

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
February 16, 18, 2022  
Virtual Meeting**

*Agendas and background materials for SAA Council meetings are publicly available via the SAA website at: <http://www2.archivists.org/governance/reports>. Each Council meeting agenda comprises Consent Items, Action Items, Discussion Items, and Reports, and the number/letter in the minutes (e.g., II.A.) corresponds to an item listed on the agenda. The minutes summarize actions taken and the outcomes of discussions. Reports generally are not summarized in the minutes, but provide a wealth of information about the work of appointed and component groups and the staff. To view the reports—and all other background materials—see the SAA website.*

President Courtney Chartier called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. CT on Wednesday, February 16. Present were Vice President Terry Baxter; Treasurer Sharmila Bhatia; Executive Committee Member Meg Tuomala; Council members Eric Chin, Stephen Curley, Jasmine Jones, Dominique Luster, Derek Mosley, Mario Ramirez, Tonia Sutherland, and Rachel Winston; and SAA Executive Director Jacqueline Price Osafo, Publications Director Teresa Brinati, Finance/Administration Director Peter Carlson, Education Director Rana Hutchinson Salzman, Information Systems Administrator Matt Black, and Governance Manager Felicia Owens.

Guests included Margery Sly, SAA Foundation Board President, Selena Ortega-Chiolero and Rose Buchanan of the Native American Archives Section, and Gerrienne Schaad.

## **I. COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### **A. Adoption of the [Agenda](#)**

Chartier introduced the agenda. Chin moved adoption of the agenda as revised, Ramirez, seconded, and the agenda was adopted unanimously (**MOTION 1**).

### **B. Status of Council To Do List**

Council members briefly reviewed and provided updates on the status of actions listed in this internal working document.

## **II. CONSENT AGENDA**

The following items were adopted by consent (**MOTION 2**).

**Move Consent Items:** Bhatia

**Second Consent Items:** Mosley

**Vote:** PASSED

**A. Ratify Council Interim Actions**

**THAT the following interim actions taken by the Council in February 2022 be ratified:**

- Approved the [November 10, 12, 2021](#), Council virtual meeting minutes. (February 9, 2022)

**B. Ratify Executive Committee Interim Actions**

**THAT the following interim actions taken by the Executive Committee between December 2, 2021, and February 9, 2022, be ratified:**

- Approved joining the American Research Libraries and the American Library Association to recognize the [National Day of Racial Healing](#) on January 18, 2022. (December 2, 2022)
- Approved re-iterating the 2019 [Joint Statement on Conducting Public Business in Non-Governmental Email Accounts](#) in response to news of Mark Meadows using non-approved communication tools for public government work. (December 22, 2021)
- Approved a statement, "[SAA Supports Portland, Oregon, Community Archivists](#)," to stand with Don't Shoot PDX in its campaign to reclaim the Albina Arts Center as a resource for the Black community. (January 18, 2022)
- Approved a [letter to the editors](#) of various national newspapers, drafted by the Committee on Public Policy, regarding Ripped-Up Government Records and the Critical Role of the National Archives. (February 2, 2022)
- Signed on to a [statement](#), drafted by the Council of State Archivists, preferred qualities for the next Archivists of the United States. (February 9, 2022)

**C. Standards: Approve Revisions to Museum Archives Guidelines**

**THAT the SAA Council approve the proposed revisions to the Museum Archives Guidelines (see Appendix).**

**Support Statement:** Approving the revised Museum Archives Guidelines will allow the new guidelines to be posted on the Standards Portal, shared via social media, and be freely accessible to professionals who need them, while providing much needed, updated information to museum archivists and other staff.

**Impact on Strategic Priorities:** Endorsement of the revised Museum Archives Guidelines supports Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth and Goal 4: Meeting Members' Needs, by providing updated information for an outdated standard. It also addresses, in brief, repatriation concerns, acknowledging more recent conversations in the archives field about diversity, this historical record, and issues of inherent sovereignty.

**Fiscal Impact:** The endorsement of the revised guidelines does not have any known fiscal impact on SAA.

#### **D. Standards: Revision Plan for Guidelines for Accessible Archives**

**THAT the SAA Council approve the proposal for revision of the Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities, as recommended by the Standards Committee.**

**Support Statement:** The Council’s support for the proposed revision plan for the Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities shows a commitment in keeping existing standards up to date and support for diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives in our profession.

