

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
May 22 – 24, 2104  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Action: Revise Journal Editorial Board Description  
(Prepared by Editor Greg Hunter and Publishing Director Teresa Brinati)**

**BACKGROUND**

As a matter of course since appointment of Hunter as Journal Editor in January 2012, Hunter and Brinati have referred to and discussed *The American Archivist* Editorial Board description.<sup>1</sup> Revisions are recommended to better align the document with the actual workings of the Editor and the Editorial Board. The format of the proposed revision is based on the Publications Board description<sup>2</sup> approved by the Council in June 2012.

The revision appears in the recommendation below; the original description (last revised by the Council in February 2005) appears in the Appendix and in the link provided in the first footnote. Because so much of the content of the original charge was reorganized and edited to reflect current practice, a tracked document would be complex and unhelpful and is not provided.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the following revised description of *The American Archivist* Editorial Board and Editor be adopted:**

***The American Archivist* Editorial Board**

**I. Purpose**

The Editorial Board advises and assists the Editor of *The American Archivist* in the editorial review and production of the journal and in establishing and implementing editorial policies and procedures for peer review of submitted manuscripts.

The Editorial Board also assists with the evaluation of the Journal Editor as requested by the Council.

**II. Board Size, Length of Terms, and Selection**

The Editorial Board consists of the Editor, who serves as chair of the board, the Reviews Editor, and eight individual board members.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.archivists.org/governance/handbook/section7/groups/AAEB>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www2.archivists.org/governance/handbook/section7/groups/Publications>

The Editor is appointed by the Council. The Editor's term is three years and customarily begins on or about January 1; however, the exact date on which the individual selected assumes the responsibilities of editorship is negotiated by the individual and the Executive Director. An incumbent Editor may be re-appointed for one additional term as Editor. An individual may not serve more than two consecutive terms, but may apply for the position at a later time.

The Reviews Editor is appointed for a three-year term by the Editor. The Reviews Editor may serve no more than two consecutive terms. The Reviews Editor is selected based on demonstrated excellent writing and editorial skills and knowledge of current research and writing in the archives field.

The eight individuals comprising the board are appointed for four-year terms that are staggered so that one-fourth are appointed each year. Board members are nominated by the Editor and appointed by the SAA Vice President based on the list of nominees. In the event that the Vice President is unable to appoint a person nominated by the Editor, the Vice President asks the Editor to nominate another person for appointment. Individuals serving on the Editorial Board are selected because of their knowledge of archival theory, methodology, and practice; expertise in research strategies and methodologies; and experience in archival research and publication.

The Editorial Board also reflects a diversity of archival institutions and functional expertise and the demographic and geographic breadth of the profession. An individual may serve no more than two consecutive terms on the board.

The chair of the Publications Board serves as an *ex officio* member of the Editorial Board.

### **III. Duties and Responsibilities**

#### **A. The Editor**

The Editor coordinates Editorial Board activities. To maintain the editorial independence of the journal as a peer-refereed professional journal, the Editor manages the manuscript review process and makes final decisions for publication. The Editor is responsible for the solicitation, selection, peer review, and final approval of articles, features, and photographs. He or she works with authors and prospective authors on necessary revisions, reviews page proofs before publication, and works closely with the Reviews Editor, a copyeditor, an indexer, and the SAA staff, who handle journal production and business matters.

The Editor uses the Editorial Board listserv as the principal means of communication with the Editorial Board about editorial activities, including, but not limited to, statistical summary of submissions and decisions about submissions, negotiations for special issues, special achievements, problems and needs, and suggestions for Editorial Board policies.

The Editor also serves as an *ex officio* member of the Publications Board.

#### **B. Reviews Editor**

The Reviews Editor works in conjunction with the Editor to commission review essays; selects books and exhibits (print and online) to review; assembles, maintains, and refreshes a stable of reviewers; assigns items to be reviewed and oversees the reviews process; and edits copy for the reviews section in each issue of the journal.

#### **C. Individual Board Members**

Individual Editorial Board members assist the Editor in developing and implementing editorial policies and procedures, soliciting manuscripts to be considered for publication in *The American Archivist*,

recommending other manuscript reviewers, reviewing manuscript submissions for possible publication in the journal, and contributing as needed with reviews of professional literature and resources.

