

**Society of American Archivists
Council Interim Action
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2025 Nominating Committee: Recommendations

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Reviewed, discussed, and approved by the 2026 Nominating Committee**

BACKGROUND

The Nominating Committee is comprised of two SAA Council 3rd year members and three members at large elected by SAA membership. The Nominating Committee is responsible for recruiting candidates to stand for elections each year for the role of Vice President/President-Elect, Council, Treasurer, and the next year's Nominating Committee.

Informed by our experiences and observations as members of the 2025 Nominating Committee, we are submitting a list of recommendations to Council that will improve the process and tools for all future nominating committees to carry out their charge efficiently, consistently, and in a people-first manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the SAA Council approve the 2025 Nominating Committee's following recommendations:

1. Nominating Committee structure and autonomy

- Maintain clear and proactive communication with SAA staff to ensure alignment on timeline, process, and expectations.
- Nominating Committee chair schedules, sets the agenda (with committee input), and runs all Nominating Committee meetings.

2. Nomination form

- Use a centralized Google Form for nominations, with all committee members granted editorial access to review submissions in real time.
- Include an optional pronouns field for candidates.
- Grant the Nominating Committee the authority to craft questions/make edits to the form as needed, before circulating.
- Change Question #5 from: "How would this candidate diversify the Council and/or Nominating Committee?" to "What perspectives and experience would the candidate contribute in their role?"
 - i. Rationale: Prospective candidates have shared feedback with us that the term "diversify" can be viewed as a commodification of identities. We agree with this concern and recommend "perspectives and experience"

to still address identities but also encompass other elements that represent the full person.

3. Encourage participation and voter engagement

- Host an information session with a panel of past candidates. This helps to demystify the nomination process and encourage participation.
- Host a town hall with candidates for the Vice-President/President-Elect position in collaboration with the Diversity Committee.
- Partner with SAA leadership and Communications to develop targeted campaigns to increase voter turnout.
- Encourage candidates to publicize the election and encourage voting.

4. Contingency Planning

- Identify alternate candidates for all positions (including Council and Nominating Committee) in case of unexpected candidate withdrawal.

5. Assessment Tools

- The 2025 Nominating Committee developed an assessment matrix with the goal of evaluating candidates more objectively and consistently on the basis of professional service, DEIA leadership, experience within SAA, and diverse representation. We recommend that future iterations of this Committee continue to work from and refine this matrix.

7. Diversity Statement

- [The Diversity Statement requirement](#) was approved by Council in 2021 and is a component of the Governance Manual. Given the current political climate and the already substantial length of candidate materials, members may feel discouraged from fully engaging with the voting process. To help lower these barriers, we recommend implementing a one-year provisional moratorium on this requirement, during which time Council may consider alternative wording or statements that continue the spirit of DEI by addressing underlying issues of power and context, while mitigating concerns or limitations that candidates may experience. The 2026 Nominating Committee is aware of this recommendation and supports it.
- While the future of this statement requirement will be determined by Council, we recommend that the Nominating Committee is a collaborative and equal partner in ongoing discussions.

Suggested motions for Council's considerations include:

- That the SAA Council approve the Nominating Committee's changes to the nomination form, including revisions to the language.
- That the SAA Council approve the Nominating Committee's Standing Rules, which acknowledge and reinforce the committee's operational autonomy
- That the SAA Council approve suspending the Diversity statement requirement for one year so that a collaborative review process can be initiated and led by the Nominating Committee

- That the SAA Council approve the Nominating Committee's recommendation for the ongoing use and further development of the candidate assessment matrix.
- That the SAA Council encourage the Nominating Committee to lead efforts to encourage participation and voter engagement, including hosting an information session with a panel of past candidates; in collaboration with the Diversity Committee, hosting a town hall with candidates for the Vice-President/President-Elect position; and partnering with SAA leadership and communications to develop voter turnout campaigns
- That the SAA Council encourage current and future Nominating Committees to engage in contingency planning to identify alternate candidates for all positions in case of unexpected candidate withdrawal.

Support Statement:

The nomination process should be iteratively refined and responsive to pressing issues within our field. Because of the fast-moving nature of these issues, the Nominating Committee needs to have clear autonomy and greater flexibility for implementing changes to this process. The recommendations that we have put forth align with evergreen issues and concerns relating to this important process. We seek to streamline labor, encourage voter participation, address membership needs, and be relevant to emerging challenges.

Impact on Strategic Priorities:

Implementing our recommendations aligns with Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan: Meeting Members' Needs.

Fiscal Impact:

None.