

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
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Chicago, Illinois**

**Review of SAA's Statement on Diversity
(Prepared by Executive Director Nancy Beaumont)**

BACKGROUND

In August 2010 the SAA Council adopted a Statement on Diversity that it reviewed and reaffirmed in January 2013. At that time the Council agreed that the Statement should be reviewed every three years in conjunction with review of the SAA Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Policy.

See the statement [here](#) and below:

SAA Statement on Diversity

As a professional association that benefits from the participation of people from all backgrounds, the Society of American Archivists strives to ensure that its membership, the holdings that archivists acquire and manage, and the users whom archivists serve reflect the evolving diversity of society.

SAA understands *diversity* to encompass:

Socio-cultural factors. These factors relate to individual and community identity, and include the attributes mentioned in SAA's Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Policy.

Professional and geographic factors. Concern about these factors reflects the Society's desire for broad participation from archivists working in various locations, repository types and sizes, and professional specializations.

By embracing diversity, the Society speaks more effectively on behalf of the entire profession, serves a fuller range of stakeholders, increases organizational credibility, and becomes a stronger advocate for the archives profession. SAA's initiatives are focused primarily on achieving socio-cultural diversity. This "living" document will be reviewed every three years in conjunction with the SAA Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Policy.

Commentary:

Diversity is one of three high priorities identified in SAA's Strategic Plan from 2005 to 2013. To

guide and clarify our work in this area, the Council developed the "SAA Statement on Diversity." The Society of American Archivists has long promoted policies of nondiscrimination, identified diversity as a value for the association and the profession (as expressed in the Strategic Plan 2014-2018), and strived to foster a just and inclusive professional culture that reflects and embraces the diversity of the larger society. (For a review of SAA's many early actions, see Elizabeth Adkins's 2007 Presidential Address, "[Our Journey Toward Diversity—And a Call to \[More\] Action.](#)")

In 1992 SAA adopted an [Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Policy](#) that is reviewed ~~annually~~ at least every three years. But SAA recognizes that simply pledging nondiscrimination is insufficient, and that we must make positive efforts to develop diversity among our membership, our members' holdings, and our members' user communities in order to enrich the historical record and achieve professional excellence. In 2006 the SAA Council adopted "Strategic Priorities" that included the following issue statement as the basis for its strategic priority related to diversity:

The relevance of archives to society and the completeness of the documentary record hinge on the profession's success in ensuring that its members, the holdings that they collect and manage, and the users that they serve reflect the diversity of society as a whole.

The "[Strategic Plan](#)" document, which guides SAA activities, is reviewed and updated annually to accommodate the evolving landscape of professional challenges.

SAA promotes diversity in all of its professional activities with an eye to ensuring effective representation of our members, addressing the concerns of the full range of stakeholders represented within our members' holdings, and reaching out to archivists' many communities of users.

Adopted by the SAA Council on August 9, 2010; reviewed and reaffirmed in January 2013.

DISCUSSION / QUESTION

SAA's Strategic Plan has changed since the Statement was last reviewed and reaffirmed, and the language cited in the Statement ("The relevance of archives to society and the completeness of the documentary record hinge on the profession's success in ensuring that its members, the holdings that they collect and manage, and the users that they serve reflect the diversity of society as a whole") does not appear in the 2014-2018 Plan – although the "sentiment" expressed in the Plan is consistent with this language.

Staff has suggested one minor editorial change to correct the Statement regarding the review process for the Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Policy (strikethrough = deletion, underline = addition).

Does the Council wish to make any changes in SAA's Statement on Diversity at this time, particularly in light of changes in the Strategic Plan?