Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 11–13, 2016
Chicago, Illinois

Staff Report: Annual Meeting
(Prepared by Executive Director Nancy Beaumont)

"Principles and Priorities for Continuously Improving the SAA Annual Meeting"

For an update on progress made toward the Council-adopted "Principles and Priorities for Continuously Improving the SAA Annual Meeting," see the Appendix. Updates appear in red type.

*ARCHIVES*RECORDS 2016* in Atlanta

ARCHIVES*RECORDS 2016 promises to be a rewarding experience for all, with outstanding conference and pre-conference programming (including the 10th Anniversary of the SAA Research Forum), dynamic speakers and learning formats, several options for participating in repository tours and service projects, and a host of networking opportunities. As in recent years, the overall conference schedule is very tight.

Program Development

See "Strengthening Our Connection" by 2016 Program Committee Co-Chairs Cheryl Oestreicher and Barbara Teague for an overview of the excellent work of that committee. (A final report will be submitted to the Council after the conference.) As noted, the innovations for the 2016 Joint Annual Meeting included a 6-weeks-later proposal deadline and use of new software that streamlined the submission, committee review, and speaker management processes. Interestingly the much later submission deadline did not result in an increase in the number of proposals received. (A total of 141 session and poster proposals were evaluated.) Since January, the SAA staff has been in regular communication with speakers to ensure that we have the most up-to-date information for posting on the conference website and that the speakers have the information and materials they need to plan for their presentations. (See "Resources" for information for speakers, first-timers and students, and those who want to "make the case" to attend.)

In addition to the 70 education sessions accepted by the Program Committee, the meeting will feature 15 Professional Poster presentations, 31 Graduate Student Poster presentations, and up to five slots for "Pop-Up Sessions" for which proposals will be submitted by the deadline of June 3 and then put to SAA and CoSA members for a vote. This change in procedure for Pop-Ups is based on ideas that emerged from our 2015 experience.

A variety of noon-time forums are scheduled for Thursday, August 4, including those sponsored by the SAA Diversity Committee, the SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Forces, and the Technical Subcommittee on Archival Facilities Guidelines. In addition, the schedule includes an advocacy

forum on "The Georgia Archives Experience" and a "Town Hall Conversation with SAA Leaders" that will feature SAA President Dennis Meissner and Vice President/President-Elect Nancy McGovern.

Use of Social Media Before, During, and After the Conference

See "Use of Social Media at 2012 Annual Meeting"[1] for background on initiatives to incorporate social media more effectively into all aspects of the Annual Meeting. We plan to continue to build on lessons learned since then to enhance use of social media before, during, and after the 2016 conference.

- The Host Committee blog went live on April 14.The notion of an active Host Committee blog, now in its eighth year, is (appropriately) institutionalized.
- We will have free wireless access throughout the hotel meeting space. This will make it easier to support…
- … Use of Twitter and Facebook before, during, and after the conference. The hashtag #saa2016 has been in active use for several months, and the feed for this hashtag is aggregated on the conference home page.
- Matt Black has enhanced the conference web page(s) to integrate social media more seamlessly. Each page on the conference site features share buttons, and analytics demonstrate that users are consistently sharing pages via these buttons.
- The online schedule (via Sched.org) uses best-practice share features, allowing individual session descriptions to be shared and promoted. The platform also encourages users to connect their social media accounts, which enhances attendees' ability to connect more directly via social media.

Service Projects

Inspired by the work of archivists at the 2012-2015 conferences and the recommendations of the Social Responsibility subcommittee of the Annual Meeting Task Force (2012), Host Committee members have been working to line up service projects to be held immediately prior to and during the conference. More information about how to sign up for service opportunities is forthcoming; watch the website.

Conference Promotion

Promotion of the Joint Annual Meeting began in the early fall via the conference website and in the January/February issue of *Archival Outlook*, with articles by the Program and Host committee co-chairs. Host Committee articles appear in each issue leading up to the conference. The Host Committee has done an outstanding job of providing information and tips on its blog linked from the conference web page, and is in the process of developing a robust list of repository open houses and tours on Tuesday and Wednesday of the conference week.

We did not develop a full Preliminary Program in PDF this year, but instead focused on creating a 12-page flyer that mailed to all SAA and CoSA members on April 15. All materials point to the Sched.org website, which allows for quick searching and filtering and also allows users to create a personalized schedule.

