

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 20-22, 2019
Chicago, Illinois**

**Petition to Form Accessibility and Disability Section
(Prepared by Dr. Lydia Tang)**

BACKGROUND

SAA first officially began addressing accessibility with the Joint Archives Management/Records Management Roundtables Working Group on Accessibility in Archives and Records Management in 2010. Since the Diversity Committee was founded in 2012, accessibility/disability is always represented and is featured at the annual Diversity Forum. In 2018, SAA convened a Task Force to Revise the Best Practices on Accessibility. A primary wish of the task force is to continue the professional dialogue about accessibility, which can be accomplished by founding this section.

The topic of disability—for archivists, users, historical documentation, research, and accessibility of services/resources—currently does not have a dedicated section. While aspects of accessibility/disability touch upon other existing sections and are represented within the appointed Diversity Committee, the goal of creating a dedicated section is to ensure that accessibility and disability have a robust and constant presence within the profession. This section would serve as a vehicle for advocacy and provides an open forum for members to exchange ideas and learn from each other.

DISCUSSION

While disability is represented on the appointed Diversity Committee, an appointed group doesn't allow an open forum for the broader membership to have discussions and learn from each other. The hope for this section is that it can be an inclusive community for people with disabilities and allies, where they can learn from each other, compile resources, and showcase work and collections promoting accessibility and disability representation, which is beyond what a single (or couple) of representatives could accomplish on the Diversity Committee. It should be noted that the Diversity Committee is connected with the chairs of the Women Archivists, Women's Collections, Archives and Archivists of Color, Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage Archives, Native American Archives, and Diverse Sexuality and Gender sections. The existence of these sections demonstrates the desire for wider member engagement and have a demonstrated positive impact for the Diversity Committee, SAA, and the wider profession.

While a perennial concern about sections is their continued sustainability, this proposed section has a remarkable level of enthusiastic support from the SAA membership. Within less than 6 hours of the petition's circulation, it reached the 100-member approval threshold and gained almost 300 signatures within the first four days. In the survey, nearly 60 people have indicated that they would be interested in participating in section leadership. While immediately incorporating all interested individuals into a steering committee that large would be impossible, the level of interest and support is impressive and bodes well for sustained and dedicated leadership for many years to come.

Finalizing the section name, reflecting the variety of disabilities and attitudes about it, was challenging. Accessibility and disability can be viewed as a Venn diagram. They are similar, but not equivalent. *Accessibility* can broadly focus on the ability to access but doesn't specifically represent Disabilities. *Disability* by itself can be construed as emphasizing the implied *lack* of ability. The section focus group also responded well to the word *Inclusion* because it can represent how accessibility benefits everyone, including people with temporary disabilities or who are elderly. However, *Inclusion* also has broader meanings beyond the intended scope of the section, and the Diversity Committee is encouraged to consider adding "Inclusion" to their name.

Goals of the Section:

- To be a section dedicated to engaging the archival profession on accessibility topics including archivists with disabilities, users with disabilities, collections representing people with disabilities, and the accessibility of collections, spaces, and workflows.
- To be a supportive community for archives professionals and allies to share their perspectives and fellowship.
 - Potential projects to build the community:
 - To encourage an inclusive and supportive community, the section would need to create a "Community Values" document to provide guidance on disability etiquette and sensitivity.
 - In collaboration with SNAP, the section could support new professionals transitioning into professional positions by creating resources on self-advocacy, surviving and thriving at conferences and other professional events, and practical issues such as transitioning insurance plans.
 - To collaborate with accessibility committees within allied professional organizations such as the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), the American Association for Museums (AAM), the American Library Association (ALA), and the National Council on Public History (NCPH) to collectively advance accessibility within the GLAM professions.
 - To reach out to disability-focused organizations to encourage people with disabilities to engage with archives.
- To compile and encourage the development of tools, resources, and workflows to improve accessibility within archives.

