

**Society of American Archivists
Council Conference Call Minutes
March 6, 2020
4:00 – 5:30 pm ET**

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 Meredith Evans called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. on Friday, March 6. Present were Vice President Rachel Vagts; Treasurer Amy Fitch; Executive Committee Member Audra Eagle Yun; Council members Steven Booth, Eric Chin, Melissa Gonzales, Brenda Gunn, Petrina Jackson, Ricardo Punzalan, Mario Ramirez, and Meg Tuomala; and SAA Executive Director Nancy Beaumont, Publications Director Teresa Brinati, Finance/Administration Director Peter Carlson, Education Director Rana Hutchinson Salzman, Information Systems Administrator Matt Black, and Governance Program Manager Felicia Owens.

I. COUNCIL BUSINESS

A. Adoption of the [Agenda](#)

Evans introduced the agenda. Gunn moved adoption of the agenda, Chin seconded, and the agenda was adopted unanimously (**MOTION 1**).

II. STRATEGIC PLANNING

A. [Current Strategic Plan Dashboard](#)

The current Strategic Plan Actions and Timelines 2020-2022, as adopted in June 2019, was provided for reference.

III. ACTION ITEMS

A. [Recommendations of the Task Force to Review SAA Fellows Selection Criteria](#)

At the request of the Committee on the Selection of SAA Fellows, the Council convened a task force in August 2019 to review and revise the guidelines, for nominators and the committee, to better inform the process of selecting SAA Fellows each year. The task force did not make significant changes to the basic criteria, but did supply more detailed information for nominators, including general recommendations about what should be included in a nomination package and

what information should be included in a recommendation letter. The Council reviewed and agreed that the proposed revisions would improve the Fellows nomination and selection processes.

MOTION 2

THAT the following revised guidelines for nominators and evaluators for SAA Fellow nominations be approved.

Fellow of the Society of American Archivists

Established in 1957, the distinction of Fellow—the highest honor bestowed on individuals by SAA—is awarded for outstanding contributions to the organization and to the archives profession. Fellows must demonstrate and represent the highest qualities of the Society as articulated in the [Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics](#).

Our Core Values include:

Access and Use
Accountability
Advocacy
Diversity and Inclusion
History and Memory
Preservation
Professionalism
Responsible Custody
Selection
Service
Social Responsibility
Social Justice

Nominees must demonstrate their “dedication, devotion, and faithfulness to archives and the archival profession.” Quantifying these qualities while also including initiative, resourcefulness, impact, and commitment may not be easy. However, through the process of nomination, we ask colleagues to contemplate and give voice to actions that portray an archivist’s “power to originate,” their “ability to overcome difficulties,” and how they excel in achieving the profession’s core values.

Candidates must qualify, illustrate, and exhibit impact in each of the following qualities/criteria:

Appropriate academic education and professional/technical training in any of the fields of SAA’s interest.

Professional experience in any of the fields of SAA’s objectives for a minimum of seven years, which shall include evidence of professional responsibility and leadership.

Contributions to the profession demonstrating initiative, resourcefulness, and commitment.

Outreach activities, projects, and scholarship of superior quality and usefulness demonstrating broad impact and contributing to the realization of SAA’s core values and strategic objectives.

Contributions to the archives profession through active participation in and efforts on behalf of SAA as well as contributions to the broader archival profession including regional organizations.

Be an individual SAA member in good standing for at least seven consecutive years immediately preceding their election.

Nomination Requirements and Deadline:

All nominations must be completed online by February 28 of each year. Individual members, primary contacts of institutional members, student members, and associate members are eligible to nominate SAA Fellows.

In accordance with the SAA constitution, the total number of Fellows may not exceed five percent of the SAA membership as of the previous annual meeting.

Nominators with questions should contact the Chair of the Selection Committee.

Guidelines for Nominations:

Overall recommendations:

Nominations must include a core narrative that provides a persuasive argument of how the nominated individual meets each of the criteria.

The nomination must provide convincing information in each of the qualities/criteria areas, although not all must have similar extent of evidence.

A recitation or list of activities, facts, or publications is not sufficient. Nominators must provide evidence of quality and impact.

At least three, but no more than five, letters of support from individuals who are familiar with the nominee's work or contributions to the profession. Ideally each letter should address a different aspect of the nominee's contributions to SAA and/or the profession. Letters may be written by individuals who are not members of SAA, but they must follow these guidelines.

The nominee's resume or curriculum vitae.

Confirmation from the SAA office that the nominee has been an individual member of SAA in good standing for seven consecutive years prior to nomination.