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[1] http://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/0612-V-L-AnnMtgSocialMedia.pdf

We continue to use *In the Loop* to refresh our promotional messages about the program, affiliated events, and the host city, and to remind members and other prospective registrants of important deadlines (like ***July 6, the Early-Bird registration deadline!***).

Registration

Registration "went live" on the conference website on Friday, April 15. As of close of business on Monday, April 25 (i.e., 14 weeks out), we have registered 79 "full paid" attendees, of whom 5 are students. This compares with 193 "full paid" attendees (including 27 students) at 14 weeks out from the 2015 conference and 208 full-paid attendees (including 19 students) at 14 weeks out from the 2014 joint conference.

Per the suggestion of the Annual Meeting Task Force's Social Responsibility subcommittee, the registration form includes an opportunity to "help us reduce our footprint" by opting out of receiving the print Onsite Program. In response to suggestions from the Women Archivists Roundtable, we have once again asked registrants to indicate if they are interested in learning more about child care options in Atlanta, which we are currently investigating.

Exhibit, Sponsorship, and Advertising Support

Given that the majority of SAA's exhibitors are "loyal" partners, we decided again this year to forego printing and mailing of the exhibitor prospectus and to rely on personal contact, email communication, and website postings for promotion of our exhibit and sponsorship opportunities. Throughout the fall we encouraged exhibitors to sign up by January 31 to receive a discount on 2016 exhibit space. We are now in year seven of working with Conference & Logistics Consultants' "virtual expo hall" software, a sign-up page on the conference website on which prospective exhibitors can view a live, real-time floor plan showing currently available booths and can select and confirm their booth space(s) immediately. This process saves time for the exhibitors and for staff.

Exhibits revenue to date totals $66,000 (compared with $87,700 in 2015), sponsorship revenue totals $23,100 (compared with $37,200 in 2015), and advertising revenue for the preliminary flyer and onsite program and the website totals $7,530 (compared with $13,700 in 2015). Special thanks to our five confirmed sponsors (Atlas Systems, Hollinger Metal Edge, LibNova, Preservation Technologies, and Preservica) for their ongoing support of SAA and the Joint Annual Meeting.

As always, I welcome your comments and questions.

Principles and Priorities for Continuously Improving the SAA Annual Meeting
(Adopted by the SAA Council, August 12, 2013, with Updates as of May 2016)

This document presents a summary of the Council's principles and priorities for ensuring the continued development of the Annual Meeting, based on the work of the 2011-2013 Annual Meeting Task Force. Going forward, the Council expects that there will be ongoing reporting on the extent to which these Principles and Priorities are put into play for the Annual Meeting. [See "Progress on Priorities as of January 2014" beginning on page 2, as well as Agenda Item 0813-1-VI-E-5-AnnMtg at http://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/0813-1-VI-E-5-AnnMtg.pdf.]

Guiding Principles

- We will make every meeting as useful, affordable, accessible, and enjoyable as possible for all attendees.
- We will explore new locations, structure, and content for the Annual Meeting on an ongoing basis.
- We will embrace a culture of experimentation and will be willing to take calculated risks with respect to the Annual Meeting. No aspect of the meeting will be off limits based on "tradition."
- We will encourage diversity among the people attending the meeting, contributing to its content, and benefiting from its results.
- We will actively pursue ways of making meeting content available online.
- We will integrate a commitment to social responsibility and sustainability into all aspects of meeting planning and execution.
- We will continuously seek feedback from both attendees and non-attendees on all aspects of the meeting.

Progress on Priorities as of May 2016 (updates in red)

Site Selection and Contract Requirements:

- We will experiment with meeting in cities of varying sizes using a combination of a convention center and room blocks in several hotels at varying price points. *[Contracts signed with Cleveland Convention Center plus three hotels for 2015, with Hilton Atlanta for 2016, with Oregon Convention Center plus two hotels for 2017, and with Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, DC, for 2018. Going forward, SAA will consider alternatives to quadrennial meetings in Washington, DC.]*

- We will offer inexpensive alternative housing (such as dormitories) whenever feasible. *[Staff actively pursued options for the 2014, 2015, and 2016 conferences, but found that all local colleges, universities, and other institutions with dorm space discontinue availability of*

dorms beginning in early August. We will continue to pursue this option for future conferences.]

