

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
August 3, 2020**

**External Representative Report:  
International Council on Archives  
Section of Professional Associations (SPA)  
(Prepared by Becky Haglund Tousey, CA)**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's SPA Steering Committee meeting scheduled for May in Beijing was cancelled. There will be no in-person ICA governance meetings or Congress this year. The Congress scheduled for November 2020 in Abu Dhabi was postponed until 17-22 October 2021. The ICA Executive Board (EB) meeting originally scheduled for April in London was held as a virtual Zoom meeting on June 23. I was invited to attend that virtual EB meeting as an observer.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

Secretary General Anthea Seles presented the final report of the 2019 ICA Strategic Review and a Membership Analysis Report on ICA Category C members (institutions).

A Program Commission (PCOM) Diversity Working Group report was presented by VP of Programs Normand Charbonneau.

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing proposed Constitutional changes. The key changes being proposed are listed here.

- Amendment to reduce number of Executive Board (EB) seats from 33 to 12 and establish two regional branch representative seats;
- Amendment to stagger Elected Officer (EO) elections;
- Amendment to revise Forum of National Archivists (FAN) objectives;
- *Amendment to establish a Forum of Professional Associations (FPA) and new FPA Terms of Reference [and dissolve SPA];*
- Amendment to the aims and objectives;
- Amendment to clarify membership criteria, categories and approvals, give Category D members the vote, and to add dues to the section;

- Amendment to move certain elements to General Assembly powers, to adjust quorum for Extraordinary General Assemblies, and to move procedures to Internal Regulations;
- Amendment to EB powers to add Internal Regulations approval and centralize elements from other clauses;
- Change title of Secretary General to Executive Director;
- Locate section budget oversight with Executive Director.

There was unanimous approval for most of the proposed changes, including the one to dissolve the Section of Professional Associations (SPA) and create a new Forum of Professional Associations (FPA).

The item which took up a great deal of time and which had very strong opinions on both sides was the proposal to change the structure of the EB and downsize it from 32 people to 12. Currently the chair of every section and branch sits on the EB. The position of the Secretariat and the Elected Officers is that managing an executive body this large is cumbersome, time-consuming, and expensive. Most of the opposition to the proposal came from those section and branch chairs who would no longer have a seat on the EB in a downsized structure. The main objection of the opposition was that ICA has been working hard since 2012 to become a more democratic and representational organization. And they feel this proposal would be a big step backward. Seles and the Elected Officers prepared a lengthy report and outlined four different options for downsizing the EB. None of the four options received a majority of votes, so the Elected Officers recommended that an EB Review Working Group be established, charged with trying to find a compromise.

### **SPA STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATES – SPA TO FPA TRANSITION**

A letter was sent to all Category B (association) members in May notifying them of the proposed constitutional revision to change Category B governance from a Section to a Forum.

A call for Category B member associations to nominate a representative for the new FPA Steering Committee (2020-2024 four-year term) will be sent out sometime in July, with a deadline of mid-September.

As I mentioned in my report after the ICA annual meeting in Adelaide in October 2019, the current chair of SPA will be stepping down. As vice-chair I have been asked by the ICA elected officials to lead the new FPA for a two-year term—from November 2020 to Fall 2022—to provide important continuity during this time of transition. After 2022 the four-year term of the FPA President will then be staggered with the four-year terms of the other FPA Steering Committee members.

The ICA General Assembly being held virtually this November will provisionally approve the change from SPA to FPA and the new FPA Terms of Reference. The change

will go into effect officially when the General Assembly meets in person at the Congress in Abu Dhabi in October 2021.

A final decision about the new Category B membership dues structure (which I mentioned in my previous report) has not yet been made. That new structure will likely not go into effect until 2022.

Future FPA Projects:

- The topic of certification seems to be gaining traction in more countries. Japan, UK, and now the Netherlands are looking at this topic or beginning to implement a program. So I expect that gathering information about what associations across the globe are doing – or want to do – in this area will be one of the key projects of the upcoming FPA Steering Committee.
- Another key project will be to look at the ICA Code of Ethics which is in need of updating.

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 2020 November: ICA virtual governance meetings via Zoom
- 2021 Spring: (Possible) in-person FPA Steering Committee meeting, Barcelona, Spain
- 2021 October 17-22: ICA Congress, Abu Dhabi UAE
- 2022 Spring: (Possible) in-person FPA Steering Committee meeting, location TBD
- 2022 Fall: ICA biennial conference, Rome, Italy

## **FOR SAA COUNCIL: DISCUSSION TOPICS OR ACTION ITEMS**

- There will likely be a new sliding fee structure for Category B member dues starting in 2022. This may mean some increase in fee levels.
- Does the SAA Council wish to continue partnering with ACA to fund a FPA Steering Committee representative?
- If the answer is yes, would SAA want me to be the designated representative and take on the role of FPA President starting this fall?

Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Haglund Tousey, CA  
July 9, 2020