Photographic and Audio-Visual Archives, Human Rights, and Intellectual Property.
- Groups established in 2014: Archive Buildings and Environments, International Support in Case of Emergencies, Digital Records, Advocacy, and Records Management.

The Human Rights Working Group produced, and is asking for comment on, a report titled “Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists in Support of Human Rights.” So far they have received few comments. They are asking all national associations to review and comment on it. (<http://www.ica.org/15999/news-and-events/basic-principles-on-the-role-of-archivists-in-support-of-human-rights-give-your-opinion.html>)

UDA: There is continuing discussion about the Universal Declaration on Archives (UDA) adopted by UNESCO in 2011. ICA leadership is encouraging countries and national archives associations to support and publicize the declaration within their organizations. SAA has already signed on to this initiative.

Future Meetings:

- 2015 Spring SPA Bureau meeting will be held in Warsaw, Poland, May 19-20.
- 2015 ICA annual meeting will be held in Reykjavik, Iceland, September 22-26.
- 2016 ICA Quadrennial Congress will be held in Seoul, Korea, hosted by the National Archives of Korea. The theme will be “Archives, Harmony and Friendship.”

ICA is looking for countries to volunteer to host ICA annual meetings between 2017 and 2019 and to host the 2020 Congress.

Membership: Category A members – national archives – hold the most power and influence and contribute the most financially to ICA through their dues and in-kind support.

The Executive Committee is reviewing the structure of benefits and membership dues for Category C and D members, with the objective of devising packages that attract more institutions and individuals to become members of ICA.

The Secretariat staff is very interested in partnering with national professional associations like SAA to offer its members the option of paying for membership in ICA, at a reduced individual (Category D) rate, when they join or renew their membership in SAA.

FOR SAA STAFF: DISCUSSION OR ACTION TOPICS

- Publicize to SAA membership the availability of the SPA Advocacy brochure when it is available online.
- Publicize to SAA membership the availability of ICA funds for projects which may have a positive impact on the broader archives profession outside of the U.S. The next Call for Papers by ICA's PComm will be spring 2015.
- Plan to staff an SAA booth at the ICA 2016 Congress in Seoul, Korea. This will be a great opportunity to expand the audience for SAA publications and online programs and attract new members.
- Investigate the pros and cons of offering SAA members the option to pay for a reduced rate individual membership in ICA as part of its own membership renewal process.

FOR SAA COUNCIL: DISCUSSION OR ACTION TOPICS

- Discuss the possibility of hosting a joint annual meeting with ICA (and possibly NAGARA and COSA) in 2017, 2018, or 2019.¹
- Does Council wish to send any comments to ICA's Human Rights Working Group about its paper "Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists in Support of Human Rights"? <http://www.ica.org/15999/news-and-events/basic-principles-on-the-role-of-archivists-in-support-of-human-rights-give-your-opinion.html>

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Haglund Tousey, CA
6 November 2014

¹ *Staff Note:* David Leitch of the ICA Secretariat has approached Nancy Beaumont about the possibility of SAA hosting the 2020 ICA Congress in Washington, DC, or New York City, or co-hosting the Congress with the ACA in Canada.