Appropriate academic education and professional/technical training is strongly preferred in any of the fields of SAA's interest.

Academic education: Please describe academic degrees in fields commonly used by institutions hiring professional archivists, including but not limited to history, public history, political science, library science, or archival administration. Coursework focused on archival competencies within that degree should be noted if it is not a more common degree for which such education would be anticipated to exist. If a nominee has a different degree, but one that is relevant to the content/context of their archival work, the nominator should explain the relevance of that degree (e.g., a degree in the sciences for someone working with scientific archives, a degree in the arts for someone working with performing arts archives, etc.). Individuals with other background or training are eligible for nomination, with the proviso that the nominator must very clearly explain qualifications that demonstrate the archival competency of the nominee.

Professional/technical training: Alternative sources of archival education that are offered by institutions/organizations providing training/educational opportunities with curricula drawing from accepted archival standards/best practices and taught by someone with archival competencies. Examples might include various archival institutes (e.g., Modern Archives Institute, Georgia Archives Institute, Western Archives Institute) and/or online or live workshops offered by SAA or regional archival organizations. (If these are the sole education/training for the individual, note the extent of training involved, e.g., number of events, extent/length of training.)

Professional experience in any of the fields of SAA's objectives for a minimum of seven years, which shall include evidence of professional responsibility and leadership.

Demonstrable work with archival materials in any of the “core functions” of records management, appraisal/acquisition, arrangement and description, access, preservation, reference, or outreach. Experience need not be entirely “hands-on” and may include management or supervision of archival functions.

The Fellows award is specifically reserved for practicing archivists.¹ SAA has other awards that are more appropriate for those who were/are vendors of archival services/materials, major donors of archival records, researchers/historians/genealogists who have promoted or used archival materials (i.e., J. Franklin Jameson Archival Advocacy Award) or administrators to whom archival programs report, but may not themselves have archival education/competencies, such as the Librarian of Congress, Archivist of the United States, heads of university libraries, state departments of archives and history or departments of libraries and archives, or SAA staff. Additionally, the SAA Council can choose, or it can be suggested to the SAA Council, to honor an individual archivist with a distinguished service award.

Contributions to the profession demonstrating initiative, resourcefulness, and commitment.

Insightful, intellectual, practical contributions that produce long-term impact on archivists and the profession including:

- Mentoring archivists to support their career development by participating in formal mentorship programs and/or exhibiting a commitment to informally mentoring archivists.
 - Examples include mentoring a student or new archival professional in archival functions and practices; providing advice on involvement with professional organizations such as SAA and regional organizations; providing advice and support to mid-career professionals.
- Administrator of an archival institution that is innovative, has a high standard of professional advocacy, and encourages staff to become involved in SAA and the profession.
 - Examples include individuals who no longer work directly with archival functions, but manage and supervise others who do. The administrator who is forward thinking, finds creative resources to further the archival field, and manages archival staff in such a way as to be a mentor to entry, mid-career and end of career staff. An administrator who directly affects their staff and encourages the participation (and leadership) in SAA (and/or other professional endeavors).
- Engaging in outreach to communities to preserve archives or understand the importance of archives.

¹ Practicing archivist includes any role that involves direct involvement with archives ranging from managing an archives, working as an archivist, to providing archival education.

- Examples include leading or making significant contributions to the rescue or preservation of archival collections during natural disasters; leading or making significant contributions to connecting with underserved or marginalized communities creating archives to help them preserve, manage, and make these collections accessible.
- Creating tools at a range of levels (digital or analog).
 - Examples include leading or making significant contributions to the development and improvement of databases and tools such as collection management tools, online finding aids, oral history, etc.
- Creating services (digital or analog).
 - Examples include leading or making significant contributions to the building archival services in virtual environments for individuals that cannot use archival collections; leading or making significant contributions to the building of archival services such as web archiving tools; etc.
- Creating content (digital or analog).
 - Examples include creating archival content or creating content specific to the archival profession such as online exhibits, podcasts; serial blogs; etc.
- Leading advocacy initiatives to address state or federal policy or legislative issues related to archives.
- Engaging in activities and projects which contribute to intellectual discourse on archival concerns.