- Examples of potential projects include:
 - Compile and maintain guidelines, standards, and a bibliography of helpful resources, and
 - Promote and create accessibility-related training opportunities.
- To enable SAA members to learn from each other about emerging accessibility best practices, disability awareness, and other relevant topics with projects such as:
 - Hosting monthly/quarterly open calls throughout the year for members to get to know each other, have mini-presentations on various themes, and collectively troubleshoot issues.
- To showcase and celebrate collections and people with disabilities within the historical record and archival profession.
 - Potential projects:
 - Maintain a directory of disability-related collections and repositories; and
 - Showcase section members and collections through newsletter/blog/microsite profiles and other initiatives.
- To support the Diversity Committee and advocate for disability awareness and sensitivity within SAA at the Annual Meeting, within communication platforms, publications, and other venues.
- To support and offer updates to the Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities as needed and requested by the SAA Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the SAA Council approve the creation of a new Accessibility and Disability Section.

Support Statement: The formation of this section has been overwhelmingly and positively supported by the SAA membership. The petition reached the 100-member minimum for endorsement within the first 6 hours of circulation and more than doubled by the second day. By the time of this petition submission, 300 positive votes were collected (292 of them being self-reported SAA members in good standing). Comments and feedback were overwhelmingly positive, including the following selected comments:

“As an archivist with disabilities, I have long felt frustrated that there is no formal mechanism for discussing/acknowledging the topic of disabilities in archives (collections, archivists, users) in SAA. I have also been frustrated by accessibility challenges I have encountered attending SAA workshops and events and would appreciate a section being devoted to these issues and working towards making our profession and organization more accessible to all. (I did not join SAA until recently, although I have been involved in

the archives field for almost 10 years because of issues like these.) I fully support this section proposal and would love to be involved!”

“I would like to see this Section highlight and center disabled people's voices (both disabled archivists and disabled archives' users), specifically those who hold other marginalized identities.”

“Glad this is happening, because a section like this should have already existed!”

“It is easy to lump this type of work into a group on diversity and inclusion, but I think the way this is written to not only address collections, but spaces as well is a great reason to have a separate section.”

“If this section existed I might consider re-joining SAA.”

“I wholeheartedly support the formation of an Accessibility Section.”

“Wonderful idea to help archivists collaborate to make their repositories more accessible, and to provide a space for archivists with disabilities to voice their thoughts and concerns.”

“As a former member of the Task Force on Accessibility, I think it's extremely important to have a standing section that will help members exchange information and advocate for accessibility issues within the field.”

“Great idea - we're currently working on making our webpages WCAG 2.1 compliant & it'd be great to have a space to discuss the issues we're facing with others in the same boat!”

Impact on Strategic Priorities:

Goal 1: Advocating for Archives and Archivists

The topic of disability—for archivists, users, historical documentation, and accessibility of services/resources—currently does not have a dedicated section. While accessibility can touch aspects of other existing sections, the goal of creating a dedicated section is to ensure that accessibility has a robust and constant presence within the profession.

Goal 2: Enhancing professional growth

A dedicated section supports and fosters professional growth through educational and outreach opportunities, as well as provides opportunities for archivists with disabilities and allies to develop leadership skills by serving on the section leadership.

Goal 3: Advancing the Field

SAA first officially began addressing accessibility with the Joint Archives Management/Records Management Roundtables Working Group on Accessibility in Archives and Records Management in 2010. Eight years later, SAA convened a Task Force to Revise the Best Practices

on Accessibility. A primary wish of the 2018-2019 Task Force is to advance the professional dialogue pertaining to disability, which can be accomplished by founding this section.

Goal 4: Meeting Members Needs

Accessibility, beyond social justice, is also protected by law and accessibility compliance is something that all institutions grapple with. This section can advocate for accessibility within SAA, inform archivists on best practices to promote accessibility within their individual organizations, and support archivists with disabilities to participate and contribute to the association and profession.

