

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Conference Call  
January 17, 2018**

**Consent Agenda: Ratify Council Interim Actions  
(Prepared by Executive Committee Member Kris Kiesling)**

**BACKGROUND**

Current parliamentary policy agrees on validating board decisions made remotely, and ratifying the Council's online and conference-call decisions via the Consent Agenda does not conflict with any existing SAA policy.

**DISCUSSION**

Given the Council's use of an e-mail discussion list to function as a group and make decisions remotely, approving interim Council actions via the Consent Agenda contributes to streamlining the group's work and improves access to the interim decisions of SAA's elected decision makers.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the following interim action taken by the Council between November 27, 2017, and January 2, 2018, be ratified:**

- Reviewed a report from SAA's Representative to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, Dennis Meissner, covering the Commission's most recent meeting. (Appendix A) (November 27, 2017)
- Approved a [letter](#), drafted by the Committee on Public Policy and signed by SAA President Tanya Zanish-Belcher, to FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai to "express our alarm at the Federal Communications Commission's plan to dismantle network neutrality regulations on Internet service providers." The letter was also sent to the chair and ranking member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation and the chair and ranking member of the House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee. (December 4, 2017)
- Approved the November 5-7, 2017, Council [meeting minutes](#). (December 13, 2017)
- Adopted a resolution to honor Greg Hunter for his six years of service as Editor of *The American Archivist*. (Appendix B) (December 14, 2017)
- Received the report of SAA's representative to the International Council on Archives Section on Professional Associations, Becky Haglund Tousey. (Appendix C) (December 19, 2017)
- Received the report of SAA's representative to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR), William Maher. This confidential report was shared with the Council via email. (January 2, 2017)

## Report to SAA on NHPRC Meeting, November 16, 2017

(Prepared by SAA Representative Dennis Meissner)

The November 16, 2017 meeting of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission convened at National Archives I at 9:00 AM and adjourned at about 1:45, a notably brief duration given the inclusion of a one-hour lunch. All in all, there were 1) fewer reports on current or emerging initiatives and 2) less discussion of individual grant applications prior to approving the omnibus staff recommendations in each of the four grant categories. The former basically reflects the absence of an executive director the past few months, which has kept the eleven-person (?) staff very busy keeping up with the general commission administration duties, as well as managing the grants cycle. The latter is a testament to the exemplary work of the grants management team that Kathleen Williams put in place over the past ten years. Their summary recommendations to the Commission for each grant application in every category were unambiguous, thorough, and well-reasoned (which reduced questions and quibbles from Commission members), and their decisions showed great talent in squeezing the maximum benefit from the available grant making dollars.

As always, I will note that, although much of NHPRC's grant-making budget is pointed at documentary editing and publishing projects, I will focus my report on the projects and staff work that relate most closely to the interests of SAA and its members.

**Executive Director.** Maria Carosa Stanwich is serving as Interim ED; I believe she was formerly Kathleen's executive assistant. The AOTUS and staff all appear to feel that things go smoothly, which they attribute to the organization that Kathleen has put in place, and which seems to be self-lubricating in the near term. The ED job description (copy attached) was publicly posted the day after the Commission meeting and the search is intended to close on December 11. David Ferriero pointed out that the salary range for the position will make it attractive as a career move for federal officials in unrelated agencies (a threat), but he expressed confidence that his internal hiring team will be able to select a fully qualified candidate at the end of the day. *I think it would be smart for SAA Council to do what they can to promote this position to good candidates.* SAA will surely benefit from sound leadership in the NHPRC.

**Strategic Plan performance.** The current performance of the grants programs and the major initiatives of the Commission are all expressed within its current strategic plan (approved May 2016). Here are the significant elements:

- **Goal One: Connect the National Archives with the work of the nation's archives.**