**Impact on Strategic Priorities:** The proposal for the revision of the Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities would provide updated guidance on issues that are rapidly changing. These revisions would support several goals in the strategic plan:

- Goal 1 by promoting use of the guidelines by leaders in archives;
- Goal 2 by supporting career development, access to educational content, and fostering community for interaction; and
- Goal 3 by advancing the field through updated guidance and publicly accessible documentation.

In addition, updating the guidelines on a regular schedule is a direct recommendation from recent diversity discussions within SAA.

**Fiscal Impact:** The Accessibility and Disability Section included a plan to request funding for working group members and reviewers. The section will submit a separate funding request to the Council for the FY 23 budget cycle.

### **III. STRATEGIC PLANNING**

**The following document was provided for reference:**

#### **A. Current Strategic Plan 2020-2022**

#### **B. Work Plan on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**

### **IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **A. SAA Sections Structure [Strategic Session]**

The Council held a strategic planning session focused on the structure and expectations for SAA sections, with particular consideration of the membership engagement experience and the resources needed to best support these groups. Luster, Jones, and Chartier volunteered to develop

a recommendation informed by the discussion. The Council agreed to determine a clear plan, in consultation with SAA leaders and members, by the 2022 Annual Meeting in August.

### **B. Native American Archives Section: Repatriation and Purposeful Deaccessioning**

The Council met with Rose Buchanan and Selena Ortega-Chiolero, leaders from the Native American Archives Section, to discuss repatriation and purposeful deaccessioning, particularly for tribal records, and agreed that action should be taken to further SAA's endorsement of the *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials*. The Council agreed to prepare a statement in support of archival repatriation and convene a cross-sectional task force to determine further steps to support the *Protocols*.

### **C. May Council Meeting Logistics**

The Council discussed logistics for the next meeting, scheduled for May 18-20, and agreed to prioritize meeting in person, pending any changes to CDC guidelines for gatherings.

### **D. Update on Governance Manual Review**

Mosley reported that the Governance Manual review group, consisting of Curley, Winston, Price Osafo, and Owens, have been meeting regularly to review the SAA constitution and bylaws and plan to have an initial draft to share with the Council for the May 2022 meeting.

### **E. Other Discussion Items from Council Members**

The Council did not discuss anything further.

### **F. Executive Session**

The Council briefly met in executive session to discuss the process for the executive director's annual performance appraisal.

### **MOTION 3**

**THAT the Council move into a private executive session.**

**Move:** Bhatia

**Second:** Ramirez

**Vote:** PASSED

## **I. COUNCIL BUSINESS (continued)**

### **C. Adjournment**

Ramirez moved adjournment, Mosley seconded, and the Council meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:03 pm CST on Wednesday, February 16.

## Friday, February 18, 2022

President Courtney Chartier called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. CST on Friday, February 18. Present were Vice President Terry Baxter; Treasurer Sharmila Bhatia; Executive Committee Member Meg Tuomala; Council members Eric Chin, Stephen Curley, Jasmine Jones, Dominique Luster, Derek Mosley, Mario Ramirez, Tonia Sutherland, and Rachel Winston; and SAA Executive Director Jacqueline Price Osafo, Publications Director Teresa Brinati, Finance/Administration Director Peter Carlson, Education Director Rana Hutchinson Salzmann, Information Systems Administrator Matt Black, and Governance Manager Felicia Owens.

Guests included Erin Baucom (Diversity Committee).

Eric Chin was excused at 2:30 pm CT.

### V. ACTION ITEMS

#### A. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget for Work Plan on DEIA

Chartier led the Council in discussing allocation of funds designated in the fiscal year 2022 budget to support the initial priorities outlined in the new Work Plan on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. The Council agreed to continue discussion via email to determine a final plan as soon as possible.

#### B. Appoint Members to Committee on the Selection of SAA Fellows

The Council selected three SAA Fellows to serve on the 2022 Committee on the Selection of SAA Fellows; Executive Director Jacqueline Price Osafo contacted the nominated individuals to confirm their consent to serve.

#### **MOTION 4**

**THAT Daniel Pitti, Cheryl Stadel-Bevans, and Katherine Wisser be selected to serve on the 2023 Committee on the Selection of SAA Fellows.**

**Move:** Chin

**Second:** Mosley

**Vote:** PASSED (unanimous)

**Support Statement:** Pitti, Stadel-Bevans, and Wisser are well qualified to serve in this important capacity.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.

### **C. Approve Strategic Plan + Dashboard (FY23-25)**

Chartier noted that she, Baxter, Price Osafo, and Owens are reviewing the feedback on the new Strategic Plan Dashboard submitted during the open comment period in February. The final version will be shared soon with the Council for online review and approval.

