

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
May 12-13, 2020  
Virtual Meeting**

**Recommended Revisions to  
SAA Statement on Diversity and Inclusion  
(Prepared by Steven Booth, Brenda Gunn, and Audra Yun)**

**BACKGROUND**

Per established review cycles, the Council is to review every three years the Code of Conduct, the Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy, and the Statement on Diversity and Inclusion. Council members Steven Booth, Brenda Gunn, and Audra Yun took on this review and in June 2019 presented thorough revisions to the Code of Conduct and the Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy, which were approved by the Council.<sup>1</sup>

**DISCUSSION**

Booth, Gunn, and Yun conducted a thorough review of the Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, including review by the Council and staff as well as multiple reviews by the Diversity Committee. These initial revisions focused on aligning the original Statement on Diversity and Inclusion with SAA's 2020-2022 Strategic Plan, which specifically cites the “Welcoming Environment” or the “WE” initiative as “a reminder to all of us that SAA intends to provide an open, inclusive, and collaborative environment in which all members have the opportunity to participate fully.” In order to do this, Booth, Gunn, and Yun felt strongly about the need to explicitly define and outline *diversity* and *inclusion*, and to incorporate *equity* as a principle for the SAA to strive toward achieving.

The proposed revisions were then posted to the SAA website in late February for a 2-week [open member comment period](#). Booth, Gunn, and Yun then reviewed the handful of comments received and incorporated additional changes accordingly. Major changes made based on member feedback include: incorporation of “employment classifications and rank” under diversity; clarification of the definition of “equity” and inclusion of types of archival workers; more concrete language on the definition of “inclusion”; and reference to the Code of Conduct. (For clarity, a “clean” draft of the proposed revisions has been provided as an appendix.) From this set of member comments, the group determined it would also be prudent to

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix F of the Council Interim Actions report from the August 1, 2019, Council Meeting. <https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/0819-1-II-A-CouncilInterimActions.pdf>.

make one additional change to the Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy to include religious and political beliefs.

## QUESTIONS

1. Are there any additional edits or suggestions for these revised drafts?
2. Do you approve and endorse these revisions?

## RECOMMENDATION 1

**THAT the following revisions to the SAA Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion be approved** (underline=addition, strikethrough=deletion):

### SAA Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Society of American Archivists centers its values on diversity and equity, and is committed to building a culture of inclusion.

As ~~a professional~~ an association that serves archives and archivists across the profession, SAA benefits from the participation of people from all backgrounds; ~~the~~ The Society of American Archivists strives to ensure that its staff, membership, the ~~holdings that archivists acquire and manage~~ historical record that archivists preserve and steward, and the ~~users whom~~ communities archivists serve reflect ~~the evolving diversity of society~~ these values. To guide and clarify our work in this area, the ~~SAA Council developed this SAA~~ Society adheres to the following *Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*.

~~SAA~~ We understands *diversity* to encompass:

- ~~Socio-cultural factors. These factors relate~~ related to individual and community identity, ~~and include~~ including the attributes mentioned in SAA's Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Policy; and
- ~~Professional and geographic factors. Concern about these factors reflects,~~ reflecting the Society's desire for broad participation from archivists working in various locations, repository types and sizes, employment classifications and ranks, and professional specializations.

We recognize *equity* as:

- Equitable access to educational, funding, leadership, and award opportunities for individuals who are of color, who identify as LGBTQIA+, and/or who have disabilities; and

- Fair pay, benefits, and labor practices for all archives workers, including students, temporary, contract, paraprofessionals, and professionals.

We identify *inclusion* as:

- SAA identifies inclusion as our A commitment to ongoing and cumulative efforts (e.g., policies, principles, practices, and activities, and infrastructures) that engage take responsibility for creating an increasingly diverse community in a welcoming, equitable, and responsive manner; and
- Continuous proactive steps to ensure that marginalized members of our organization are seen and cared for.