Program oversight, outreach activities, educational services and projects, writing, and scholarship of superior quality and usefulness that:

- **Demonstrate broad impact;**
- **Assist communities in strengthening identify and self-liberation; and**
- **Contribute to the realization of SAA’s core values and strategic objectives.**
- Outreach activities can include creating and coordinating:
 - Workshops, conferences, training programs, courses, festivals, exhibits, publications, and similar activities, with a distinctive impact, aimed at such groups as students, faculty members, scholars, administrators, researchers, donors, records creators, or the general community; and/or
 - Researching, preparing and giving presentations including keynotes; professional organization sessions including papers, lightning round participant papers, serving as a session commentator and/or moderator, a pop-up session, a poster session; or presenting about archives in non-archival venues including community or local educational and community history venues, podcasts, TED talks, SXSW conferences, etc.

- Engaging an under documented community or topic to ensure it is documented; developing policies, practices, or standards for identification/preservation/management of/access to a particular type or content area of archival records.
- Developing services to a particular community of records creators or records users.
- Educational Services can include:
 - Leading/directing/managing archival education programs;
 - Serving as a Lecturer in graduate archival education programs;
 - Creating and teaching in-person workshops;
 - Creating and teaching webinars; and/or
 - Producing and posting online tutorials.
- Writing and Scholarship can include:
 - Books;
 - Case Studies;
 - Essays;
 - Editorials and Editorial Service;
 - Policy papers and statements;
 - Promotional materials²;
 - Research Articles;
 - Reviews;
 - Reports demonstrating service to the profession; and/or
 - Serial Blogging with demonstrated impact and professionalism.

Contributions to the archives profession through active participation in SAA and innovative or outstanding work on behalf of SAA.

Participating in SAA governance activities including:

- Elected positions (officers, Council);
- Appointed positions (boards, committees, task forces, working groups);
- Positions such as *American Archivist* Editor or Publications Editor; and/or
- Service on a section steering committee.

And making outstanding contributing to activities on behalf of SAA, including:

- Advocacy;
- Fundraising and development;
- Diversity and inclusion;
- Membership services;
- Policy development;
- Standards development; and/or
- Strategic Impact.

Guidelines for Reviewers

Nominations should provide all the information necessary for evaluating the nominee. The evaluation should focus on the quality, quantity, and applicability of the nomination to the criteria. The

² Promotional materials include the use of social media tools, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc., to advance the archival profession in innovative and creative ways.

evaluators should not “fill in” evidence that may be missing. This helps ensure that all nominations are evaluated from a common perspective. Evaluators may or may not personally know or be closely familiar with a nominee and their professional career, so in any given year, those who are on the evaluation committee could influence a decision if factors not included in the nomination are part of the assessment.

Focus of the award is for service to the Society of American Archivists. The nomination needs to demonstrate that the individual has made sufficient contributions to the Society to be named an SAA Fellow. This is an award that honors outstanding contributions through active participation in and efforts on behalf of SAA as well as to the broader archival profession. This is not an award for outstanding contributions to the archival profession nationally or in a region or state without demonstrable contributions to SAA as well. While a nominee’s activities in other venues strengthens the evidence in some of the criteria areas, they do not replace evidence of service in SAA. There are individuals who may be “well-known” but have not participated in the functions and activities of SAA. Such individuals may be appropriate for other awards such as the J. Franklin Jameson Archival Advocacy Award or distinguished recognition from the SAA Council.

Nominations should demonstrate the nominee meets all criteria. The nomination should demonstrate both how the nominee meets criteria as well as explaining the strengths and impact of their contributions. The nomination should not simply list those items, but explain in a clear and compelling manner how they are superior or exceptional. Nominees will likely have more contributions in some areas compared to others; the final decision to approve a nomination should be based on the whole of contributions demonstrating a significant overall contribution, while meeting the requirement of contributions in each criteria.

Letters provided should demonstrate the quality of the nominee’s contributions. Letters may come from a range of individuals that includes professional colleagues, individuals in other professions or communities and users who have worked with or benefited from the nominee’s efforts. These letters do not need to be from Fellows, Past-Presidents, or those who might be perceived as having status in SAA. The purpose is to demonstrate the quality of the nominee’s contributions, not restate how the individual meets the criteria.

Comparability of assessment. In evaluating each nomination, evaluators should strive to ensure that their assessments are consistent and comparable between nominations. Again, an evaluator’s knowledge of an individual’s career, or their particular area of expertise and professional focus should not lead to a more (or less) favorable assessment.

Recusal. Evaluators should recuse themselves from evaluating a nomination when they have a direct working relationship or other professional or personal relationship that may be perceived as too close for objectivity. This might include an individual’s supervisors, supervisees, partners in current or recent professional positions, or partners/spouses or other close relatives. Recusal by any member of the evaluation committee is not a negative factor for the evaluation, but reflects the intent to ensure fair evaluation for all.

