

**Society of American Archivists
Council Conference Call
October 6, 2017
1:00 – 2:00 pm EST**

**Request to Change Name of Lesbian and Gay Archives Section to
Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section
(Prepared by Keith Reynolds, Chair)**

BACKGROUND

This action item is being submitted in response to long-standing suggestions by the Lesbian and Gay Archives Section membership that our section name was dated and somewhat inaccurate. The term “Lesbian and Gay” leaves out a variety of groups, including, but not limited to, individuals identifying as bisexual, queer, transgender, and asexual, as well as allies. Additionally the word “Archives” implies that only archivists that work with LGBTQ collection materials are invited to join, which is not the case. This has been a concern voiced by many members and potential nonmembers for a number of years.

In response to this concern a subcommittee was formed and tasked with two goals: 1) Research terminology and descriptors currently being used to describe LGBTQ populations, and 2) put forward a list of potential names based on general membership suggestions for the section to vote on. The subcommittee combined all suggestions, weeded out any suggestions that did not meet our group goals (for example, the word “Queer” was found to be objectionable by some members and we also wanted to avoid “alphabet soup” and not employ the term “LGBTQ” because by calling out specific groups we are by default excluding others). We also wanted to make sure that our new name 1) was descriptive enough to let people know that anyone was welcome to join and 2) had a lasting quality to it so that we would not have to change it again. It should be noted that two of our top suggestions (“Q&A” and “LGBTQ+”) had to be eliminated as possibilities because SAA’s webhosting and email systems cannot accommodate special characters (ampersand and plus sign).

The section membership was presented with four potential names to vote on:

- Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section (DSGS)
- Lavender Archives and Archivists Section (LAAS)
- Pride Archives and Archivists Section (PAAS)
- Rainbow Archives and Archivists Section (RAAS)

Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section (DSGS) won by a small margin; Lavender Archives and Archivists Section came in a close second. DSGS was presented to the general membership at our SAA section meeting as our potential new name.

DISCUSSION

This name change is important and needed for a number of reasons, the most important being the fact that “Lesbian and Gay” is a term used primarily in the early ‘90s before “Bisexual and Transgender” were added to most group names – forming the term that became “LGBT.” Later on, a “Q” was added in most places to stand for “Questioning or Queer” and over the years additional letters have been added. The term “Queer” has been adopted by most millennials and younger generations as an umbrella term to avoid the danger of calling out specific groups because no matter how many letters you add to “LGBTQ,” you will always be leaving someone out. But some people of older generations still view the term “Queer” as a slur and prefer not to identify as queer. Additionally, allies are inevitably left out of this equation unless they are specifically called out. All of this naming history made it necessary for the Lesbian and Gay Archives Section to change its name.

All four suggested names were carefully discussed by the subcommittee and vetted by both of the co-chairs before being sent out to the section membership for a vote. In spite of this careful planning we still had a small number of members who voted for no change or expressed concerns that “DSGS” is not descriptive enough for people to realize this is the “LGBTQ” section. Additionally, many members were not happy with the fact that “DSGS” is not pronounceable as an acronym and doesn’t exactly “roll off the tongue” as nicely as some section names.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the following revisions to the Lesbian and Gay Archives Section Standing Rules be approved:

**~~Lesbian & Gay Archives Section~~
Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section
of the Society of American Archivists**

STANDING RULES

Article 1. Name.

The name of this section shall be the ~~Lesbian and Gay Archives Section~~ Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section of the Society of American Archivists (SAA), hereinafter referred to as ~~LAGAS~~ DSGS.

Article 2. Objectives.

- A. Bring together people who are concerned about the collection, preservation, description and research use of archival materials documenting LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual/Ally) people and their communities.
- B. Keep LGBTQIA issues in archives and history ~~more~~ visible within SAA.

- C. Educate archivists about the importance of identifying and preserving historical records documenting the lives, accomplishments, and cultures of LGBTQIA people.
- D. Act as a liaison between SAA and community-based LGBTQIA archives. Encourage and facilitate the participation of LGBTQIA archivists in SAA activities and the professional archival community.
- E. Exchange information with other LGBTQIA professional groups.

Article 3. Membership.

Membership is open to any person who shares the objectives of ~~LAGAS~~ DSGS.

Article 4. Governance

- A. Bylaws and Standing Rules: These standing rules of ~~LAGAS~~ DSGS shall serve as a supplement to the SAA Section Bylaws, which govern all SAA sections. Please refer to Section IX. Sections of the SAA Governance Manual for information on membership, section election procedures, reporting requirements, and more.
- B. Officers: ~~LAGAS~~ DSGS shall be guided by two co-chairs. They, with any committee chairs that may be functioning at the time, shall make up the Steering Committee.
- C. Terms of Office.

- 1. Two co-chairs, ~~of different gender identities~~, shall each serve staggered terms of two consecutive years. Chairs cannot serve more than one term in succession.
- 2. The newly elected co-chair shall assume office at the close of the annual ~~LAGAS~~ DSGS at which they are elected and shall serve until their successor has taken office.
- 3. Committee chairs and members shall be ~~elected~~ appointed for a term of two consecutive years with no stipulation on consecutive terms.

