

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 22 – 24, 2014
Chicago, Illinois**

**Revision of Committee on Ethics and
Professional Conduct Description
(Prepared by CEPC Chair Nancy Freeman and
Council Liaison Bill Landis)**

BACKGROUND

The Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct (CEPC) description was last revised in June 2009. Since that time, the Committee has prepared and the Council has adopted a revised *Code of Ethics for Archivists*. CEPC is currently at work on creating new case studies for use by archivists and others in teaching and discussing specific points in the *Code*. The development of tools to promote understanding and use of the *Code of Ethics for Archivists* is a new task that is not contained in the current CEPC charge, but one that the Council felt, in adopting the new *Code*, was important for CEPC to undertake.

Additionally, when the Council approved the *Core Values of Archivists* statement¹ in May 2011, it did not establish a mechanism for periodic review and potential revision, if necessary, of the statement. The *Code of Ethics for Archivists* is now paired in display with the *Core Values* statement on the SAA website at the direction of the Council. It seems reasonable, given the interrelatedness of these two documents, to ask CEPC to take on the responsibility for periodically reviewing both to ensure that they remain living, relevant documents over time.

DISCUSSION

CEPC has reviewed its charge, in collaboration with its Council liaison and the SAA Executive Director, to bring it into alignment with its current duties and responsibilities and to bring into the scope of its responsibilities the *Core Values of Archivists* statement.

In its discussions, CEPC has also embraced the notion of appointing junior and senior co-chairs of the Committee, which would ensure more continuity in the Committee's leadership from year to year. This is especially critical since many of its promulgation-related responsibilities, such as soliciting and developing case studies, are multi-year projects that benefit immensely from leadership continuity.

¹<http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics>

Finally, in adopting the revised *Code of Ethics for Archivists* in January 2012, the Council decided to remove the *Code* from the Standards Portal, obviating the need for it to undergo the formal standards approval process. The Council stipulated that the *Code*, linked with the *Core Values of Archivists*, be added to the “Position Statements and Resolutions” section of the SAA website, with a direct link from the main navigation bar.

The proposed revision addresses each of these changes.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the description of the Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct (CEPC) be revised as follows (strikethrough = deletion, underline = addition):

Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct

I. Purpose

The Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct (CEPC) addresses issues related to ethical and professional conduct within the archival profession. CEPC facilitates, as needed, the creation and promotion of education and outreach resources relating to the *Code of Ethics for Archivists* and the *Core Values of Archivists* statement and periodically reviews each document for currency.

II. Committee Selection, Size, and Length of Terms

The Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct consists of six members, ~~two~~ appointed by the SAA vice president ~~each year~~ for staggered three-year terms. ~~The chair is appointed annually by the SAA vice president from among the members.~~ In consultation with the senior co-chair, the SAA vice president appoints a junior co-chair from among the rising second-year committee members each year for a two-year term, so that the terms of the two co-chairs are staggered.

III. Duties and Responsibilities

1. The committee recommends to the Council updates to the *Code of Ethics for Archivists* and *Core Values of Archivists* when these are made necessary by changes in laws governing recordkeeping, copyright, or other pertinent subjects, or by changes in professional procedures and practices.
2. The committee periodically conducts a complete review of the *Code of Ethics for Archivists* and *Core Values of Archivists* statement to ensure that *ad hoc* changes have not compromised ~~its~~ their internal consistency and the documents as a whole continues to meet the needs of the profession. It recommends to the Council revisions as necessary.
3. The committee monitors the rise of new ethical and professional conduct issues due to societal, legal, or judicial and technological developments.
4. The committee solicits or creates case studies and other educational materials in a variety of formats to promote understanding and utilization of the *Code of Ethics for Archivists* and *Core Values of Archivists* statement, and works with SAA staff members to make these available in appropriate ways.
5. The committee reviews its charge every two years and works with its Council liaison to propose any necessary changes for approval by the Council.

IV. Reporting Procedures

~~The committee chair presents committee recommendations to the Council. Changes to the Code of Ethics for Archivists are submitted to the Standards Committee according to established procedures. Recommendations related to procedure or ad hoc situations are reported directly to the Council. CEPC reports to the Council and works closely with its Council liaison, the President, and the Executive Director to ensure that it is responsive to the Council's needs. The co-chairs are responsible for submitting an annual report to the Council, and may also submit items for Council action or discussion and feedback as necessary. The co-chairs also are responsible for ensuring that minutes of CEPC meetings are prepared and posted on the CEPC's SAA-hosted website to inform SAA members of its activities and comply with SAA's record-keeping requirements.~~

Revised: June 1, 2009; May 23, 2014

Support Statement: The recommended revisions to the CEPC description more accurately reflect the work with which the committee is currently engaged. Assigning oversight of the *Core Values of Archivists* document to CEPC enhances the document's relationship to the *Code of Ethics for Archivists* and ensures that it is being monitored for currency and relevance to SAA's members and the archives profession.

Relation to Strategic Plan: Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth. Ensuring that both the *Code of Ethics for Archivists* and the *Core Values of Archivists* are regularly reviewed for relevance, and tasking CEPC explicitly with soliciting or creating and promoting tools for understanding and using these key professional documents, helps archivists to be successful and effective in their careers.

Fiscal Impact: None.