

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Conference Call  
February 11, 2019  
1:00 – 2:00 pm EST**

**A\*CENSUS II Partnership  
(Prepared by SAA President Meredith Evans)**

**BACKGROUND**

At its November 2018 meeting the SAA Council passed the following motion (Motion 3):

**THAT a task force be formed to identify potential resources and partners for preparation of a second iteration of A\*CENSUS; and**

**THAT the task force be appointed no later than December 1 and comprise six individuals representing the diversity of our organization; and**

**THAT a final report be submitted for Council consideration at its May 2019 meeting.**

As noted in the support statement for this motion: This task force is necessary to begin initial preparations for conducting a second iteration of A\*CENSUS. Once completed, this “census of archives and archivists” will provide invaluable data on all aspects of the profession.

I appointed the following individuals to serve on the task force: Bridget Burke (University of Oklahoma), Bergis Jules (Shift Design), Michelle Light (SAA Vice President/President-Elect), Dennis Meissner (retired, CODA representative), Elizabeth Yakel (University of Michigan), and myself. SAA Executive Director Nancy Beaumont serves *ex officio*.

**DISCUSSION**

Since November I have spoken with several individuals about likely partners who might expand our capacity to prepare for and implement A\*CENSUS II. They confirmed my own thinking about “natural” partners, with Ithaka S+R rising to the top in each conversation. From their mission statement:

Ithaka S+R provides research and strategic guidance to help the academic and cultural communities serve the public good and navigate economic, technological, and demographic change. Supporting their unparalleled impact on our society, we work with foundations, universities, libraries, publishers, museums, and other organizations to provide research and strategic guidance on our rapidly evolving environment, including:

- Reports on the effectiveness and affordability of online and hybrid forms of education
- Multi-institutional collaborations focused on increasing the degree attainment of low-income college students
- Analysis of the changing research practices of scholars in different disciplines

Michelle, Nancy, and I met with Roger Schonfeld, director of Ithaka S+R Libraries and Scholarly Communication Program, by phone on January 3, during which we learned a lot about Ithaka’s interests, priorities, and partnership models. Although Ithaka S+R “is not in the position to do self-funding,” according to Schonfeld, the group does have significant experience in grant writing, and particularly in soliciting grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Mellon Foundation. Ithaka S+R is a natural partner for SAA in the cultural heritage, grant writing, and survey implementation “space.”

On January 28, the Mellon Foundation, the Association of Art Museum Directors, the American Alliance of Museums, and Ithaka S+R, released the [results](#) of their second comprehensive survey of the ethnic and gender diversity of the staffs of art museums across the United States—a survey that represents at least some of what we would most like to see in A\*CENSUS II.

The Task Force met via conference call on January 30 to discuss potential partners, potential funders, and the logistics of conducting our work over the course of the coming months. We were unanimous in agreeing that we would like to pursue a partnership agreement with Ithaka S+R as a first step in seeking funding for implementation of A\*CENSUS II.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the A\*CENSUS II Task Force and staff proceed with development of a partnership agreement with Ithaka S+R to pursue funding opportunities for A\*CENSUS II, with an understanding that the Council will provide feedback on a draft partnership agreement.**

**Support Statement:** Ithaka S+R is a natural partner for SAA in preparing for and implementing A\*CENSUS II, as the group brings to the table grant writing capacity, awareness of the challenges that cultural heritage professionals and institutions face, and strong connections to major funders of cultural heritage projects.

**Relation to Strategic Plan:** Goal 3: Advancing the Field, 3.2. Foster and disseminate research in and about the field, and 3.3. Participate actively in relevant partnerships and collaborations to enhance professional knowledge.

**Fiscal Impact:** To be determined, depending on whether Ithaka S+R would perform as a contractor or a sub-grantee.