~~SAA's initiatives are focused primarily on achieving socio-cultural diversity and fostering inclusion within SAA, the profession, and archival collections and users.~~

~~By embracing diversity and encouraging inclusion, 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.~~

### ***Provenance:***

The Society of American Archivists has long promoted policies of nondiscrimination, has identified diversity as a value for the association and the profession, and has strived to foster a just and inclusive professional culture that reflects and embraces the diversity of the larger society. In 1992 SAA adopted an [Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy](#). SAA ~~recognizes~~ affirms that simply pledging nondiscrimination is insufficient, and that we must make positive efforts to ~~develop~~ center 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 a statement of its "Strategic Priorities" that ~~included~~ includes the following ~~issue statement as the basis for its strategic priority related to~~ argument for the centrality of diversity for the Society: "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."

~~To guide and clarify our work in this area, the Council developed the "SAA Statement on Diversity" in 2010.~~ Diversity is one of the eleven Core Values of Archivists (adopted in 2011), and several SAA committees, task forces, component groups, and initiatives have focused on issues relating to diversity and inclusion. In 2010, the Council developed the "SAA Statement on Diversity." In drafting ~~the~~ its 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, the SAA Council revised SAA's mission to ~~include promotion of~~ promote the "diversity of archives and archivists" as a core principle to guide all of the ~~Strategic Plan's~~ plan's goals and activities. The Council also included ~~"Ensuring the diversity of its membership and leaders, the profession, and the archival record"~~ as a core organizational value, which was retained in the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan. The 2020-2022 Strategic Plan specifically cites the "Welcoming Environment," or "WE," initiative as a "reminder to all of us that SAA intends to provide an open, inclusive, and collaborative environment in which all members have the opportunity to participate fully."

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](#)," and see SAA's [Diversity and Inclusion resources page](#) with relevant past and current initiatives and efforts.

### ***Implementation and Governance:***

SAA promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of its professional activities with an eye to ensuring effective representation of staff, 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.

The SAA Code of Conduct provides guidance on expectations for member conduct that are based on the core principles of this Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as well as the Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy.

*Adopted by the SAA Council on August 9, 2010; reviewed and reaffirmed in January 2013; reviewed and revised in August 2016; May 2020. The Council agreed to review every three years this document, SAA's Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy (July 2019), and SAA's Code of Conduct (July 2019).*

*Additional resources consulted: <https://dobetterlabor.com/>*

**Support Statement:** These proposed revisions better reflect the Society's current values and aspirations for welcoming and supporting a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for all members.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

**THAT the following revisions to the SAA Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy be approved** (underline=addition, strikethrough=deletion):

### **Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy**

The Society of American Archivists is a professional organization established to serve the educational and informational needs of its members. SAA promotes cooperation, research, standards, public awareness, and relations with allied professions and thereby advances the identification, preservation, and use of records of enduring value. Because discrimination and unequal treatment are inimical to the Society's goals, SAA hereby declares that discrimination on the grounds of age, color, political and religious beliefs, ability, family relationship, gender identity/expression, individual life style, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status is prohibited within the Society. SAA will vigorously pursue a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity through its programs, activities, services, operations, employment, and business contracts.

*Adopted by the SAA Council in January 1992; updated February 2009; reviewed and reaffirmed in February 2010 and January 2011, 2012, and 2013; updated in May 2016, July 2019, May 2020. The Council agreed to review every three years this document, SAA's Statement on Diversity (January 2014), and SAA's Code of Conduct (July 2014). Last Reviewed: ~~July 2019~~ May 2020.*

**Support Statement:** This minor revision reflects member feedback to further improve and strengthen this document.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.

**Society of American Archivists**  
**Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
**CLEAN DRAFT**

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We understand *diversity* to encompass:

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- Professional and geographic factors, reflecting the Society’s desire for broad participation from archivists working in various locations, repository types and sizes, employment classifications and rank, and professional specializations.

We recognize *equity* as:

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***Provenance:***

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inclusive professional culture that reflects and embraces the diversity of the larger society. In 1992 SAA adopted an [Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy](#). SAA affirms that simply pledging nondiscrimination is insufficient, and that we must make positive efforts to center 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 a statement of its "Strategic Priorities" that includes the following argument for the centrality of diversity for the Society: "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."

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*Additional resources consulted: <https://dobetterlabor.com/>*