Fiscal Impact: The cost of creating this Section would be the same for creating any new section, in terms of responding to member requests, generating reports to/from SAA Council, competing for other resources/funding within SAA, and the time and attention of the SAA Governance Coordinator. This proposed section would probably plan on meeting online only this year, not requiring a room reservation or dedicated time slot during the Annual Meeting this year.

List of SAA members who support the formation of an Accessibility and Disability Section:

	Name	I am an SAA member in good standing.
1	Nathaniel Arndts	Yes
2	Bridget Malley	Yes
3	Jasmine Jones	Yes
4	Lauren Meyers	Yes
5	Valencia Johnson	Yes
6	Jennifer Ho	Yes
7	Stephanie Molnar	Yes
8	Lynn Hildenbrand	Yes
9	Margaret Breidenbaugh	Yes
10	Katherine Madison	Yes
11	Anne Rich	Yes
12	Zachary Tumlin	Yes
13	Suzanne Buchanan	Yes
14	Lisa Mix	Yes
15	Ciaran Trace	Yes
16	Caroline Crowell	Yes
17	Lauren Algee	Yes
18	Jim Havron	Yes
19	Brian Wilson	Yes
20	Steven Gentry	Yes

21	John Levin	Yes
22	Jessica Abson	Yes
23	Gracen M. Brilmyer	Yes
24	Deborah Richards	Yes
25	Susan Rishworth	Yes
26	Kelly Rovegno	Yes
27	Alex Krensky	Yes
28	Hilary Swett	Yes
29	Chuck Koontz	Yes
30	Rachel Seale	Yes
31	Joanna Black	Yes
32	Emily Reiher	Yes
33	Laura Streett	Yes
34	Elise Reynolds	Yes
35	Sarah Keen	Yes
36	Dorothy Waugh	Yes
37	Sylvia Hernandez	Yes
38	Joe Schill	Yes
39	Carla Alvarez	Yes
40	Kristina McGuirk	Yes
41	Chad Garrett	Yes
42	Joyce Joseph	Yes
43	Lori Dedeyan	Yes
44	Rory Grennan	Yes
45	Irene Gates	Yes
46	Tomaro Taylor	Yes
47	Suzanne Guerra	Yes
48	Mary Haberle	Yes
49	Jess Farrell	Yes
50	Wim van Dongen	Yes
51	Edith Sandler	Yes
52	Taylor Dwyer	Yes
53	Erin Glasco	Yes
54	Meredith Campbell	Yes
55	Cathleen Miller	Yes
56	Lindy Smith	Yes
57	Kristen Weischedel	Yes
58	Tracy M Jackson	Yes
59	Ashley Gosselar	Yes
60	Elizabeth Loch	Yes
61	Kate Tasker	Yes

62	Margaret T. Kidd	Yes
63	Trista Raezer-Stursa	Yes
64	Jen Hale	Yes
65	Susanna Coit	Yes
66	Christina Tanguay	Yes
67	Jane	Yes
68	Rebekah A McFarland	Yes
69	Amy Brunner	Yes
70	Crystal Rodgers	Yes
71	Amy Wickner	Yes
72	Mandy Ryan	Yes
73	Danielle Nowak	Yes
74	aems emswiler	Yes
75	Marlayna Christensen	Yes
76	greta suiter	Yes
77	Sara Shutkin	Yes
78	Bryce Henry	Yes
79	Alexa Logush	Yes
80	Jana Gowan	Yes
81	Anna Tunnicliff	Yes
82	Steve Fisher	Yes
83	Linnea Anderson	Yes
84	Emily Mathay	Yes
85	Dyani Feige	Yes
86	Ana D. Rodriguez	Yes
87	Kristen Watson	Yes
88	Nicholas Wojcik	Yes
89	Juli Folk	Yes
90	beaudry allen	Yes
91	Brenda S. McClurkin	Yes
92	Jamie Seemiller	Yes
93	Tabitha Cary	Yes
94	Karen Turk	Yes
95	Enid Ocegueda	Yes
96	April Akins	Yes
97	Rebecca Becker	Yes
98	Greta Pittenger	Yes
99	Maxine Brown	Yes
100	Blake E Relle	Yes
101	Cqrol Lynn Waggoner-Angleton	Yes
102	Meagan Kellom	Yes