D. Nomination and Election.

- 1. ~~Sections will conduct annual elections via an online ballot system provided by SAA staff. Members must vote via the online ballot. 1. Nominations will be taken from the floor of the annual LAGAR meeting. All nominations must be seconded and consent of the nominee is required. Elections shall be conducted online with the assistance of the SAA staff and in accordance with guidelines for section elections as specified in Section IX. of the SAA Governance Manual. Availability of the online ballot and deadline for voting shall be announced by the Chair to all section members via the section's official email discussion list and website.~~
- 2. ~~Elections for each office shall be by a show of hands. A simple majority shall elect an office. If there is any contest, the election shall be retaken by secret ballot with a simple majority rule.~~
- 3. Vacancies in office shall be filled by a Steering Committee member in the case of a co-chair and appointed jointly by the co-chairs in the case of a committee member.

E. Duties of the officers.

- 1. The co-chairs shall facilitate the ~~LAGAS~~ DSGS meetings with the advice and assistance of the Steering Committee. The co-chairs appoint committee chairs, liaisons and task force members ~~the Newsletter Committee~~; submit the Three-Year Plan and summary to SAA Council; submit budget requests to SAA Council; and turn over the records of their administration to the new co-chair and non-current records to the SAA Archivist.

2. Roundtable members may be appointed to additional leadership roles (Web Liaison, Social Media Liaison, Section Secretary, etc.) by the co-chairs. Newsletter Committee shall produce at least two issues of the LAGAR Newsletter and record the minutes of any meeting.
3. Committee Chairs shall ensure the progress of the committee's work as directed at the annual meeting or by the Steering Committee and keep a co-chair apprised by report.

Article 5. Business.

A. Meeting times.

LAGAS DSGS shall meet once a year at the time of the annual meeting of the SAA. The time and agenda will be announced in advance. ~~the LAGAR Newsletter immediately preceding the meeting.~~

B. Other meetings.

Additional LAGAS DSGS meetings may be scheduled during the annual meeting of the SAA. Such meetings shall be announced ~~in the LAGAR Newsletter~~ immediately preceding the annual meeting, if possible, or before the end of the annual LAGAS DSGS meeting.

C. Voting.

Voting is conducted via the online ballot system provided by SAA staff only. All decisions of the LAGAR shall be determined by a plurality of members voting at the annual meeting.

Article 6. Parliamentary Authority.

Any meeting shall be facilitated by the senior co-chair. Robert's Rules of Order, the latest edition, shall govern the proceedings of the meetings, except as otherwise provided for in the bylaws of the LAGAS DSGS, or in the constitution, bylaws, or special rules of the SAA.

Article 7. Amendments to the Bylaws.

A. Notice and form.

1. Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed by any LAGAS DSGS member.
2. Amendments must be proposed in writing 60 days before ballot information is due for submission to the SAA Governance Program Coordinator. Such amendments must be submitted in writing to a LAGAR co-chair sixty days prior to the annual meeting.
3. The proposed amendments shall be shared with ~~mailed to~~ the membership prior to the online ballot with the LAGAR Newsletter immediately preceding the annual meeting and available at the annual meeting. A discussion of the proposed amendment will take place at the annual LAGAR meeting.

B. Adoption of amendments.

1. ~~Sections will vote on the suggested amendments via an online ballot system provided by the SAA staff. Members must vote via the online ballot. After the appropriate~~

~~notice has been given, amendments shall be voted on at the annual LAGAR meeting immediately following the mail notification.~~ To ensure alignment with SAA's governance documents, any amendments to the section's standing rules should be reviewed by the executive director (or her/his designee) and the section's Council liaison by May 1, before they are put forward in a referendum for vote by the section membership. Proposed amendments to the section's standing rules will appear on the section's annual election ballot for a final approval by a simple majority of voters. Any adopted amendments should be posted promptly to the section's official microsite and be noted in the section's next annual report to the Council. Any revisions to the section's name or mission/description must be submitted to the Council for final approval. For more information on amendment procedures, see Section IX. Sections of the SAA Governance Manual.

Approved by the SAA Council, January 2011. Updated per the [member affinity group transition](#) approved by the Council, August 2016.

Support Statement: The name of the Lesbian and Gay Archives Section should be changed to the Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section because the new name is much more inclusive and utilizes language that is more contemporary and reflective of the group's goals and priorities.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: This proposed name change addresses a number of SAA's strategic priorities, including:

- 1.3 – Provide leadership in ensuring the completeness, diversity, and accessibility of the historical record.
- 4.2 – Create opportunities for members to participate fully in the association.
- 4.3 – Continue to enrich the association with greater diversity in membership and expand leadership opportunities.

Fiscal Impact: The only fiscal impact will be the time needed by staff to change the name of our subgroup both online and in print.