Individual board members also assist with the review of the Editor's performance and may assist in the search for a new Editor.

#### **D. SAA Office**

The SAA office coordinates production aspects of the journal and handles business matters, including:

- Physical and digital production;
- Content licensing;
- Coordination of cover art;
- Advertising sales;
- Subscriptions and claims;
- Providing reports to assist the Editorial Board in accomplishing its goals;
- Coordinating communication with and among Editorial Board members and with SAA members at large;
- Ensuring the production and distribution of Editorial Board meeting minutes; and
- Negotiating contracts with vendors.

#### **IV. Meetings**

The Editorial Board meets at least annually during SAA's Annual Meeting.

The SAA Executive Director, Director of Publishing, and Editorial and Production Coordinator customarily participate in all meetings of the Editorial Board.

#### **V. Budget**

The Council, as part of its budget process, approves the budget (prepared by the SAA office) for *The American Archivist*.

#### **VI. Reporting and Editor Performance Evaluation Procedures**

The Editor reports to the Council. The Editor submits a report three times a year in advance of each Council meeting. The report includes a summary of the Editor's activities, the production of the journal, issues and concerns, and any changes to editorial policies and procedures.

The following procedures apply to the annual performance evaluation of the Editor, which is based on performance criteria, goals and objectives, and a formal review process. The purpose of this process is to form a basis for considering renewal of the Editor's contract, to provide feedback to the Editor, to discuss issues of common concern, and to recognize achievements. The Executive Director establishes a schedule for this evaluation process based on a timetable for renegotiation of the contract with the Editor.

The Executive Director shares with the Editor the statement of criteria for performance evaluation, stipulating elements considered appropriate and relevant for evaluating the Editor's performance on an annual basis. This statement must be reviewed and approved by the Council.

The Executive Director solicits written and/or oral comments on the Editor's performance from the Editorial Board, Council liaison, various SAA staff, three authors who have recently published in the journal, an author in the process of publishing in the journal, and any others who are in a position to provide useful perspectives. Also to be considered are comments received from SAA members or any other information that the Council deems appropriate. The Editor also completes a self-evaluation.

The Executive Director compiles all feedback received and disseminates this information to the Editor and the Council. The Council reviews the feedback regarding the Editor's performance and takes appropriate action. If feasible, the Council conducts a conference call with the Editor; otherwise, the Council conveys conclusions to the Executive Director to share directly with the Editor.

In years in which the incumbent Editor is eligible for reappointment, the Executive Director contacts the incumbent Editor to determine if he or she is interested in serving a second term. If the Editor expresses such an interest, the matter is referred to the Council for evaluation. The Council makes a recommendation regarding reappointment of the Editor or directs the Executive Director to implement a search for a new Editor as outlined in VII. Editor Search Process.

## **VII. Editor Search Process**

In years in which the incumbent Editor is ineligible for reappointment, is not offered reappointment, or chooses not to serve a second term, the Council and staff work together to conduct a search for a new Editor.

### **A. Qualifications of Editor**

The Editor of *The American Archivist* possesses the following qualifications:

1. Leadership skills that allow him or her to present a vision of the journal that places it at the center of the profession's intellectual dialog.
2. Ability to develop and nurture relationships with authors, both established and newly emerging, to encourage them to explore interesting questions and submit material to the journal.
3. Ability to nurture interesting but not completely satisfactory submissions to successful publication.
4. Ability and willingness to pay special attention to the need to develop ideas in newly emerging areas of the profession, to support the thoughtful re-examination of past professional insights, and to address issues of particular relevance to historically under-represented populations.
5. Excellent personal communication and writing skills, including the ability to edit scholarly material, the ability to communicate successfully with those who make submissions, and the ability to report to those in the Society with oversight responsibility for the journal.
6. Sufficient financial skill to manage the journal within the established budget.
7. Sufficient time-management skills to complete tasks in an acceptable manner and to publish the journal at appropriate and regular intervals as established within the annual budget work plan.

