

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
August 11 – 12, 2014  
Washington, D.C.**

**Report: Committee on Advocacy and Public Policy  
(Prepared by CAPP Chair Frank Boles)**

At the Council's May 2014 meeting the Committee on Advocacy and Public Policy's Council liaison, Tanya Zanish-Belcher, notified the Council that the committee had been working on a draft of procedures that would help SAA members and component groups understand how they could propose that SAA take action on a public policy issue. The procedures, which will be made available via the CAPP microsite and other means, are provided here for the Council's information.

### **Procedures for Suggesting SAA Advocacy Action**

#### **FOR SAA MEMBERS: HOW TO SUGGEST THAT SAA TAKE ACTION ON AN ADVOCACY ISSUE**

**If you encounter a public policy issue on which you think SAA should comment (or advocate for in another way), here's how to bring that issue forward.**

- Review SAA's [Advocacy Agenda](#)<sup>1</sup> to determine if your issue is included among the priorities outlined there. Use this review to note the types of issues that SAA addresses and also to ensure that your issue is not already being addressed. Gather as much information as you can on the issue.
- Prepare a brief (1- or 2-page) written Overview of the issue that includes:

**Statement of Facts:** What is the issue? Has SAA taken action on this or a similar issue in the past? If so, what was that action?

**Discussion:** Why is this issue important to archives and/or archivists? Does the issue fit within the priorities outlined in SAA's Advocacy Agenda? If so, where? If not, why should it be considered as a high priority outside of the Agenda? What are the pros and cons or implications of SAA taking a position or action (or not taking a position or action) on this issue?

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<sup>1</sup> The SAA Council has outlined the advocacy priorities of the organization in the SAA Advocacy Agenda, available here: <http://www2.archivists.org/initiatives/saa-advocacy-agenda>. The Agenda is reviewed and updated annually. Requests for SAA to take action on a specific advocacy issue are more vigorously pursued if the issue fits within the priorities outlined in the Agenda. SAA limits its advocacy activities to those areas in which the Society and its members have professional archival competencies and training.

**Recommendation(s):** What do you recommend that SAA do? Should SAA act alone in this, or should it seek support from one or more other organizations?

- As you prepare your Overview, consider the following: If you were in a leadership position within the organization, what information would you need to make a good decision on behalf of SAA?

**If you are an individual member:**

- Consider whether there is an SAA component group (committee, board, working group, section, or roundtable) that would have a specific interest or expertise in the issue that you are raising (e.g., the Intellectual Property Working Group on copyright issues or the Privacy and Confidentiality Roundtable on privacy issues). Collaboration with an existing group is encouraged because it could both avoid the potential for duplication of effort and assist you in gaining support for addressing your issue.
- If so, contact the chair of that group to determine if the group is interested in collaborating with you to put the issue forward.
- Contact the chair of the Committee on Advocacy and Public Policy to discuss whether CAPP would support putting the issue forward.
- You should always feel free to contact the staff office directly for assistance in determining who to contact.
- *On very urgent matters:* Contact the staff office so that we can help you take the issue directly to the SAA President, Executive Committee, or Council. The President may choose to seek advice from the Committee on Advocacy and Public Policy or other groups.

**If you represent a component group (committee, board, section, or roundtable):**

- Discuss the issue with your steering committee. If the steering committee agrees to proceed on behalf of your group, ask its members to draft/review/approve an Overview of the issue.
- Consider whether there are other component groups that would have a specific interest or expertise in the issue that you are raising. Collaboration with one or more groups is encouraged as a means of gaining support for your issue. If so, contact the chair of that group to determine if the group is interested in collaborating with your group to put the issue forward.
- Contact the chair of the Committee on Advocacy and Public Policy to discuss whether CAPP would support putting the issue forward.
- With or without collaboration from other groups, proceed with your request for action by contacting your Council liaison. If your liaison is not available, reach out to the SAA staff for help in moving your request forward. Contact information for Council liaisons is included on each component group's roster.
- *On very urgent matters:* Contact the staff office so that we can help you take the issue directly to the SAA President, Executive Committee, or Council. The President may choose to seek advice from the Committee on Advocacy and Public Policy or other groups.

**After you've raised your issue or concern:**

- The Council liaison or staff member will pass it along to the President, the Executive Committee, or the Council.

- The President, Executive Committee, or Council may ask for additional information, assessment, and/or recommendations from a component group (such as the Committee on Advocacy and Public Policy), related professional associations, and/or experts on the specific topic or issue.
- The leadership (either the Executive Committee or the full Council) will determine whether SAA should respond as an organization.<sup>2</sup>
- *If the decision is made to issue a statement and/or take action:* The Executive Committee may designate a person or group to develop a statement of SAA’s position. (This is where your Overview can be extremely helpful when time is of the essence.) The Executive Committee will then review and approve the statement for public dissemination or determine that the statement should be reviewed and approved by the full Council before dissemination. The President, Council liaison, or staff member will inform you or your group of the decision.
- *If the decision is made not to develop a statement and/or take action:* The President, Council liaison, or staff member will inform you or your group of the decision.

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<sup>2</sup> As the elected governing body of the organization, the SAA Council alone is authorized to “speak” on behalf of the Society or to delegate that role to an individual or group. Although Council-appointed groups (committees, boards, and working groups) and Council-approved sections and roundtables are within the SAA governance structure, they are not empowered to take action in the name of SAA without specific prior authorization from the Council. This firm rule is required to protect the organization and its members from potential legal complications.