

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
August 1, 2016  
Hilton Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia**

**Revision of SAA Statement on Diversity and Inclusion  
(Prepared by the Council Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion)**

**BACKGROUND**

At the May 2016 Council Meeting, the SAA Statement on Diversity was brought forward for its regular review, currently on a three-year cycle. A number of Council members voiced concerns about the current state of the statement, specifically concerning the absence of “inclusion.” The Council Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion was charged to review the statement and bring forward revisions at the August 2016 Council meeting.

**DISCUSSION**

Through online discussion and collaboration, the Council Working Group, with the help of Councilor Michelle Light and incoming Vice President/President-Elect, Tanya Zanish-Belcher, discussed the revisions detailed below. The most significant change is including a definition of “inclusion” and including the concept more prominently in the statement. Other major changes address reorganizing statement for a more logical flow.

The Working Group presents the following proposed revisions for Council discussion.  
(*Underline = addition; strikethrough = deletion.*)

**SAA Statement on Diversity and Inclusion**

As a professional association that benefits from the participation of people from all backgrounds, the Society of American Archivists strives to ensure that its membership, the holdings that archivists acquire and manage, and the users whom archivists serve reflect the evolving diversity of society. To guide and clarify our work in this area, the SAA Council developed this *SAA Statement on Diversity and Inclusion*.

SAA understands *diversity* to encompass:

- **Socio-cultural factors.** These factors relate to individual and community identity, and include the attributes mentioned in SAA’s Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Policy.

- **Professional and geographic factors.** Concern about these factors reflects the Society's desire for broad participation from archivists working in various locations, repository types and sizes, and professional specializations.

SAA identifies inclusion as our commitment to ongoing and cumulative efforts (e.g., policies, principles, practices, and activities) that engage an increasingly diverse community in a welcoming, equitable, and responsive manner.

SAA's initiatives are focused primarily on achieving socio-cultural diversity and fostering inclusion within SAA, the profession, and archivists' collections and users.

By embracing diversity and encouraging inclusion, the Society speaks more effectively on behalf of the entire profession, serves a fuller range of stakeholders, increases organizational credibility, and becomes a stronger advocate for the archives profession. ~~SAA's initiatives are focused primarily on achieving socio-cultural diversity. This "living" document will be reviewed every three years in conjunction with the SAA Equal Opportunity / Nondiscrimination Policy.~~

#### ***Commentary: Provenance:***

Diversity is one of three high priorities identified in SAA's Strategic Plan from 2005 to 2013. To guide and clarify our work in this area, the Council developed the "SAA Statement on Diversity." The Society of American Archivists has long promoted policies of nondiscrimination, identified diversity as a value for the association and the profession (as expressed in the Strategic Plan 2014-2018), and strived to foster a just and inclusive professional culture that reflects and embraces the diversity of the larger society. ~~(For a review of SAA's many early actions, see Elizabeth Adkins's 2007 Presidential Address, "[Our Journey Toward Diversity—And a Call to \[More\] Action.](#)")~~ In 1992 SAA adopted an [Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy](#) ~~that is reviewed annually.~~ But SAA recognizes that simply pledging nondiscrimination is insufficient, and that we must make positive efforts to develop diversity among our membership, our members' holdings, and our members' user communities in order to enrich the historical record and achieve professional excellence. In 2006 the SAA Council adopted "Strategic Priorities" that included the following issue statement as the basis for its strategic priority related to diversity: The relevance of archives to society and the completeness of the documentary record hinge on the profession's success in ensuring that its members, the holdings that they collect and manage, and the users that they serve reflect the diversity of society as a whole.

To guide and clarify our work in this area, the Council developed the "SAA Statement on Diversity" in 2010. Diversity is one of eleven Core Values of Archivists (adopted in 2011), and several SAA committees, task forces, component groups, and initiatives have focused on issues relating to diversity and inclusion. In drafting the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, the SAA Council revised SAA's mission to include promotion of the "diversity of archives and archivists" as a core principle to guide all of the Strategic Plan's goals and activities. The Council also included "Ensuring the diversity of its membership and leaders, the profession, and the archival record" as a core organizational value.

For a review of SAA's many early actions, see Elizabeth Adkins's 2007 Presidential Address, "[Our Journey Toward Diversity—And a Call to \[More\] Action.](#)" and see SAA's Diversity and Inclusion resources page with relevant past and current initiatives and efforts.

~~The "[Strategic Plan](#)" document, which guides SAA activities, is reviewed and updated annually to accommodate the evolving landscape of professional challenges.~~

#### ***Implementation and Governance:***

SAA promotes diversity and inclusion in all of its professional activities with an eye to ensuring effective representation of our members, addressing the concerns of the full range of stakeholders represented within our members' holdings, and reaching out to archivists' many communities of users.

*Adopted by the SAA Council on August 9, 2010; reviewed and reaffirmed in January 2013; reviewed and revised in August 2016. The Council agreed to review every three years this document, SAA's Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy (January 2013), and SAA's Code of Conduct (July 2014).*

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Is the definition of “inclusion” appropriate and sufficient for SAA’s purposes?
2. Do any other parts of the statement require further revision?
3. If not, should we move for adoption of the revised statement?