

**Society of American Archivists
Council Conference Call
October 14, 2019
3:00 – 5:00 pm EST**

**Archival Salary Advocacy Group
(Prepared by Melissa Gonzales)**

The archival profession continues to be plagued by inadequate compensation for individuals, which has negatively affected retention and diversification efforts. Many formal and informal surveys conducted by archivists and archival organizations over the past decade have shown that the issue is growing worse as reflected through job postings that request vast amounts of education and skills for compensation that is not commensurate or justifiable in comparison. One serious issue to keep in mind is the number of SAA members who have opted to leave the profession for more financially stable careers, thereby affecting SAA's sustainability. It is time that we actively address this issue before it alters the future of the profession by demeaning degrees and skillsets, which in turn will adversely affect collections through inadequate care and accessibility.

Many regional organizations are attempting to advocate on behalf of archivists and the profession by promoting salary transparency through job postings on their sites. If institutions refuse to provide the salary range in job postings, these organizations will not promote them on their websites or social media. When the Society of Southwest Archivists decided to implement this policy earlier in the year, it sparked a healthy discussion on the SAA Leaders List with people addressing the pros and cons. This led to the formation of an informal group of archivists and records managers (led by Jessica Farrell; see attached report) to obtain data in support of such a decision in the hopes that the SAA Council would vote in favor of doing the same.

Council members Melissa Gonzales and Steven Booth organized a forum at the 2019 SAA Annual Meeting to discuss the decisions of these regional organizations openly with members and to obtain any additional insights and ideas. One recommendation was to provide a job board discount to those institutions willing to provide salary ranges in their descriptions. Many see salary transparency as a small step toward improving compensation for archivists, in addition to other more active ideas, among them unionizing and creating repository accreditation similar to that of the American Alliance of Museums. The SAA Strategic Plan states that the Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment and SAA staff will work with O-Net, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and others to upgrade descriptions of archivist positions. This along with the upcoming A*CENSUS II update are steps in the right direction.

As such, I propose the formation of a task force, think tank, or other such group to serve as a hub to gather, disseminate, and develop solutions to improve compensation for the profession that is on par with our professional peers. This group will consolidate SAA's efforts and look outside

the profession to explore all possibilities. Furthermore, this group would support SAA's core organizational goals of fostering collaboration and experimentation, in addition to advancing the visibility of archivists and ensuring the inclusion and sustainability of diverse groups within the profession.

Staff Note: The SAA Business Archives Section also conducted an independent survey regarding archival salaries and job board requirements, and submitted results to Council liaison Steven Booth on October 8, 2019. See agenda item IV.A.2 BAS Survey for the results.

Final Report from the Ad-hoc Working Group on Archivist Salary Transparency (Prepared by Ad-hoc Working Group)

The Ad-hoc Working Group on Archivist Salary Transparency has been meeting monthly since April 2019. Current members of this collaborative, fluctuating group include the following individuals, many of whom are/were section leaders: Rayna Andrews, Krystal Appiah, Stephanie Bennett, Itza Carbajal, Elena Colon-Marrero, Sara DeCaro, Courtney Dean, Jess Farrell, Matt Francis, Jim Havron, Susan Hernandez, Brad Houston, Jennifer Johnson, Jane Kelly, Rebecca Leung, Ashley Levine, Greg McCoy, Dave Moore, Kate Neptune, Gayle Schechter, Jennifer Steinhardt, Sandra Varry, and Christina Zamon. The group held its final meeting on September 12, 2019.

BACKGROUND

This informal working group was assembled in early April 2019 as a result of a conversation on the SAA Leader list regarding the Society of Southwest Archivists' recent decision to not list jobs without posted salary ranges. The discussion was particularly ignited recently by articles from the Society of Southwest Archivists' president Mark Lambert:

- "Poor Pay in Archives: How Top Archives Directors and Our National Organizations Are Failing Us" (November 2018)
- "Poor Pay in Archives: How Our National Organizations are Failing Us" (March 2019)
- "Archival Pay and SAA: Some Modest Proposals" (April 2019)

That resulting conversation, started by Jessica Farrell, led to this group's formation.

