

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
May 7–9, 2018  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Extend Publications Editor's Term  
(Prepared by Publications Board Council Liaison Amy Cooper Cary and  
Executive Director Nancy Beaumont)**

**BACKGROUND**

The SAA Publications Editor serves at the pleasure of the SAA Council according to the following charge [underlined below for emphasis regarding the Publications Editor]:

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of the Publications Board and Publications Editor is to ensure that the Society's non-serial publications serve the needs of its members. The Publications Board assists the Publications Editor by establishing overall policy direction, goals, and priorities for the non-serial publications program; approving manuscripts; and monitoring publications to ensure consistently high quality. The Publications Board also assists with the evaluation of the Publications Editor as requested by the Council.

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

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

The Publications Editor's term of office, assuming satisfactory performance, is three years, with an option of reappointment for one additional three-year term.

The eight individual board members are appointed for four-year terms that are staggered so that one-fourth of the members are appointed each year. The Publications Editor recommends new members for appointment by the SAA Vice President. The Vice President bears ultimate responsibility for appointing board members to ensure that they represent diverse knowledge areas and constituencies within SAA. The Publications Editor's recommendations, however, bear considerable weight in this appointment process. An individual may serve no more than two consecutive terms.

The chair of *The American Archivist* Editorial Board will serve as an *ex officio* member of the Publications Board.

**III. Duties and Responsibilities**

## **A. Publications Editor**

The role of the Publications Editor is to set a vision and provide philosophical and strategic direction for the program, acquire manuscripts, maintain a clear and transparent review process, direct the work of the Publications Board, cultivate partnerships with other professional associations, and seek external financial support (with the Council's permission) for specific projects.

The Publications Editor also serves as an *ex officio* member of *The American Archivist* Editorial Board.

## **B. Publications Board**

The Publications Board assists the Publications Editor to:

1. Develop and implement editorial policies and procedures.
2. Review manuscripts, recommend reviewers, and coordinate review processes.
3. Solicit authors and publish works that support the archival profession.
  - Ensure that seminal archival literature remains in publication.
  - Publish new, and newly translated, academic works on advanced archival topics.
  - Publish works that establish best practices. Produce revised editions as necessary.
  - Publish new works that meet the evolving needs of the membership.
4. Identify titles published by other publishing outlets that should be acquired for distribution by SAA or promoted by SAA.
5. Continue a fiscally responsible program of publishing and distributing works relating to archival history, practice, research, and principles.
  - Work to increase funds for an expanded publications program, such as cooperative ventures with other publishers, seeking grants to defray the cost of some publications, and suggesting ways in which the Council-designated Publications Fund might be enhanced.
  - Seek ways to improve marketing strategies for current and new audiences.
6. Participate fully in all board discussions.

## **C. SAA Office**

The SAA office coordinates the physical production and mechanical aspects of the publishing program, including:

- Negotiate contracts with authors;
- Negotiate contracts with vendors (e.g., printers);
- Negotiate contracts with other publishing outlets to distribute works;
- Oversee production of SAA publications;
- Manage inventory of titles;
- Ensure that all deadlines are met;
- Provide reports to assist the Publications Board to accomplish its goals;
- Coordinate communication with and among the Publications Board members, and with SAA members at large;
- Ensure the production and distribution of Publications Board meeting minutes.

## **IV. Meetings**

The Publications Board typically meets twice each year, once at the Annual Meeting and once at the midpoint of the fiscal year (provided funding is available). The Council liaison, Editor of *The American Archivist*, Executive Director, and Director of Publishing participate in all meetings of the Publications Board.

## **V. Budget**

The SAA Council, as part of its budget process, approves the publications program budget, which is prepared by the SAA office.

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

The Publications Editor reports directly to the Council, and is required to submit written reports three times a year to the Council. The Council also may request that the Publications Editor attend and present a verbal report in conjunction with the Annual Meeting.

If the Council expresses concern about the performance of the Publications Editor, it will charge the Executive Director to gather information so that the Council can conduct a more detailed performance review. Such a performance review would include feedback from Publications Board members, the Director of Publishing, authors, and other individuals as appropriate.

In years in which the incumbent Publications Editor is eligible for reappointment, the Executive Director will contact the incumbent Publications Editor to determine if he or she is interested in serving a second term. If the Publications Editor expresses such an interest, the matter will be referred to the Council. After reviewing the Publications Editor's performance based on the position description and consulting such individuals as it deems appropriate, the Council will determine whether it wishes to offer the Publications Editor reappointment to a second term or will direct the Executive Director to implement a search for a new Publications Editor.

*Approved by the Council September 29, 2006.*

*Revised by the Council: June 2012.*

Publications Editor Christopher Prom was appointed to that position effective March 1, 2013, for a three-year term ending December 31, 2015. He was reappointed effective January 1, 2016, for a three-year term ending December 31, 2018.

On January 31, Prom sent an email message to Beaumont requesting Council consideration of an extension of his contract through December 31, 2019:

Hi Nancy,

I've been meaning to contact you for a while, and would like to ask if SAA would consider extending my editor contract for an additional year, or however long you and the SAA Council feel appropriate?

As you'll recall, my current term was adjusted downward slightly from past practice to account for the fact SAA quite wisely sought to put its editor contracts on a calendar year basis. In

addition, I have several key projects (AFSIII, proposed new archival futures series, and pilot of new e-distribution platform), which I'd like to see through to fruition.

In other words, I think this extension would allow me to hand off a much cleaner slate to the next publications editor, so that person can pursue his or her own initiatives. And, in full honesty, I enjoy the position and feel like I am still growing and learning every day, as I work with authors, the board, and SAA staff such as Teresa and Abigail.

Thank you and Council for considering this request.

Chris Prom

In discussing this matter with SAA President Tanya Zanish-Belcher, she asked that it be put on the May 2018 Council meeting agenda rather than being considered solely by the Executive Committee.

## **DISCUSSION**

Prom makes a compelling case for extending his term by one year so that he may complete or further a number of projects and initiatives that were started during his term.

Should the Council wish to seek another Publications Editor, that search would have to commence immediately. Given the extensive number of activities currently being conducted by those who would be involved in the search, this process would significantly tax SAA's volunteers and staff.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT Christopher Prom's second term as Publications Editor be extended by one year, to end on December 31, 2019.**

**Support Statement:** Prom's work as Publications Editor has been outstanding, and it is both appropriate and in the Society's best interest to extend his term to allow him to complete or further a number of projects and initiatives that were started during his term.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.