

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
August 2, 2021
Virtual Meeting**

**SAA Fellows Nomination and Selection Process
(Prepared by 2021 SAA Fellows Selection Committee)**

During the latter stages of its work during the 2020-2021 annual cycle, members of the Fellows Selection Committee engaged in an email exchange that surfaced some questions which various members thought represented significant issues in the current process of selecting new Fellows. There was some agreement, but no overall agreement on these issues or their resolution. The committee does agree that the most appropriate action of the committee at this stage is simply to characterize the issues and then present them to the Council for its consideration. The issues are presented below, with specific questions for the Council to consider, if it wishes to do so.

Fellows Nomination Process

Over the past several years, there have been a comparatively low number of nominations (three in 2019-2020, two in 2020-2021). The nominations have also not reflected as much diversity as Fellow Committee members would hope to see. Nominators have also expressed confusion about the nominations process and how it actually works. It should be noted, [the criteria for SAA Fellows](#) was just revised by a task force and approved by the Council in 2020; this was the first year these criteria were implemented.

Selection Committee Composition

Current membership is comprised of the five SAA past presidents, who each serve five-year terms, along with three additional Fellows appointed by the Council for one-year terms. The committee membership has not been reviewed or updated in some years. As a means toward opening up the Committee structure, one member proposed reducing the number of past presidents on the committee (and shorten their tenure); to increase the terms of SAA Fellows appointed to the Committee to two or three years; to stagger terms to ensure more consistency and experience among the committee cohort; and to include non-Fellows. Some other members found merit in this.

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL

Nominations Process

- Would it be helpful to examine how nominations are sought, as well as how this recognition is promoted?
- Is there a need for further education about the criteria and how to nominate a colleague?
- Is the Fellows recognition not seen by members as being important or worth pursuing?
- Is there a need to explore this further and to consider different approaches that might attract greater diversity among nominees?
- Is there a more systematic way to identify SAA members who might be nominated?
- Should the SAA Fellows Selection Committee bear some responsibility for promoting the program and fostering nominations?

Committee Membership

Up until now, it has been assumed that existing Fellows, and especially SAA past presidents, have the greatest capacity to assess the nominations and the broadest awareness of those SAA members who might be eligible for nomination. The existing membership reflected an interest in keeping past presidents engaged in SAA.

- Are these assumptions still valid?
- Should the Fellows appointed to the Committee have expanded terms?
- Should Committee membership be broadened?

How SAA Recognizes Individual Contributions

- Is the Distinguished Fellow recognition an anachronism that needs to be discontinued or substantially reconfigured? If so, what alternative form(s) of recognition might take its place?
- Should a wide-ranging discussion about awards and recognitions be held among SAA members so they can be invested in and contribute to the conversation?
- Is this a good opportunity for SAA to consider the “what” and “how” for recognition of members? Are there missing categories of recognition?