### **D. Other Action Items from Council Members**

No additional action items were brought forward.

## **VI. REPORTS**

*Reports are discussed by the Council only as needed and generally are not summarized in the minutes (with the exception of the Executive Committee report, which details interim actions of the Executive Committee). They do, however, provide a wealth of information about the work of appointed and component groups and the staff. To view the reports—and all other background materials—see <http://www2.archivists.org/governance/reports>.*

The Council reviewed, but did not discuss, the following reports:

- A. [President](#)
- B. [Vice President/President-Elect](#)
- C. [Treasurer](#)
- D.2. [Staff: Membership](#)
- D.3. [Staff: Education](#)
- D.4. [Staff: Publications](#)
- D.6. [Staff: Technology](#)
- E. [American Archivist Editor](#)
- F. [Publications Editor](#)

#### **D.1. Staff: Executive Director**

Price Osafo provided updates on a new staff position for marketing and communications, recent advocacy efforts, A\*CENSUS II, and the National Coalition for History.

#### **D.5. Staff: Annual Meeting**

Price Osafo noted that SAA is planning for a hybrid conference, with in person events in Boston and a strong virtual component (similar to the 2021 conference) to be held simultaneously in late August. The Program Committee just met, and communications about session selections will be forthcoming.

#### **G. [SAA Foundation Board](#)**

SAA Foundation President Margery Sly introduced the report and discussed the Foundation's development of a distinct strategic plan.

## **H. Other Reports from Council Members/What Are You Hearing from Members?**

Mosley brought forward a suggestion from the Membership Committee to consider providing DEIA courses for free in conjunction with future events related to the National Day of Racial Healing.

## **I. COUNCIL BUSINESS (continued)**

### **C. Review of February 2022 To Do List and Talking Points**

Council members reviewed the draft list of action items stemming from the meeting.

### **D. Meeting Debriefing**

The Council briefly reflected on the highlights from the meeting and suggestions for improving future virtual Council meetings.

### **E. Adjournment**

Mosley moved adjournment, Jones seconded, and the Council meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 3:53 pm CST on Friday, February 18.

## Museum Archives Guidelines

### *2022 Proposed Revisions*

*The Museum Archives Section of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) represents those who are responsible for the organization and care of archival collections located in museums. These guidelines have been created by the Section to assist all types of museums in the development and administration of archival programs. They outline the components of a successful museum archives program and should be used in conjunction with detailed information on the administration of archives that is available through SAA and other professional sources. Specific examples of museum archives documentation, particularly with regard to policies, are available in the [Museum Archives Standards and Best Practices Working Group's Resource Guide](#).*

#### **1. Introduction and Mission Statement**

##### **Introduction**

All museums should maintain an active, professional archives to systematically collect, organize, preserve, and provide access to organizational records of enduring value as well as the papers of individuals, groups, and topics associated with the museum. An archives program provides evidence, explanation, and justification for both past actions and current decisions. It is the role of the museum archivist to recommend policies and procedures for the creation, maintenance, and ultimate retention or disposition of current museum records in all formats, as well as to undertake the acquisition and stewardship of externally generated special collections. By supporting an archives program, a museum not only promotes its own history but ensures that its records are preserved and that information resources are readily available to support the work of its staff as well as to meet the research needs of scholars and the general public.

##### **Mission Statement**

The archives should have a mission statement, approved by museum administration and ratified by appropriate governing bodies, that defines the authority of the archivist within the museum and the scope of the archival program. The statement should explicitly recognize the archivist's role in the museum and in relation to its records management program. When possible, the mission statement should reflect and expand upon key aspects of the parent institution's mission.

#### **2. Collecting Scope**

The museum archives identifies and collects records of long-term and permanent research value, regardless of format. The collecting scope of a museum archives should be clearly outlined within the parent institution's overarching collections statement or maintained separately by the archives department. The materials described in the archives' collecting scope should add value to the museum's collections and exhibition programs and should reflect a commitment to diversity and inclusion.



A museum archives' collections may encompass:

1. Organizational records. These document institutional history and provide context for object collections. They may include, but are not limited to, records relating to programming, curatorial, administrative, legal, and fiscal activities.
2. Collection records, such as object, specimen, or conservation files. These may be part of the museum archives' collections or, if active records, kept in the curatorial, registration, or collections management offices. The museum archivist should advocate for and offer support for the stewardship of these records, including their potential transfer to the archives when appropriate.
3. Special collections. These may include papers of external and/or allied individuals and organizations as well as related topical collections that align with the museum's overarching mission.