103	Deborah Dandridge	Yes
104	Merle A. Branner	Yes
105	Lauren White	Yes
106	Hayley Jackson	Yes
107	Elizabeth Bates	Yes
108	Lisa May	Yes
109	Nora Egloff	Yes
110	Lindsay Wittwer	Yes
111	Roxanne Dunn	Yes
112	Holly Deakyne	Yes
113	Dana Lamparello	Yes
114	Mary Mellon	Yes
115	Garret B. Kremer-Wright	Yes
116	Karen Morse	Yes
117	Michelle Hueg	Yes
118	D.J. Reece	Yes
119	Taylor McNeilly	Yes
120	Katherine Duvall	Yes
121	Cinda Nofziger	Yes
122	Dorothy Judith Berry	Yes
123	Jennifer Kinniff	Yes
124	Hope Grebner Bibens	Yes
125	Carlinthia Cox	Yes
126	Michelle Sigiel	Yes
127	Ashley Howdeshell	Yes
128	Randall Bowman	Yes
129	Anne Marie Lyons	Yes
130	Haley Antell	Yes
131	Ximena Valdivia	Yes
132	Marian A. Schad	Yes
133	Hillary S. Kativa	Yes
134	David E. Horn	Yes
135	Margaret Welch	Yes
136	Colleen McFarland Rademaker	Yes
137	Yvonne Rode	Yes
138	Taryn Cooksey	Yes
139	Laurel Wilson	Yes
140	Erin Mahaney	Yes
141	Rita Johnston	Yes
142	Lisa Conathan	Yes
143	Christina Orozco	Yes

144	Scott Keefer	Yes
145	Christopher M. Laico	Yes
146	John Anderies	Yes
147	Anne Schlitt	Yes
148	VivianLea Solek	Yes
149	Jaimi Parker	Yes
150	Alejandra Dean	Yes
151	Rayna Andrews	Yes
152	Arielle Petrovich	Yes
153	Jess Sand	Yes
154	Marci Bayer	Yes
155	Logan Tapscott	Yes
156	Eric Hung	Yes
157	London Stever	Yes
158	Nicholas Smith	Yes
159	Barbara Gombach	Yes
160	Mike Aday	Yes
161	Christine Schmid Engels	Yes
162	Krista Oldham	Yes
163	Charles David Piotrowski	Yes
164	Thera Webb	Yes
165	Michelle Peralta	Yes
166	Marlee Newman	Yes
167	Maria Isabel Molestina	Yes
168	Meghan Ryan Guthorn	Yes
169	Alexis Antracoli	Yes
170	Vincent Novara	Yes
171	Michelle Mirza	Yes
172	Laura Morris	Yes
173	Patricia Glowinski	Yes
174	Faith Charlton	Yes
175	Jennifer Coggins	Yes
176	Alison Clemens	Yes
177	Tricia Gilson	Yes
178	Kaitlyn Lichtle	Yes
179	Annie Tummino	Yes
180	amanda demeter	Yes
181	Amy San Antonio	Yes
182	Cheryl Cordingley	Yes
183	Lea Osborne	Yes
184	Amber Moore	Yes