### **B. Search Committee**

In January of the year prior to the expiration of the incumbent Editor's term of office, the Executive Director:

1. Forms a search committee consisting of the President (who serves as chair of the committee), the Council liaison to the Editorial Board, the chair of the Publications Board, a member of the Editorial Board selected by the President, the Executive Director, and the Director of Publishing.
2. Consults with the search committee regarding appropriate text for a call for applicants. The deadline for initial applications is no later than May 15.
3. Prepares advertising for the position in all available and appropriate SAA communication outlets.
4. Consults with the search committee to identify other venues for promoting the position and/or identifying prospective candidates who might be encouraged to apply for the position.

The search committee reviews the applications, interviews candidates, and makes a recommendation to the Council on the selection of an Editor. (Should the search committee believe that there are no qualified

candidates, or that additional qualified candidates are desirable, the committee is empowered to solicit additional nominations to supplement those already received.)

The Council, with due consideration of the selection committee's recommendation, makes the final decision.

**C. Suggested Timeline:**

- *January–May:* Advertising of position.
- *May 15:* Application deadline.
- *May 22–June 15:* Search committee receives applications and begins review process to identify candidates who proceed to the next stage.
- *June 15–July 30:* Search committee conducts phone interviews and/or in-person interviews with candidates, deliberates, and prepares report to the Council recommending a new Editor.
- *August:* Search committee delivers its recommendation to the Council. The Council deliberates and either appoints the candidate recommended by the search committee or agrees on a process and timeline for further solicitation and review of candidates. Search committee chair notifies all candidates regarding decision.
- *September/October:* Executive Director executes contract with Editor.
- *November/December:* SAA office facilitates transition between incoming Editor and outgoing Editor.
- *January 1:* New Editor officially assumes duties.

*Approved by the Council: February 5, 2005.*

*Revised: May 23, 2014.*

**Support Statement:** The revised description more accurately reflects current procedures as they have evolved since 2005.

**Relation to Strategic Plan:** None.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.

## Previous Description of *The American Archivist* Editorial Board (From 2005)

### ***American Archivist* Editorial Board**

#### **I. Purpose**

The Editorial Board advises and assists the Editor of *The American Archivist* in the editorial production of the journal and in establishing and implementing editorial policies and procedures for peer review of submitted manuscripts. The Editorial Board also assists with the evaluation of the Journal Editor as requested by the Executive Director, Council, and Elected Officers. In order to maintain the editorial independence of the journal as a peer-refereed professional journal, the Editor manages the manuscript review process and makes final decisions for publication.

#### **II. Board Selection, Size, and Length of Terms**

The Editorial Board consists of eight individuals appointed for four-year terms that are staggered so that one-fourth of the members are appointed each year. An individual may serve no more than two consecutive terms. Board members are nominated by the *American Archivist* Editor and appointed by the Vice President. The Editor submits a list of nominees to the Vice President. In the event that the Vice President fails to appoint a person nominated by the Editor, the Vice President will ask the Editor to nominate another person for appointment.

Individuals serving on the Editorial Board are selected because of their knowledge of archival theory, methodology, and practice; expertise in research strategies and methodologies; and experience in archival research and publication. The Editorial Board will also reflect a diversity of archival institutions and functional expertise and the demographic and geographic breadth of the profession.

The Editor of the *American Archivist* is responsible for coordinating Board activities.

#### **III. Duties and Responsibilities**

The Editorial Board assists the Editor in developing and implementing editorial policies and procedures, in soliciting manuscripts to be considered for publication in the *American Archivist*, in recommending other reviewers, and in reviewing manuscript submissions for possible publication in the journal. The Editorial Board also assists with the annual review of the performance of the Editor (as described in Sections VII and VIII below) and may assist in the search for and nomination of a new *American Archivist* Editor.

The Editorial Board shall meet at least annually during SAA's Annual Meeting. The chair of the Publications Board will serve as an *ex-officio* member of the *American Archivist* Editorial Board. The Editor of the *American Archivist*, the *American Archivist* book review editor, the SAA Publications Editor, Executive Director, and Managing Editor customarily participate in all meetings of the Editorial Board.