- *Initiative on New Publishing Methods.* This is a very exciting (IMO) collaboration with Mellon Foundation, which is funding it at \$2 Million. It seeks to fund a small number of multi-year projects that will test the promise of collaborative online publishing endeavors, as well as the platforms and tools that produce them. One outcome might be a set of tools and one or more innovative online platforms that could bring digital publishing within the means and abilities of a wider and deeper pool of repositories. Don Waters presented to the Commission and is very keen on this one.
- *Initiative on Digital Records Preservation and Access.* Nancy Melley facilitated the Government Email Symposium that took place at NARA in September. It featured case studies from states with active email preservation programs (often NHPRC-funded), as well as from NARA units and a DOJ records manager. Melley is preparing annotated case studies to present to wider audiences.
- *Initiative on the Future of State Boards.* Dan Stokes organized a state board symposium that took place at the 2017 CoSA annual meeting. In exploring how to make the boards as effective and wide reaching as possible, they came up with a few “quick wins” including standard reporting mechanisms, identification of common training needs, inclusion of boards in grant reviews, and stronger dialogue with NARA. A CoSA task force will carry the discussion and insights forward.
- *Publish and disseminate findings on best practices, tools, and methodologies drawn from grant projects.* Lucy Barber has produced a lengthy draft report, which will be finalized and shared publicly. Its findings should help future applicants achieve better results and more efficient use of NHPRC funds.
- **Goal Two: Expand access to the nation’s historical records.**
  - *Develop a single “Access” grant program with two tiers and two-stage application process.* The new process asks applicants to first submit a preliminary application, following which a promising subset will be asked to submit a final application. This is proving to be more rewarding for both applicants and reviewers.
    - *Major initiatives (\$100,000-300,000).* 33 applications were submitted, with 10 invited to submit full proposals. Eight responded and five of those were rewarded with full or partial funding. \$825,000 approved funding.
    - *Archival projects (<\$100,000).* 39 applications were received (16 from never-before-funded institutions. Decisions next May.
  - *Fund State Board Programming Grants.* These grants fund the annual programs of state boards. They are competitive among states for a fixed pool of funds (\$700,000). 22 states applied and 20 were funded at requested or lesser amounts.
- **Goal Three: Engage the American people in preserving and discovering the American record.**

- *Implement a Public Engagement Grants Program.* 9 applications received at the October 2017 deadline, with decisions to come in May. \$300,000 budget.
- **Goal Four: Enhance the capacity of small and diverse organizations with historical records collections.**
  - Efforts are ongoing to 1) streamline the peer review process (better software in place), 2) support and offer workshops (one offered at MAC next spring), and 3) survey applicants and recipients about the process and the programs (survey will be distributed in winter 2017).

**Budget.** The Commission is operating under a continuing resolution that ends on December 7, 2017. Although the President's FY2018 budget contained no funding for NHPRC, the House budget approved \$4 Million and it is hoped that the Senate will do likewise. Congressman Mark Meadows (R-NC) and Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK), both of whom were represented by staff members during the morning session, are both strong supporters. During the afternoon session Mark Meadows texted the AOTUS from the Hill, suggesting that NHPRC would likely see a bump up to \$5 Million, which would be good news indeed.

**Reception for Kathleen Williams.** The Commission and invited guests reconvened at 4:00 to honor the service of Kathleen Williams as Executive Director, 2010-2018. The Commission and staff appreciation for Kathleen's effective work in staff development and strategic planning was very apparent.

**SAA Council Resolution Honoring  
Gregory S. Hunter, PhD, CA, CRM  
Editor, *The American Archivist*  
2012–2017**

*Whereas* Gregory S. Hunter has furthered professional discourse through his editorship of *The American Archivist* from 2012 to 2017; and

*Whereas* he edited twelve issues of the journal—more than 3,400 pages of content—and contributed introductions to each issue; and

*Whereas* he encouraged and fostered first-time authors, engaging a new generation of writers in archival scholarship; and

*Whereas* his mentorship of new and returning authors expanded on the diversity of perspectives shared; and

*Whereas* he debuted a section, “Archives in Translation,” to feature articles originally published in other languages that would be of interest to English-speaking archivists; and

*Whereas* at SAA Annual Meetings he presented at forums for potential contributors and facilitated thought-provoking lunch discussions on forthcoming articles; and

*Whereas* during his tenure he championed SAA’s implementation of a new online platform and submissions management system;

*Therefore Be It Resolved* that the Society of American Archivists expresses its sincere thanks to Dr. Hunter for advancing the professional discourse through his six-year editorship of *The American Archivist*.

## **Society of American Archivists**

### **External Representative Report to Council:**

#### **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) Steering Committee met during the 2017 ICA annual meeting in Mexico City, November 25-29. I attended as a representative of both the Society of American Archivists and the Academy of Certified Archivists. This year ICA held its annual meeting in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Association of Latin American Archivists (ALA). There were two days of governance meetings at the National Archives of Mexico on November 25-26, followed by a three-day program at a conference center venue on November 27-29. This change in ICA's annual meeting model – to partner with an already-scheduled country or regional association conference – is an intentional move to reduce meeting costs. As a result of this joint meeting ICA did not issue a “call for papers” as it has for past annual meetings and Congresses. But for the 2018 annual meeting ICA will return to issuing a call for papers. The range of speakers and attendees, while predominantly from Latin America, represented a cross section of countries and regions. There were 620 attendees from forty countries:

- 43% from Latin America
- 28% from Europe
- 19% from North America
- 3% from Asia

#### **SPA MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

The SPA steering committee met on Saturday, November 25 for 3 hours. This is the shorter of the two SPA committee in-person meetings. Besides myself, other SPA committee members present represented associations in Norway, Chile, Netherlands, Germany, Israel, France and Catalonia. SPA member associations sending regrets were from Poland, China and Senegal. We had a moment of silence in memory of our friend and SPA Secretary Cristina Bianchi (the Swiss association representative) who passed away suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage one month prior to our meeting. As vice-chair I volunteered to assume the role of SPA Secretary until a replacement was assigned.

#### **SPA Budget and Administrative matters**

The committee dealt with administrative matters related to budget, membership and future meeting logistics. ICA currently has 74 association (category B) members that are members of

SPA. The Brazil association is no longer active and has not renewed its membership. But a newly revived Argentina association is joining ICA. *(For a detailed report on section budgets, see my report below from the Section Chairs meeting.)*

After the announced retirement of ICA Secretary General David Leitch, ICA conducted a search for a new Secretary General this summer and fall. As SPA Chair, Vilde Ronge was part of the interview team. ICA received 12 applications. In-person interviews were held with 4 finalists in September in London. David's successor is Dr. Anthea Seles, a Canadian who is currently working at the UK National Archives. Anthea attended a portion of our SPA steering committee meeting as an observer.

At the previous SPA committee in Oslo, we spent a lot of time developing an action plan for the rest of the term. We only briefly touched on some action items at this meeting. Most of the upcoming 3 ½-day SPA meeting in Berlin will be spent on moving those plans forward.

#### Elevator Speech Workshop

We spent some time during this meeting on final preparations for the ½ day "Elevator Speech" workshop that we developed. It was accepted as part of this annual meeting program and was held on Tuesday morning. All the SPA steering committee members participated in some way. We were pleased with the turnout of about 15 attendees (in addition to SPA committee members). Everyone seemed engaged and attentive and the evaluations were very positive. As a next step we plan to develop an Elevator Speech Workshop Toolkit (in English, French and Spanish) that can be used by other associations.

#### Africa Strategy

The most tangible result of ICA's efforts in this area is the plan to hold the 2018 ICA annual meeting in Cameroon. SPA will be working with James Lowry, chair of the Africa Programme, to identify what the SPA committee can do at, or in conjunction with, that annual meeting to support the African archives associations. There was informal discussion among attendees in Mexico City about the challenges of a Cameroon meeting from logistical and safety perspectives. Cameroon is arguably close to a civil war between the English-speaking region and the French-speaking region. Many people have concerns about travel to that country, including myself. My plan is to see what the US National Archives decides to do. Meg Phillips is the US National Archives rep to ICA. If the National Archives decides it is safe for Meg Phillips to go to Cameroon, then I will attend. If the National Archives decides not to send Meg, then I will not go.

#### SPA Communications

The current SPA newsletter is published twice a year on the ICA website, posted as a PDF document and pushed out to SPA associations via the email distribution list. Our hope is that we can transition the newsletter to a more dynamic blog format. But word from the ICA head office is that they are not quite set up to do this yet. Regarding the SPA website, Vilde spent a full day

this past fall in Catalonia with SPA's website coordinator. The two sat together and reviewed existing content, fixed broken links and generally cleaned up the SPA website. There is still work to do but they made significant improvements. At the next SPA meeting in Berlin we will discuss some of their recommendations for future improvements.

### **SECTION CHAIRS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

*(Since the chair of the Section on Business Archives (SBA) was not able to attend the Mexico City meeting, I stood in for the SBA chair at this meeting on Saturday morning, November 25.)*

Up until now the Programme Commission's (PCOM) annual €20,000 budget allocation to the sections has been automatically divided equally among the 16 sections. But some sections do not spend any of their allocation and some only spend a portion. As a result each year some of that €20,000 goes unspent. This year the section chairs asked PCOM to be allowed more autonomy in deciding how the money is allocated among the sections and PCOM agreed. Starting in 2018, each section chair will submit an itemized budget request for their section. Some sections will likely not submit a request since they are either not active or do not need additional funds to carry out their mission. With this new process the €20,000 will be divided among those sections that need and request the funds.

