

Principles and Priorities for Continuously Improving the SAA Annual Meeting

(As adopted by the SAA Council, August 12, 2013)

This document presents a summary of the Council's principles and priorities for ensuring the continued development of the Annual Meeting, based on the excellent work of the 2011-2013 Annual Meeting Task Force. Going forward, the Council expects that there will be ongoing reporting on the extent to which these Principles and Priorities are put into play for the Annual Meeting. ["Progress on Priorities as of August 12, 2013" beginning on page 2 is the first of such reports. See also Agenda Item 0813-1-VI-E-5-AnnMtg at <http://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/0813-1-VI-E-5-AnnMtg.pdf>.]

Guiding Principles

- We will make every meeting as useful, affordable, accessible, and enjoyable as possible for all attendees.
- We will explore new locations, structure, and content for the Annual Meeting on an ongoing basis.
- We will embrace a culture of experimentation and will be willing to take calculated risks with respect to the Annual Meeting. No aspect of the meeting will be off limits based on "tradition."
- We will encourage diversity among the people attending the meeting, contributing to its content, and benefiting from its results.
- We will actively pursue ways of making meeting content available online.
- We will integrate a commitment to social responsibility and sustainability into all aspects of meeting planning and execution.
- We will continuously seek feedback from both attendees and non-attendees on all aspects of the meeting.

Priorities for Site Selection and Contract Requirements

- We will experiment with meeting in cities of varying sizes using a combination of a convention center and room blocks in several hotels at varying price points.
- We will reevaluate site selection criteria based on member input.
- We will facilitate inexpensive alternative housing (such as dormitories) whenever feasible.
- We will stipulate in all Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that free wireless access in meeting spaces is a key component of our needs.
- We will stipulate in all RFPs the importance of fair labor practices, sustainable ("green") practices, and donation of excess food and beverage to worthy causes.
- Staff will actively monitor and report to the Council information about labor contracts and potential labor actions affecting the hotel sector.

Priorities for Delivery of Meeting Content

- We will deploy a mobile conference app for access to program information via smart phones and tablets.
- We will ensure that each year's conference website includes effective functionality and navigation.
- We will seek to provide free and easy access to session content from past conferences.
- We will investigate and incrementally implement online access to meeting content by various means as technology and resources permit.
- We will implement sustainable practices in our production of conference materials.

Priorities for New Approaches to Meeting Content and Structure

- We will experiment with new approaches to plenary sessions.
- We will identify and implement new approaches to structured and unstructured networking.
- We will experiment with new formats and content for education sessions.
- The Program Committee charge will be revised to encourage innovation.
- We will actively publicize to members all efforts to consider, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of new approaches.

Progress on Priorities as of August 12, 2013

Site Selection and Contract Requirements:

- We will experiment with meeting in cities of varying sizes using a combination of a convention center and room blocks in several hotels at varying price points.
[Progress: Staff has begun investigating such sites for 2015-2017.]
- We will offer inexpensive alternative housing (such as dormitories) whenever feasible.
[Progress: Staff will actively pursue this beginning with the 2014 conference.]
- We will stipulate in all Requests for Proposals (RFP) that free wireless access in meeting spaces is a key component of our needs.
[Progress: This stipulation is in all RFPs currently out for bid.]
- We will stipulate in all RFPs the importance of fair labor practices, sustainable ("green") practices, and donation of excess food and beverage to worthy causes.
[Progress: This stipulation is in all RFPs currently out for bid.]
- Staff will actively monitor information about labor contracts and potential labor actions affecting the hotel sector.
[Progress: This is being done on an ongoing basis.]

Priorities for Delivery of Meeting Content

- We will deploy a mobile conference app for access to program information via smart phones and tablets.
[Progress: We launched an app in 2013 and will have one going forward.]
- We will ensure that each year's conference website includes effective functionality and navigation.
[Progress: We have retooled the conference website for 2013 (although it was not available too much in advance of the meeting); remaining work will be done as quickly as possible in the context of redesigning SAA's overall website.]
- We will seek to provide free access to recordings made of important sessions from past conferences.
[Progress: We received in late July from Convention Recordings the discs from the 2006-2011 meetings. The 2006-2008 recordings were posted on the SAA website immediately prior to the 2013 Annual Meeting; the 2009-2011 recordings will be posted immediately following the 2013 Annual Meeting.]
- We will investigate and incrementally implement online access to meeting content by various means as technology and resources permit.
[Progress: Staff has been discussing approaches and costs with several companies that offer these services.]
- We will implement sustainable practices in our production of conference materials.
[Progress: As of 2013, registrants may opt out from receiving the onsite program in paper. We are using recycled materials for name badges and badge holders.]

Priorities for New Approaches to Meeting Content and Structure

- We will experiment with new approaches to plenary sessions.
[Progress: The 2013 opening plenary will feature a panel of three speakers moderated by the SAA president. The Vice-President/President-Elect will present her inaugural address at the Business Meeting on Saturday.]
- We will identify and implement new approaches to structured and unstructured networking.
[Progress: As in 2012, a room will be set aside with ten or more round tables that small groups may reserve for informal meetings on an ad hoc basis.]
- We will experiment with new formats and content for education sessions.
[Progress: The Call for Proposals for 2014 invites members to propose new session formats of any kind. Sessions will be 60 or 75 minutes long rather than the "traditional" 90-minute time blocks; this will open up time for other possible conference activities.]
- The Program Committee charge will be revised to encourage Program Committees to innovate in additional ways.
[Progress: The Council adopted a revised charge at its August 2013 meeting. (See 0813-1-III-A-2-ProgComm.)]
- We will actively publicize to members all efforts to consider, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of new approaches.
[Progress: This document is our first step in what will be an ongoing process.]