

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
August 24, 2022
Boston, Massachusetts**

Committee on Research, Data and Assessment: Revise Description
(Prepared by: Erin Passehl Stoddart and Jennifer King, CORDA co-chairs)

BACKGROUND

The SAA Council approved changes to the original charge of the Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment (CORDA) at the May 2022 meeting. Revisions to the original charge included: 1) transition of the SAA Research Forum under the CORDA umbrella; 2) expanded the charge to include dissemination and education responsibilities related to A*CENSUS II; and 3) addition of the outgoing co-chair to serve as an ex officio member of the committee for up to one year after rotating off the committee. As laid out in the May 2022 report, next steps included CORDA discussing its organizational structure with SAA staff before submitting a revision to Section II with regards to an increase in membership.

DISCUSSION

CORDA proposes that the membership structure be increased to add two additional members through the Appointments process. This is to be inclusive of the new role of managing the SAA Research Forum as well as helping to critically address and expand CORDA's capacity and sustainability around A*CENSUS II. The addition of two new members will also bring new opportunities for SAA members to volunteer and contribute as part of the appointments process.

CORDA co-chairs met with several stakeholders throughout the discovery process leading up to the charge addition to manage the SAA Research Forum, including the SAA Research Forum's co-chairs and organizing team, SAA staff Felicia Owens, and SAA Council/CORDA liaison Jasmine Jones. CORDA met with the above stakeholders and CORDA staff liaison and Executive Director Jackie Price Osafo in June 2022 to discuss governance and organizational structure options that would better the work of CORDA and the SAA Research Forum. This group also analyzed needs for additional appointed members based on the incorporation of the SAA Research Forum and work related to A*CENSUS II into CORDA's charge having a direct effect on CORDA planning and strategy for the next few years due to increased responsibilities, including building appropriate capacity through rightsizing the membership. Consensus was reached to continue CORDA's current organizational structure due to its flexible nature. CORDA proposes an increase of two members to the size of the committee.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT the Committee on Research, Data and Assessment (CORDA) description and charge be revised as follows (*strikethrough* = *deletion*, *underline* = *addition*):

Committee on Research, Data and Assessment

I. Purpose

The Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment provides access to significant and useful data and research about SAA, American archives, and their users that evidence the value of archives for society and help us improve our services to SAA members and to our consumers. The Committee will work to conduct or support relevant research and to create, gather, and preserve data by directing and engaging in several areas of activity:

- Providing SAA members with standardized tools for gathering and analyzing data;
- Providing a repository or portal for data and other research outputs;
- Providing training on gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and using data; and
- Providing up-to-date and reliable basic facts and figures about archives and archivists.;
- Providing a space to discuss and share information about research initiatives with relevance for archives and records management through the SAA Research Forum.

II. Committee Selection, Size, and Length of Term

The Committee shall consist of a minimum of ~~nine~~ eleven appointed members (including two co-chairs) serving staggered three-year terms with the possibility of reappointment. The Vice President, on behalf of the Council and with the recommendation of the Committee, appoints new members and co-chairs. Because the Committee may benefit from members who possess specialized skills and abilities that may vary from time to time, a Request for Applicant-based process may be necessary to help surface the best candidates in any particular appointment cycle. Maximum Committee size is variable, depending on the number, nature, and complexity of the projects and activities in which the Committee is engaged at any particular time.

To better facilitate the Committee's diverse work, members may be distributed among multiple project- or activity-based subcommittees, each of which is headed by a subcommittee chair appointed by the Committee co-chairs to repeatable annual terms. The Committee co-chairs may recommend that the SAA Council form (and disband) subcommittees from time to time, based on current needs.

The vice chair of the Committee on Education will serve as an *ex officio* member of the committee. The outgoing co-chair may serve as an *ex officio* member of the committee for up to one year after rotating off the committee.

III. Reporting Procedures

The Committee co-chairs shall submit a report for each Council meeting, summarizing current activities and projects and progress toward stated objectives. As directed by the Council, the Committee co-chairs may submit a written report upon the conclusion of specific projects.

IV. Duties and Responsibilities

The Committee shall enjoy a great deal of latitude in developing and engaging in research projects and data accumulation. In so doing, the Committee must maintain frequent communication with the Council, which approves and advises on the Committee's strategic directions, tactics, resources, activities, and projects. This communication is facilitated by the Committee co-chairs, who must ensure that the Council is aware of emergent planning and directional changes.

The Committee maintains responsibility for achieving its purpose by:

- Looking strategically at the organization's information needs and sharing its strategies with the SAA Council and relevant component groups;
- Proactively commissioning or directly engaging in necessary and strategic research, including dissemination, preservation, promotion, and education of survey data and research (such as A*CENSUS II);
- Manage the SAA Research Forum.
- Gathering quantitative and qualitative information of strategic value for SAA in the areas of advocacy, public awareness, improved audience service, and community engagement;
- Evaluating such information and surfacing it to SAA members via dashboards, reports, and constructed data sets that members can use to better understand and act on their own environments and to perform better as archivists;
- Engaging academic and other communities within SAA to perform research by helping to set research agendas and by utilizing grants, fellowships, conferences, and other tools and levers;
- Providing a repository (or repositories) and analytical tools for sharing and evaluating useful data about archivists, repositories, audiences, and the environments in which archives function; and
- Building and maintaining, in collaboration with other SAA groups, a training site for archivists around research, data gathering, evaluation and assessment, and business intelligence.

V. Meetings

The Committee shall conduct its business largely through email and conference calls. The Committee shall meet formally each year at the SAA Annual Meeting. Any additional in-person meetings that may be necessary shall occur only with Council approval and funding.

Approved by the SAA Council, November 2018.

Revised: May 2022, August 2022.

Support Statement: The change to the committee structure in Section II will provide CORDA with two additional members to help carry out its recently revised charge and new responsibilities with managing the SAA Research Forum and assisting with A*CENSUS II and other research related initiatives.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: These changes support Goal 3.2 (Foster and disseminate research in and about the field), specifically Goal 3.2.C (Seek effective means to elevate information presented at Research Forum). These changes also support the SAA DEIA Work Plan 1.3 (Conduct A*CENSUS on a regular schedule).

Fiscal Impact: None.