Move: Booth
Second: Chin
Vote: PASSED

Support Statement: These revised guidelines provide a clearer decision-making structure that is fair, comprehensive, transparent, and flexible and that will encourage more complete applications that provide all the information needed by the Selection Committee to make a fair decision about candidates.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: Addresses Goal 4. Meeting Members' Needs by increasing the transparency of the nomination and selection processes for this important honor.

Fiscal Impact: None.

B. Elect Three Fellows to Serve on the Committee to Select SAA Fellows

Each year the Council elects three individuals to serve on the Committee on the Selection of SAA Fellows. The Committee comprises the five most recent past presidents of the Society and three Fellows who are elected by the Council. The Council reviewed the list of eligible Fellows and put forward three nominees and two alternates. Beaumont will contact the selected nominees to confirm their consent to serve.

MOTION 3

THAT Terry Baxter, Louis Jones, and Wilda Logan be selected to serve on the 2020 Committee on the Selection of SAA Fellows.

Move: Chin

Second:

Vote: PASSED

Support Statement: Baxter, Jones, and Logan are well qualified to serve in this important capacity.

Relation to Strategic Plan: None.

Fiscal Impact: None.

Note: Terry Baxter stepped down from the 2020 Committee on the Selection of SAA Fellows and Merrilee Proffitt consented to serve on the committee.

C. Other Action Items from Council Members

No other action items were brought forward.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. FY 2020 Financials

Fitch guided the Council in reviewing the most current fiscal year budget summary. Concerns about the COVID-19 virus are affecting in-person education courses this spring; staff are closely monitoring national news regarding the novel coronavirus and will attempt to reschedule these courses, if possible. Staff are also monitoring the situation for the Annual Meeting and will continue to discuss with the Council as August approaches.

B. Beaumont Performance Appraisal Process and Timeline

Evans reviewed the process for the annual performance appraisal of the executive director, which will include feedback from the Council and staff both in a written report and an in-person discussion during the May Council meeting. Evans will be sending more information about the next steps soon.

C. Communication Between Executive Committee and Council

As the Executive Committee has been more active in recent years, the Council discussed how best to facilitate communication to keep Council members apprised of Executive Committee actions, which often require very quick turnaround. The Council agreed that the Executive Committee will send to the Council its agenda prior to its monthly calls and will send a monthly summary of Executive Committee actions.

D. Other Discussion Items from Council Members

No other discussion items were brought forward.

V. 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>.

A. Update: Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force

Booth reported via email prior to the Council conference call that the Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force had a productive and inspiring meeting in Chicago on February 19 and will have a final report for the Council by March 31. The Council and task force members are grateful to LYRASIS for their financial support of and participation in the meeting.

B. Update: Archival Compensation Task Force (Verbal Update)

Vagts reported that she is making calls this week to finalize the appointments, and hopes to have the task force fully in place by the end of the month. All of the designated section representatives have been accounted for, and Vagts will be reaching out to the Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment (CORDA) to determine an *ex officio* member to represent them on the group.

C. Update: Affinity Group Working Group (Verbal Update)

Chin, Punzalan, and Yun plan to initiate conversations with all sections to reflect on their current health and paths forward for restructuring SAA's member affinity groups.

D. Update: SAA Job Board Research/Options (Verbal Update)

Carlson provided an update on progress to provide incentives in the SAA Career Center for job listings that include salary information, noting that the plan is to provide a 20% to 25% incentive that should be implemented within the next two months.

E. Update: A*CENSUS II Grant Proposal (Verbal Update)

Evans reported that SAA has reached the second round in the IMLS grant application process, a great step forward in our efforts to secure funding to conduct A*CENSUS II.

F. Updates: Annual Meeting Planning (Verbal Update)

- Executive Leadership Forum
- Council Listening Session
- Leadership Orientation and Forum (Chin, Ramirez, Tuomala)
- Schedule
- Live streaming

The Council briefly discussed a number of activities planned for the 2020 Annual Meeting in Chicago. Beaumont reported that staff are very closely monitoring updates on COVID-19 concerns and will be reviewing hotel contracts with legal counsel as well as researching possibilities for a virtual meeting, if needed. The Council and staff will discuss regularly as the meeting approaches.

G. Report: Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment

The Council reviewed, but did not discuss, this report.

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

No additional reports were brought forward.

I. COUNCIL BUSINESS (continued)

A. Review of March 2020 Action List / Talking Points

Staff agreed to prepare talking points following the meeting for the Council to review and share with their liaison groups.

B. Adjournment

Fitch moved adjournment, Punzalan seconded, and the Council meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:45 p.m. on Friday, March 6.