185	Krystal Appiah	Yes
186	Kathy Bohlman	Yes
187	Leah Geibel	Yes
188	Caitlin Birch	Yes
189	Anthony Wright de Hernandez	Yes
190	Molly Hults	Yes
191	Alice Prael	Yes
192	Daria D'Arienzo	Yes
193	Phyllis Kinnison	Yes
194	Jessica Chapel	Yes
195	Ann McShane	Yes
196	Emily Higgs	Yes
197	Elena Perez-Lizano	Yes
198	Maggie Hoffman	Yes
199	Meredith E. Torre	Yes
200	Matt Francis	Yes
201	Mark Custer	Yes
202	Christy Tomecek	Yes
203	Joseph Denton	Yes
204	Katy Rawdon	Yes
205	Hsiu-Ann Tom	Yes
206	Michael Rush	Yes
207	Arel Lucas	Yes
208	Phillip Stone	Yes
209	Michelle Sayers	Yes
210	Cyndi Shein	Yes
211	Brandon Pieczko	Yes
212	Melissa Shaw	Yes
213	David Spriegel	Yes
214	Linda Sellars	Yes
215	Samantha Cook	Yes
216	Rebecca Elder	Yes
217	Jordon Steele	Yes
218		Yes
219	Anton duPlessis	Yes
220	Christiana Dobrzynski	Yes
221	Jeanne Lowrey	Yes
222	Jessica Tai	Yes
223	Kathryn M. Kramer	Yes
224	Ashley Levine	Yes
225	Anna Trammell	Yes

226	Ellen C Walker Show	Yes
227	Tamar Zeffren	Yes
228	Betsy Pittman	Yes
229	Mary Rupp	Yes
230	Denise L Rayman	Yes
231	Helice Koffler	Yes
232	Sharon Mizota	Yes
233	Sofia Becerra-Licha	Yes
234	Catherine Howell	Yes
235	Melinda Isler	Yes
236	Tanya Zanish-Belcher	Yes
237	Allison Kilberg	Yes
238	Wendy Hagenmaier	Yes
239	Kait Dorsky	Yes
240	Benn Joseph	Yes
241	Jaime Marie Burton	Yes
242	Jennie Thomas	Yes
243	Rebecca Pattillo	Yes
244	Rosemary Flynn	Yes
245	Alison Stankrauff	Yes
246	Helen Wong Smith	Yes
247	Carol B Wilson	Yes
248	Nicole Topich	Yes
249	Gayle Schechter	Yes
250	Monica Howell	Yes
251	Camille Davidson	Yes
252	Samantha Brown	Yes
253	Courtney Tkacz	Yes
254	Philippe Cloutier	Yes
255	Courtney Dean	Yes
256	Tracy Lauer	Yes
257	Michelle Howard	Yes
258	Dory Klein	Yes
259	Amy Bishop	Yes
260	Colleen Hoelscher	Yes
261	Melissa Dalton	Yes
262	Megan Keller Young	Yes
263	Samantha Abrams	Yes
264	Traci Robison	Yes
265	Jennifer Johnson	Yes
266	Anjanette Schussler	Yes

267	Edward Benoit	Yes
268	Jennifer Bolmarcich	Yes
269	Jennifer Head	Yes
270	Michelle Ganz	Yes
271	Margaret Dodson	Yes
272	Roberta Schwartz	Yes
273	Rebecca Thayer	Yes
274	Rebecca Skirvin	Yes
275	Maggie Schreiner	Yes
276	Charity Park	Yes
277	Adriane Hanson	Yes
278	Julie Calcagno	Yes
279	Edward Rubeiz	Yes
280	Jade Finlinson	Yes
281	Stephanie Bredbenner	Yes
282	Rebecca Chandler	Yes
283	Victoria Eastes	Yes
284	Nicole Joniec	Yes
285	Anna Kresmer	Yes
286	Elizabeth Peters	Yes
287	Mary Goolsby	Yes
288	Jamie Patrick-Burns	Yes
289	Daria Labinsky	Yes
290	Lauren Kata	Yes
291	Philip Blocklyn	Yes
292	Laura O'Hara	Yes
293	Brianna LoSardo	Yes
294	Scott Kirycki	Yes
295	Janet Carleton	Yes