Conversations about pay and recognition have been ongoing in our field. Though the scale of A*CENSUS (2004) has not been repeated to date, SAA's recent efforts have included a 2015 survey regarding archivists' employment and in 2017 the Women Archivists Section conducted a salary-specific survey in conjunction and with the support of SAA. Realizing the importance of this issue to its constituents and the field, SAA appears to be ramping up efforts related to salary, including a proposed A*CENSUS II and a salary advocacy group.

DISCUSSION

The group surveyed archivists, SAA members and non-members, regarding their thoughts on SAA requiring job postings to include some kind of salary or range information. Concurrent with the survey, group members conducted research and reviewed policies from other GLAM and allied organizations. The survey provided an opportunity for SAA members and non-members to give feedback on requiring salary information on the SAA job board and on SAA’s job-related advocacy in general. See Appendix I for the survey and Appendix II for the full source data. *Please note that this data is internal and cannot currently be shared outside of the SAA Council.*

Of 1,311 individual survey responses, 1,012 respondents identified themselves as SAA members. The vast majority of respondents support requiring some form of salary information in job postings on the SAA job board, with a smaller majority supporting such a requirement for postings on SAA listservs or blogs and social media when notices come from SAA leaders and/or administrators acting in an official capacity. A minority of respondents support requiring salary information on section lists and blogs and social media, regardless of who is posting.

The question “In which of the following situations should SAA require that job postings include salary or salary range information?” received the following responses:

	Total	Total %
On the SAA Job Board	1143	87.19%
On the section lists, when postings are from SAA leaders and/or administrators acting in their official capacity	815	62.17%
On blogs and social media, when postings are from SAA leaders and/or administrators acting in their official capacity	708	54.00%
On the section lists, regardless of who is posting	626	47.75%
On blogs and social media, regardless of who is posting	488	37.22%
None of the above; SAA should not require that job postings include salary information	134	10.22%

Respondents choosing a **single** response to “In which of the following situations should SAA require that job postings include salary or salary range information?” selected the following:

	Only	Only %
On the SAA Job Board	232	17.70%
On the section lists, when postings are from SAA leaders and/or administrators acting in their official capacity	7	0.53%
On blogs and social media, when postings are from SAA leaders and/or administrators acting in their official capacity	708	54.00%
On the section lists, regardless of who is posting	7	0.53%
On blogs and social media, regardless of who is posting	2	0.15%
None of the above; SAA should not require that job postings include salary information	134	10.22%

Around 700 responses included free text responses. A subset of the ad-hoc working group coded the free text responses in order to make sense of this qualitative data. They first conducted sample coding, and adjusted coding definitions and shared understandings to ensure the most accurate final coding possible. Then two people coded each response, seeking to catch all facets of the response. The source data provides the results by coder to show both the consensus and slight variations in individuals' analysis, as well as a concurrence and divergence report. The codes employed included the following (shortened versions in parenthesis):