### **3. Organizational Placement**

While administrative placement, structure, and governance will reflect institutional differences and cultures, the museum archives should be placed within the museum's organizational structure at the same level as all other collections departments, with the museum archivist maintaining the equivalent custodial and related authority delegated by the director of the museum, governing board, or parent institution. The archives department should also be an independent entity within the museum's organizational structure, though the museum archives may also be an administrative affiliate of a parent institution's archives, such as when a museum is part of a larger university.

### **4. Professional Archivist and Archives Staffing**

The museum should have a professionally trained archivist. If institutional resources do not permit the hiring of a professionally trained archivist, expert advice should be sought in the management of the museum's archives and archival training provided to the staff member(s) made responsible for them.

The responsibilities of museum archivists are to appraise, acquire, arrange, describe, preserve, and facilitate access to the records of the museum and collections of related materials acquired from outside the museum. These responsibilities may be divided among multiple archives staff members. Museum archivists may also provide archival instruction and training on how to utilize primary source material to parties internal or external to their institution. Performing outreach and advocating for the archival program communicates the value of the museum archives.

The museum archivist should be empowered to undertake strategic planning for the museum archives, assess its resource needs, and create policies and procedures that follow professional best practices and ethics. The museum archivist should also be responsible for hiring archives staff. Archives staffing levels should be aligned with staffing for other museum departments.

Hiring should follow a policy of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity and hiring activities should be implemented in a culturally competent manner.

## **5. Policies and Standards**

Museum archives should adopt existing institutional policies and standards in place at the museum when possible, refining as needed to suit archival practice. When such is not appropriate, archivists should create standalone policies for their repositories that draw upon professional archival [standards](#) and practices.

## **6. Records Management**

The museum archives should be responsible for, or maintain an active role in, the museum's records management program, including identifying records and scheduling their retention. The criteria for permanent records retention include:

1. Evidence of the structure, development, mission, and functions of the museum over time.
2. Documentation of the actions, decisions, policies, and fiscal and legal rights and responsibilities of the museum.
3. Research and informational value.

These criteria apply to records in all formats and on all platforms.

The museum archivist should be involved in the development of policies, guidelines, and records retention schedules pertaining to the maintenance, disposition, and preservation of all museum records, with the aim of avoiding records duplication and the retention of nonpermanent records. The museum archivist, as well as the records creators and general counsel, if applicable, should also approve the appropriate disposition of records that must be maintained temporarily for fiscal or legal purposes.

The museum archivist should be consulted for recommendations on the maintenance of permanently active records of archival value in noncustodial situations such as collection object or accession records under the care of a registrar, collections manager, curator, or conservator, as well as computer network backups managed by the information technology staff.

## **7. Infrastructure**

Well-supported and maintained physical and digital infrastructure is required to manage records in all formats within the museum archives. Robust institutional commitment as well as collaboration with other museum departments are necessary in building, implementing, and maintaining the museum archives' physical plant, storage areas, study rooms, and digital systems.

## **8. Access and Use**

Museum archives should provide access to all records that can be open to research use. Select holdings should be limited only by reasonable restrictions related to privacy, confidentiality, copyright laws, cultural sensitivity, cultural property rights, moral rights, and other purposes. Museum archives should provide equal research access to archival materials, regardless of the patron's status, affiliation, or intended use; however, it is typical for an institution's own staff members to have increased access to certain materials. Museum archives should also strive to provide intellectual and physical access through archival description and delivery of resources both in person and online whenever feasible.

## **9. Outreach**

Museum archives may organize exhibits, workshops, publications, presentations, instruction, tours, and other programming to promote collections and services, foster collaborative relationships, share and build knowledge, and advocate for financial support and resources. Museum archivists work individually and collaboratively with colleagues to create programs that are meaningful to their constituents and support the institutional mission and specific goals of the museum.

## **10. Repatriation**

Museum archives have an ethical responsibility to assist with the processes of repatriation and are encouraged to develop modes of collaboration, engagement, and partnership for archival or museum holdings that have problematic histories or unclear provenance. Archivists should strive to research, record, and make accessible as much information as possible regarding the provenance of the collections in their care and in the care of the museum. Establishing institutional guidelines to ensure consistent practices around releasing information is recommended. Museum archivists should aim to uphold rights and responsibilities that recognize the inherent sovereignty that affected communities have over their cultural heritage.