

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 16-17, 2023
Chicago, Illinois (Hybrid Meeting)**

**Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment (CORDA): SAA
Research and Innovation Roadmap**

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The Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment (CORDA) was charged in 2019 with various responsibilities, including “Engaging academic and other communities within SAA to perform research by helping to set research agendas.” Over the last two years, CORDA has set about addressing that responsibility by developing a Research and Innovation Roadmap.

CORDA presents the beta Research and Innovation Roadmap to the Council for review, feedback, and formal adoption. Specific questions include the following:

- 1) CORDA seeks SAA Council approval and formal adoption of the roadmap, with the understanding that the roadmap is a “living” document and will continue to evolve and reflect the interests and needs of the archival profession.
- 2) CORDA seeks the Council’s input on the process undertaken to develop the roadmap, especially membership engagement with the development of the roadmap. Engagement to date includes presentations and discussion of the roadmap, directly seeking input and feedback from:
 - a) SAA Annual Meeting 2018 feedback on personas and clustered themes.
 - b) CORDA-led updates to the themes 2020-2021
 - c) SAA Membership at a Conversation Lounge at the SAA 2022 Annual Meeting
 - d) The American Archivist Editorial Board, Nov. 18, 2022
 - e) Standards Committee, Feb. 9, 2023
 - f) Committee on Public Awareness, Feb. 16, 2023
 - g) Diversity Committee, March 15, 2023
 - h) 2023 Program Committee, March 7, 2023
 - i) Education Committee, April 10, 2023
 - j) Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct, May 4, 2023
- 3) Is further engagement recommended, acknowledging that the engagement to date has been undertaken aggressively from August 2022 – April 2023?
- 4) What will be the process for the adoption of the roadmap?

- 5) Once adopted, what should be Council's input on ongoing roadmap development in sync with membership interests and needs? Suggestions include:
 - a) A review at the SAA Annual Meeting.
 - b) A cyclical review as part of the SAA Research Forum.
 - c) An annual review and discussion with section leadership.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Archivists throughout North America actively engage in research, assessment, and evaluation related to the archival profession. Many research activities are conducted, with research results and data that subsequently appear in just as many venues and outlets every year. Foremost of these is [The American Archivist](#), the profession's leading journal, established in 1938, two years after the 1936 founding of the society. The peer-reviewed online journal reflects theory and practice in the archival profession. The [SAA Foundation](#) is the nation's leading source of nonprofit funding dedicated exclusively to the interests of archives and archivists, which offers funds that directly support research and reporting about the profession, its practice, and its practitioners. The [SAA Research Forum](#), established in 2007, offers members engaged in innovative practice and research a platform to present their work, publishing presentations and peer-reviewed papers typically before the SAA annual meeting each year.

The SAA Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment (CORDA) was formed in 2019 to provide access to significant and useful data and research about SAA, American archives, and their users that evidence the value of archives for society and help us improve our services to SAA members and our patrons. The Committee oversees the [Society of American Archivists Dataverse](#), a [Facts and Figures site](#), education, and training. It is developing the [Research and Innovation Roadmap](#) to frame the multitude of research activities that have already been undertaken or need to be undertaken in the archival field.

The roadmap will allow SAA to have a document that consolidates research themes and prospective topics that can be used to inform grant proposals, publications, preservation, and general attention and support for the finite time and SAA resources allocated to underpinning archival practice with research.

CORDA's work on bringing together these resources, and establishing a roadmap, has been incredibly well received by archivists and, further, leaders of committees have expressed a desire that the roadmap be adopted as a tool that can help inform and frame calls for programs, grant applications, research forum themes, etc.

DISCUSSION

The advantage of adopting the roadmap is that SAA will have established a cohesive guiding document that encapsulates priority research themes and topics. The disadvantage of adopting the roadmap is that SAA will have an ongoing commitment to the roadmap's maintenance and upkeep.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1) Has CORDA gathered sufficient input from SAA leaders and component groups, or is further feedback required?
- 2) Is Council ready and willing to adopt the Research and Innovation Roadmap?
- 3) How should it be published for presentation to, and use by, SAA members? What is the preferred structure for its presentation, and is there a structure that can be dynamically updated? For example, GitHub.
- 4) What level of oversight would Council like to maintain over the Roadmap as it evolves?
- 5) How can implementation of the roadmap best effectuate guidance to the profession? Leaders in committee meetings have advocated that it is an imperative that the roadmap provide an overarching strategy that can be used to inform grant proposals, publications, preservation, and general attention and support for the finite time and SAA resources that are allocated to underpinning archival practice with research. For example, the Program Committee expressed that they wish they had had the roadmap in hand before they undertook the process of approving meeting sessions. Similarly, a leader in the education field expressed an interest in the roadmap being available to shape curriculum development. The roadmaps influence will depend entirely on SAA's interest in adoption, and strength of its use to onboard committee leaders and encourage its adoption for decision-making, prioritization, etc.