#### **IV. Editor's Term of Office**

The Editor's term of office, assuming satisfactory performance of editorial duties, is three years. The Editor is appointed by Council when it meets at SAA's Annual Meeting. The term of office will customarily begin on or about January 1; however, the exact date on which the individual selected assumes the responsibilities of editorship will be negotiated by the individual and the Executive Director.

An incumbent editor may be re-appointed for one additional term as Editor. An individual may not serve more than two consecutive terms, but may apply for the position at a later time.

## **V. Editor Selection Process**

In years in which the incumbent editor is eligible for reappointment, see Section VIII below.

In years in which the incumbent editor is *not* eligible for reappointment, a selection process will take place. In January of the year prior to the expiration of the incumbent editor's term of office, the Executive Director will:

1. Form a selection committee that will consist of the President (who will serve as chair of the committee), the Council liaison to the *American Archivist* Editorial Board, the chair of the Publications Board, a member of the *American Archivist* Editorial Board selected by the President, the Executive Director, and the Managing Editor.
2. Consult with the selection committee regarding appropriate text for a call for applicants. The deadline for initial applications should be no later than May 15.
3. Prepare advertising for the position for:
  - a. Placement in *Archival Outlook* and, depending on the publication schedule, in *American Archivist*;
  - b. Posting on the SAA Web site and on electronic mail lists; and
  - c. Dissemination via broadcast email to the SAA membership.
4. Consult with the selection committee to identify other venues for promoting the position and/or identifying prospective candidates who might be encouraged to apply for the position.

The selection committee will review the applications and make recommendations to Council prior to the SAA Annual Meeting. Should the selection committee believe that there are no qualified candidates, or that additional qualified candidates would be desirable, the committee is empowered to solicit additional nominations to supplement those already received.

Council, with due consideration of the committee's report but without requirement that it act in accordance with the committee's recommendations, will select an editor during the SAA Annual Meeting.

The following timetable is suggested:

**January–May:** Advertising of position.

**May 15:** Application deadline.

**May 22–June 15:** Selection committee receives applications and begins review process to identify 3–5 candidates to proceed to the next stage.

**June 15–July 15:** Selection committee conducts phone interviews with 3–5 candidates and prepares report for Council recommending candidates to interview in person during the SAA Annual Meeting.

**July 20:** Council invites candidates to interview during the Annual Meeting.

**August:** On the day prior to the first Council meeting, interviews are conducted by the selection committee, which ranks candidates and prepares a recommendation to Council.

**August:** On the day of the first Council meeting, the selection committee delivers its recommendation to Council, Council deliberates and either passes a resolution endorsing the recommendation or agrees on a process and timeline for further solicitation and review of candidates. Selection committee chair notifies candidates.

**September:** Executive director executes contract with editor.

**January 1:** New editor officially assumes duties.

## **VI. Qualifications of Editor**

The Editor of the *American Archivist* should possess the following qualifications:

1. Demonstrated leadership skills that allow him or her to present a vision of the journal that places it at the center of the profession's intellectual dialog.
2. Demonstrated ability to develop and nurture relationships with authors, both established and newly emerging, to encourage them to explore interesting questions and submit material to the journal.
3. Ability to nurture interesting but not completely satisfactory submissions to successful publication.
4. Ability and willingness to pay special attention to the need to develop ideas in newly emerging areas of the profession and support the thoughtful re-examination of past professional insights, and address issues of particular relevance to historically under-represented populations.
5. Excellent personal communication and writing skills, including the ability to edit scholarly material, the ability to communicate successfully with those who make submissions, and the ability to report to those in the Society with oversight responsibility for the journal.
6. Sufficient financial skill to manage the journal within the budget established for it.
7. Sufficient time-management skills to complete tasks in an acceptable manner and, most importantly, to publish the journal at appropriate and regular intervals as established within the annual budget work plan.

## **Section VII. Reporting Procedure**

The Editor of the *American Archivist* reports to the SAA Council. Council's oversight responsibility is accomplished primarily through review of the Editor's annual performance evaluation. Council's responsibility is facilitated by the *American Archivist* Editorial Board and the Executive Director, with the Board bearing primary responsibility for editorial matters and the Executive Director bearing primary responsibility for administrative and financial matters.