- We will stipulate in all Requests for Proposals (RFP) that free wireless access in meeting spaces is a key component of our needs.
  [This stipulation is covered in all current contracts (2014-2018) and will be included in all future RFPs.]

- We will stipulate in all RFPs the importance of fair labor practices, sustainable ("green") practices, and donation of excess food and beverage to worthy causes.
  [This stipulation is covered in all current contracts (2014-2018) and will be included in all future RFPs.]

- Staff will actively monitor information about labor contracts and potential labor actions affecting the hotel sector.
  [This is being done on an ongoing basis.]

Priorities for Delivery of Meeting Content:

- We will deploy a mobile conference app for access to program information via smart phones and tablets.
  [The app launched in 2013 and has been refined each year based on user feedback and staff experience.]

- We will ensure that each year's conference website includes effective functionality and navigation.
  [The conference website was refined for 2015 and 2016, and has been fully incorporated into SAA's redesigned website.]

- We will seek to provide free access to recordings made of important sessions from past conferences.
  [All recordings from the 2006 – 2014 Annual Meetings are now available for free download. The conference fee for the 2016 Joint Annual Meeting in Atlanta includes free access to MP3s of all sessions, available beginning in September 2016.]

- We will investigate and incrementally implement online access to meeting content by various means as technology and resources permit.
  [Staff has been discussing approaches and costs with several companies that offer these services. For 2014 we negotiated with long-time vendor Convention Recordings to provide downloadable MP3 audio recordings of all education sessions and plenaries for 12 months for just $29 for SAA members. This replaced the previous model of $99/$149 for CDs. Most recent quotes from two vendors for providing either real-time access to sessions or video recordings of all sessions for ARCHIVES 2015 ranged from $75,000 to $218,000. See also the previous bullet.]

- We will implement sustainable practices in our production of conference materials.
  [As of 2013, registrants may opt out from receiving the onsite program in paper. Approximately 10% of attendees have selected this option each year. We expect that as the

app is adopted more widely, more attendees will forego the print program. We are using recycled materials for name badges and badge holders.]

Priorities for New Approaches to Meeting Content and Structure:

- We will experiment with new approaches to plenary sessions.
  *[**2013**: The opening plenary featured a panel of two speakers moderated by the SAA president. The vice president/president-elect presented her inaugural address at the Business Meeting on Saturday.*
  ***2014**: The opening plenary featured a panel discussion on access to records, along with awards; Plenary 2 featured a speaker on National History Day, along with awards; the presidential address was presented via videotape on the website so that all members may view it; and the vice president/president-elect presented her inaugural address at the Business Meeting on Saturday.*
  ***2015**: Plenary 1 featured two speakers on "story-telling" to address SAA's Goal 1; Plenary 2 featured Kathleen's Roe's presidential address, Dennis Meissner's comments on the need to pursue data to complement SAA's messages on the "value of archives," and Helen Wong Smith's comments on the SAA Council's commitment to addressing cultural competence.*
  ***2016**: Plenary 1 will feature Chris Taylor, director of inclusion and community engagement at the Minnesota Historical Society, on "Getting Our House in Order: Moving from Diversity to Inclusion."]*

- We will identify and implement new approaches to structured and unstructured networking.
  [As in the past four years, a room will be set aside with ten or more round tables that small groups may use for informal meetings on an ad hoc basis.]

- We will experiment with new formats and content for education sessions.
  *[**2014**: The Call for Proposals invited individuals to propose new session formats of any kind. Sessions will be 60 or 75 minutes long rather than the "traditional" 90-minute time blocks in the hope that this will open up time for other possible conference activities.*
  ***2015**: The Program Committee implemented a new session format – "Pop-Up Sessions" –for the Cleveland conference.*
  ***2016**: Learning from the 2015 experience, the 2016 Program Committee has reserved five slots for Pop-Up sessions that will be submitted via a call for proposals by June 3 and voted on by SAA and CoSA members.]*

- The Program Committee charge will be revised to encourage Program Committees to innovate in additional ways.
  [The Council adopted a revised charge at its August 2013 meeting. (See 0813-1-III-A-2-ProgComm.)]

- We will actively publicize to members all efforts to consider, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of new approaches.
  [This document – with updates – will be provided on an ongoing basis as a component of the Annual Meeting staff report. In addition, Program Committee and Host Committee reports will address the "Principles and Priorities" as appropriate.]