In addition, PCOM has expressed a willingness to let the section chairs spend some or all of their budget allocation on travel to section governance meetings. Previously PCOM asked that the funds be spend on section operations (i.e. translations) or programs. This change is a positive step since not all section chairs have the full financial support of their institutions or associations to travel to governance meetings and to the ICA annual meeting. Since most section spring committee meetings are several days long, and the section committee meetings during the fall annual meeting are only 2-3 hours long, it was agreed that money spent to support travel should be used for the longer spring meeting.

I pointed out that it is important for ICA get a clear picture of how many section chairs and committee members receive full travel support from their institutions or associations, as well as how many chairs and committee members get no support or only partial support and must pay their own travel costs. This information should be assembled and reported to PCOM and to the Executive Board (EB). The chairs agreed that sections should collect and report this information. The section chairs also agreed that any travel costs related to their required attendance at the spring EB meetings – costs not covered by their institutions or associations – should not come out of the sections' €20,000 budget allocation. But rather those EB travel costs should come out of ICA's governance budget.

There was also a brief discussion about what to do about sections that become inactive. There are a few sections which fit this description. The constitution will have to be changed if any section is de-commissioned or "down-graded" to a Special Interest Group. That topic will be on the agenda for the Spring 2018 EB meeting.



## **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

*(Again standing in for the Section on Business Archives (SBA) chair, I attended the EB meeting on Sunday, November 26.)*

President David Fricker gave an overview of the selection process for the new Secretary General and the EB formally endorsed the selection of Dr. Anthea Seles, ICA's first woman Secretary General. (ICA has never had a woman President.)

ICA is reviving its relationship with UNESCO's International Committee of the Blue Shield. ICA was one of the founding members of Blue Shield. The EB recently appointed Emilie Gagnet Leumas (SAA and ACA member) as ICA's representative to the Blue Shield. And Blue Shields has broadened its scope from just military conflicts to include natural disasters, a change that ICA supports. Blue Shield is looking to its founding members for increased support.

There was a related report on "Archives at Risk" from Rita Tjien-Fooh about the effect on archives from the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean. Discussion followed. It was agreed that ICA's role should not be to rebuild archives, but to be in solidarity with and to provide some small level of support, such as sending in teams to help train local archivists dealing with recovery. It was recommended that ICA establish a Disaster Fund. The vice-president of Finance said €4000 would be earmarked to support emergency efforts in 2018. Any money not used would be rolled over to support future efforts. This would be the first step in the creation of that fund. It was also suggested that members be asked to contribute to the fund. Emilie and Rita will submit some recommendations for discussion at the spring 2018 EB meeting. President David Fricker said that ICA should be doing more in this area and should also be publicizing its efforts more widely.

ICA will hold an election of officers in 2018. David Fricker's term as President ends next year. It is not known yet whether or not he will opt to run for a second term.

At the previous EB meeting in Arusha, Tanzania there was some discussion about how and when ICA comments on public events – "using its voice." I do not have the details of this discussion since I was not there. But it seems to parallel similar discussions within both SAA and ACA. At the Spring 2018 EB meeting David Fricker wants to continue the discussion and establish some principles. As the "peak" international organization on archives, when should ICA make a public statement? As a non-government organization ICA has some latitude to speak on issues when government archives cannot. I will report on any future outcomes related to this discussion.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS**

I also attended the ICA General Assembly held during the annual meeting on November 27. The new Secretary General was introduced and there were reports from the outgoing Secretary General, the ICA President, Vice-President Programme, and Vice-President Finance. Two new ICA Expert Groups have been established: Archives of Women and Archives of Native Peoples.

Margaret Crocket reported on the newly established ICA Training Programme and a strategic plan is being developed for 2018-2020. And two promotional videos were shown: one by the National Archivist of Cameroon, host of the 2018 annual meeting; and one by a representative of the host committee for the 2020 Congress in Abu Dhabi.

**FUTURE ICA & SPA MEETINGS:**

- 2018 – Spring SPA meeting, Berlin, Germany, May 22-25
- 2018 – ICA annual meeting, Yaoundé, Cameroon, November 26-30
- 2019 – Spring SPA meeting probably in Santiago, Chile
- 2019 – IC annual meeting, Edinburgh, Scotland in October
- 2020 – Spring SPA meeting – location TBD
- 2020 – ICA Congress, Abu Dhabi, UAE in November

**FOR SAA COUNCIL: DISCUSSION OR ACTION TOPICS**

- I do not have any specific action items this time. But there was a lot of discussion this year about the Open Government Partnership, Open Data and issues of accountability and transparency related to government archives and records. So I just wanted to mention that.