The Editor of the *American Archivist* will use the *American Archivist* Editorial Board listserv as the principal means of communication with the Editorial Board. The Editor will submit bimonthly reports to the Editorial Board on editorial activities, including, but not limited to, statistical summary of submissions and decisions about submissions, negotiations for special issues, special achievements, problems and needs, and suggestions for Editorial Board policies. The Editor of the *American Archivist* will prepare an annual report to the Board at least four weeks in advance of SAA's Annual Meeting, summarizing the Editor's activities, the production of the journal, issues and concerns, and needs for editorial policies and procedures.

## **VIII. Performance Evaluation Process for Editor of the *American Archivist***

The following procedures will be followed for the purpose of conducting an annual performance evaluation of the Editor of the *American Archivist*, based on performance criteria, goals and objectives, and a formal review process. The purpose of this process is to form a basis for considering renewal of the Editor's contract, to provide feedback to the Editor, to discuss issues of common concern, and to recognize achievements. The Executive Director will establish a schedule for this evaluation process, based on a timetable for renegotiation of the contract with the Editor's institution.

The Editor and Executive Director will prepare a statement of criteria for performance evaluation, stipulating elements that will be considered as appropriate and relevant for evaluating the Editor's performance on an annual basis. This statement must be reviewed and approved by Council.

The Executive Director will form an evaluation committee, which shall consist of the President, the Council liaison to the Editorial Board, and the Executive Director.

At the beginning of each evaluative period, the Editor, in consultation with the Editorial Board, will submit to the Executive Director an annual statement of personal goals and objectives. This statement will be organized according to the criteria for performance evaluation as drafted by the Executive Director and



the Editor and approved by Council. The Executive Director will forward the statement to the evaluation committee, which will have responsibility for its approval.

By October 30 of each year, Editorial Board members will submit to the Executive Director a completed performance appraisal that has been compiled by its designee from the Editorial Board. This appraisal form addresses the Editor's work with the Board and encourages inclusion of comments received from Editorial Board members and other SAA members concerning the quality of the journal, its editorial policies, the Editor's performance, and related concerns.

By November 30 of each year, the Editor will submit to the Executive Director an annual summary of activities and accomplishments, with clear reference to the current year's goals and objectives, as well as a completed self-appraisal form.

The evaluation committee may solicit written or oral comments on the Editor's performance from the Managing Editor, the Chair of the Publications Board, those who have recently published in the journal, and others who are in a position to provide useful perspectives. The committee will also consider comments received from SAA members, or any other information that the committee deems appropriate. Submission to Council of information solicited or obtained by the evaluation committee, other than that found in the reports of the Editor and the Editorial Board, will be at the discretion of the evaluation committee.

The Executive Director will compile comments from Editorial Board members, staff, and others, prepare a written performance appraisal, and disseminate this information to the evaluation committee and to the Editor. The Executive Director will then meet with the Editor to discuss the performance evaluation and self-evaluation materials. Based on this discussion and written materials, the evaluation committee will prepare a report for Council review at its winter meeting. The evaluation committee's report to Council will include, in addition to its own recommendations, copies of the reports submitted to the Executive Director by the Editor and the Editorial Board.

At its winter meeting, Council will review the Editor's annual report, the report of the Editorial Board, the report of the evaluation committee, and any additional comments the Editor may choose to submit, take such actions as are deemed advisable, and convey its conclusions to the chair of the evaluation committee.

The chair of the evaluation committee will review Council's conclusions and the evaluation report with the Editor. This annual evaluation will be considered in preparing revised goals and objectives for the Editor for the coming year.

Annual evaluations will be taken into consideration during periodic discussions concerning renewal of the Editor's contract.

In years in which the incumbent editor is eligible for reappointment, the Executive Director will contact the incumbent editor to determine if he or she is interested in serving a second term. If the Editor expresses such an interest, the matter will be referred to the evaluation committee. That committee, after reviewing the Editor's annual performance reviews and consulting such individuals as it deems appropriate, will make a recommendation to Council regarding reappointment of the Editor. Council, meeting in executive session, will review the Executive Committee's recommendation and either vote to reappoint the Editor to a second term or direct the Executive Director to implement a search for a new Editor as outlined in Section V.

*Approved by the SAA Council, February 5, 2005*