

**Society of American Archivists Foundation  
Board of Directors Meeting  
August 15, 2014  
Washington, DC**

**DRAFT: Board and Membership Development Grant  
(Prepared by Foundation Vice President Carla Summers)**

**BACKGROUND**

Foundation Board member Ann Russell and I have drafted the following grant proposal because we think that external grant support is needed to advance the Foundation's development work to the next level. Please see the discussion questions following the draft grant proposal.

**GRANT PROPOSAL**

The Society of American Archivists Foundation is the nation's leading source of nonprofit funding dedicated solely to the interests of archives and archivists. The mission of the SAA Foundation is to enrich the knowledge and enhance the contributions of current and future generations by championing efforts to preserve and make accessible evidence of human activity and records of enduring value. The Foundation achieves this mission by funding public and professional education initiatives through programs and scholarships. Other activities include research, publications, and awards.

SAA was founded in December of 1936, "...to promote sound principles of archival economy and to facilitate cooperation among archivists and archival agencies." The Society has been raising money since its founding but it was only in 2006 that the Foundation was created. Some of the energy to create a foundation was generated by members of the Society of Southwest Archivists and SAA to create a fund for archival repositories affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

**Needs Statement**

This is a project outline for a grant to develop a culture of giving within the SAA Foundation's Board and its membership. SAA's member-elected Council is the governing board of the membership association, a 501(c)(6) organization and, as such, selects the Board members of the Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization. Specific members of the Council (the president, vice president, treasurer, executive committee member, and immediate past president) are members of the Foundation Board; the remaining Board members are selected by the Council from the membership and external communities.

**Challenge 1:** Although the leaders of the Society of American Archivists and the Foundation Board have extensive experience in dealing with complex archival issues, leading the association, and planning for professional development in the archival profession, they have only begun to understand the work associated with developing an association foundation. (The “Special Funds” board, as it was known at that time, met for the first time in May 2006.)

**Challenge 2:** Another difficulty that the Foundation faces at this early point in its development is that very little is donated by the general membership to the funding categories that comprise the Foundation’s holdings. From 2001 through 2004, the average total annual amount donated to the funds by individuals was a little more than \$7,000, from an average of about 150 donors. The average gift per donor has been around \$47. In 2005, stimulated by a dramatic disaster that affected a significant number of archival collections, contributions of \$34,785 were made to establish the Society of Southwest Archivists/Society of American Archivists Emergency Disaster Assistance Grant Fund for relief from hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

**Challenge 3:** And finally, there is need for the archival profession to raise awareness in fundraising within the membership of the Society. Archivists have outstanding knowledge of how to work with donors, families, businesses, and institutions concerning the donation of archival material. They know how to negotiate deeds of gift and are masters at stewardship in this area. However, few have turned these skills to raising monies for their institutions.

Past efforts at fundraising for the Foundation have included a number of communications from the SAA President to all members or subsets of members, as well as annual appeal letters and/or announcements in the SAA newsletter, *Archival Outlook*. Other fundraising efforts have been dependent on the motivation of an individual or a small group.

SAA’s Council and the Foundation’s Board of Directors have had a long-standing interest in enhancing SAA’s fundraising capabilities. By creating the Foundation, those bodies have moved this interest to a commitment. The Council, along with SAA’s professional staff, seek outside funding to enhance the development of capabilities to initiate and execute development. Parallel to board and staff development will be the founding of a culture of giving within the Society and growth of an understanding by members not only of the role of development in supporting the Society’s mission, but also the critical nature of development as a professional competency that is central to the management of the nation’s historical records repositories.

### **Goals of the Project**

1. The Board will be able to connect important initiatives to obtaining foundation and corporate support.

2. The Board will be able to identify the elements necessary to develop a culture of giving within the Society.
3. The Board will develop and approve a communications plan for possible donors.
4. The Board will participate in a professionally conducted feasibility study for obtaining member gifts.
5. The Board and the members will increase their understanding of the elements of professional fundraising and how to implement the elements in their own institutions.
6. The Board will develop specific strategies for involving members and other stakeholders in fundraising.
7. The Board will develop specific strategies for overcoming Board turnover as it relates to development.

### **Project Elements**

- It is estimated that the project will take two years and cost an estimated \$200,000.
- Consultant and/or development officer for the time of the grant. A development officer will be housed at the SAA headquarters and be a professional that can provide staff liaison tasks within the headquarters, freeing the Executive Director and other program staff by providing an extra staff member dedicated to development.
- Prepare communication plan for Foundation.
- Execute a feasibility study for the Foundation that could include the identification of prospective interviewees, preparation of case statements, and estimates of fundraising benefits/costs.
- Board retreat with trainers to review and approve plan and study. Sessions could include developing funding initiatives and the communications plan, types of giving, strategic trends in development, etc. The retreat will also focus on providing Board members with training in development.
- Sessions or workshops at annual meetings lead by consultants to educate members about development.
- Sponsorship, by the Foundation, of events for the general membership such as a reception at annual meeting and specific outreach to the Society's fellows group, past presidents and/or student chapters.
- Printing of publications and other communications vehicles. Website development and support.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Do Board members agree that a grant proposal for this purpose is appropriate?
2. If so, who do you think are likely potential funders?
3. Do Board members have suggestions for strengthening this grant proposal?