

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 12, 2025
Virtual**

Title: Discussion of Advocacy Strategy with SAA Leadership

Prepared by: Teresa Mora and Zachary Tumlin, Co-chairs, Diversity Committee

Executive Summary/Overview (up to 300 words)

The Diversity Committee has been in communication with various members of the organization, including leaders of its ex-officio sections, about concerns that SAA as a professional organization is not representing the interests and needs of its membership. Diversity Committee leadership would like the opportunity to voice the concerns we have heard and enter into a dialog with SAA Council and staff to better understand the current strategies and decision-making process in regard to advocacy efforts. We request the opportunity to engage directly with the Council at the May meeting and that this agenda item be granted a minimum of twenty minutes for discussion.

Contextual Information (up to 500 words)

In conversation with leaders of its affiliated sections (those with ex-officio representation), it has become abundantly clear to the Diversity Committee that a significant portion of our membership is feeling alienated by SAA as an organization, specifically in this current political moment when archivists are being actively targeted and vilified. Conversations have raised concerns including but not limited to:

- the need for strong and consistent advocacy and transparent communication about advocacy efforts;
- the fact that members feel SAA has walked away from its own values as codified in the Work Plan on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility;
- feelings of tokenization, specifically, that individuals/groups/programs have been highlighted in the past when the optics benefited the organization but then sidelined post-Inauguration in the current anti-DEIA environment.

Members (including leaders) have made clear that they are questioning their membership in the organization and the Diversity Committee feels it is important to both bring these concerns forward to Council and better understand the current strategies of the organization in order to directly address these matters.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities

The proposed agenda item includes a discussion of the larger values of SAA as an organization as expressed throughout the entire Strategic Plan as well as the Work Plan on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

Fiscal Impact

None

Potential Benefits

An opportunity to publicly support the organization's stated Strategic Goals and Work Plan on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

Members will see their professional organization standing up for their professional autonomy and the significance and impact of their work.

The opportunity to enter into a productive dialog with disillusioned members of the organization.

Potential Drawbacks

None identified.

Recommendation (Action Items only)

Recommendations from appointed groups, staff, and others should be written in such a way that the SAA Council can easily re-word them to form a Council motion.

The Diversity Committee would like the Council to reaffirm its commitment to DEIA efforts, recognizing the need for our membership to feel supported by its national professional organization in a moment when our work is being actively vilified.