

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
June 8 – 10, 2012  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Action Item: Policies and Procedures for  
Sections and Roundtables  
(Prepared by: Beth Kaplan and Bill Landis)**

**BACKGROUND**

In mid-December 2011 Council members became aware that two petitions for new roundtables would come before the Council at its January 2012 meeting. An online discussion of roundtable formation, benefits, requirements, and policies and procedures for sections and roundtables ensued.

Concerns raised in this online exchange prompted a discussion item at the January 2012 Council meeting, which included review of current policy language on Sections and Roundtables from the SAA Governance Manual, annotated with notes on changes to that language since March 2007, as well as notes on policies not yet implemented.

It was agreed that subsections IX. Sections and X. Roundtables of the Governance Manual should be reviewed and edited for terminological and structural inconsistencies. The Council assigned Bill Landis and Beth Kaplan to work with Executive Director Nancy Beaumont to highlight the problematic areas, develop new language, and present recommendations for review at the Council's June 2012 meeting. (See 0112 To Do List item # E40.)

Kaplan and Landis independently reviewed subsections IX. and X. in conjunction with other relevant documents (such as the FAQ for Section and Roundtable Leaders on the SAA website), highlighted language inconsistencies, re-ordered the two documents to create a parallel structure, removed items that seemed out of place in a governance manual, and suggested a variety of language updates. The more substantive changes are enumerated in the Discussion section below and all notes and suggested changes are captured in Appendix A (Sections) and Appendix B (Roundtables).

**DISCUSSION**

Notes documenting the rationale for each of the recommended changes in Appendixes A and B are included in the fourth column on each document. This discussion serves to

highlight specific issues to which we want to draw Council members' attention in considering the recommended action on this item.

- **Proposed X.I.D.:** Non-members of SAA do not technically *belong* to Roundtables; the language clarification here aims to specify how nonmembers may *participate* in Roundtables. Is this satisfactory to the Council? See also proposed X.IV.A.2.
- **Proposed IX.III.B. and proposed X.III.B.:** The January 1 date specified in each of these seems problematic when, as happened with our January 2012 Council meeting, the due date for Council agenda items fell in late December. Does the Council agree that it is better to specify something with more flexibility?
- **Proposed IX.III.C. and proposed X.III.C.:** This seems like a policy decision. Do we or do we not accept electronic signatures on Section and RT formation petitions?
- **Proposed X.IV.B.:** Does this capture Council's current thinking on Annual Meeting space for Roundtables?
- **Current IX.V.:** Does the Council agree with the complete elimination of this section? Is the Council comfortable with letting component groups figure out how best to sub-organize themselves to accomplish their work without trying to prohibit use of names for those sub-groups (see current IX.V.B.)?
- **Proposed X.V.D.:** If approved, we need to task the SAA staff to create a Roundtable Bylaws Template document.
- **Proposed X.VII. and proposed IX.VII.:** Does the Council agree with the designation of the Council liaison as the primary contact, and with the redress process if a Section/Roundtable has an issue with its assigned Council liaison?
- **Current IX.IX.:** Does the Council agree that details about the annual Leadership Orientation and Forum do not belong in either of these documents?
- **Proposed IX.IX.E. and proposed X.IX.D.:** Does the Council agree with designating the Council liaison rather than the Executive Director as the primary contact through which approvals for seeking external funds should be directed?

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the SAA Council adopt the changes to IX Sections and X Roundtables in the SAA Governance Manual as specified in the first column in Appendix A (Sections) and Appendix B (Roundtables).**

**Support Statement:** The SAA Governance Manual is a core document that guides SAA leaders at all levels through the organization's policies and clarifies expectations for members, staff, leaders, and the full range of component groups. The proposed edits to

subsections IX. and X. of the SAA Governance Manual are intended to reduce the potential for confusion for the many users of the manual and to foster transparency and compliance among Sections and Roundtables.

**Impact on Strategic Priorities:** None.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.