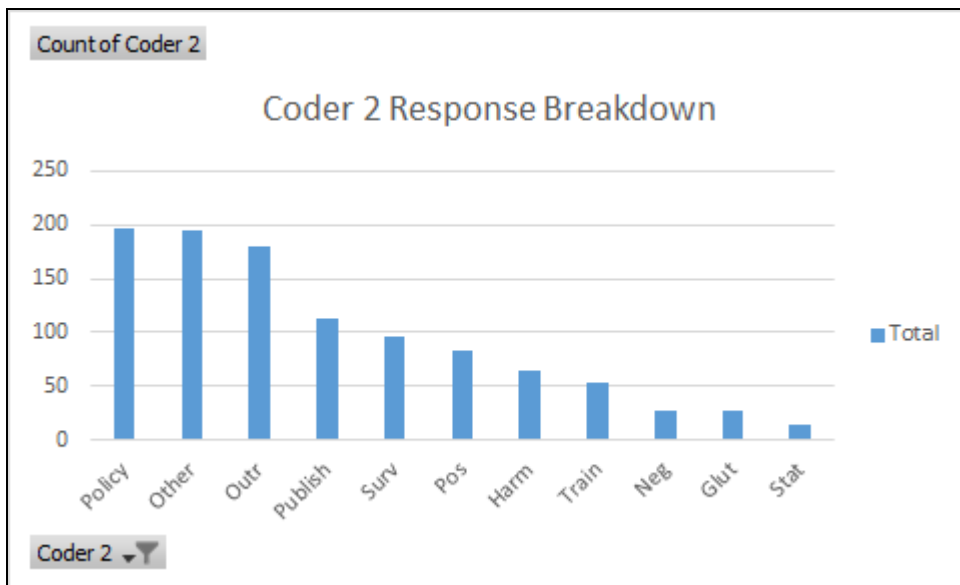
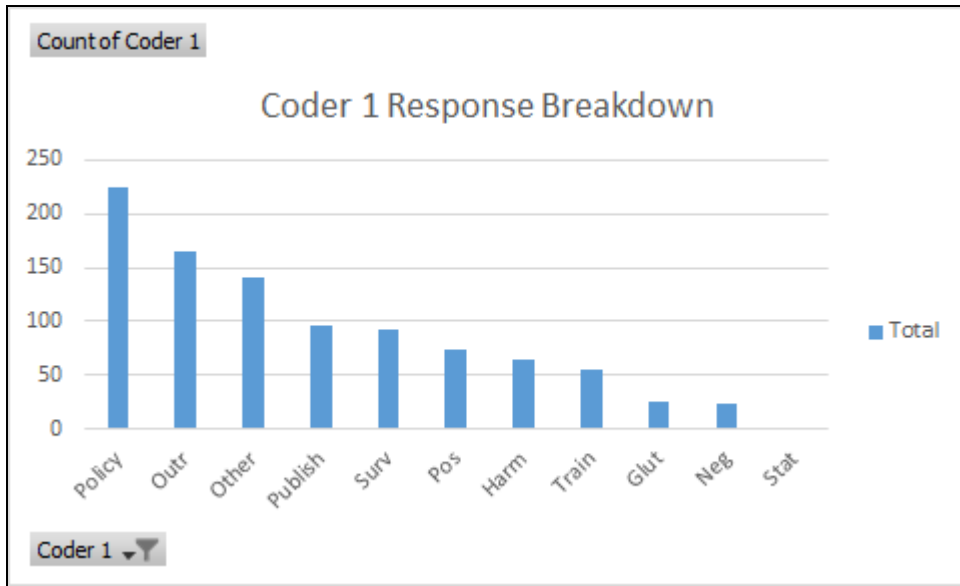
- Conduct a survey/study/A*CENSUS II (Survey)
- Publish member salary info/toolkit/other resources (Publish)
- Conduct training to improve response to low salary (Train)
- Update SAA policy on types of jobs accepted (Policy)
- Outreach/publicity effort (Outr)
- SAA should not dictate policy on X issue (Inapp)
- SAA should issue a statement on X issue (Stat)
- Restrict new archivist supply in some fashion (Glut)
- Potential unintended side effects of this policy (Harm)
- General positive attitude (Pos)
- General negative attitude (Neg)
- Other

Coders could choose “Other” when they felt none of the existing codes fit if they submitted an alternate code. The incomplete list of less standardized “Other” codes include:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Union | • US gov. jobs | • EDI issue |
| • Unrelated | • Internal SAA policies | • Compromise idea |
| • Accreditation | • Scholarship | • Harm |
| • Project or term employment | • Gatekeeping | • Living wage |
| • Paid internships | • Comments on SAA | • Salary inequity |
| • Labor task force | • Data on cost to hire/train | • Interview reimbursement |
| • Membership dues | • Frustration | • Paid labor |
| • Sharing thoughts | • Transparency | • Public shaming |
| • Benchmarking | • Employers | |

Encoding revealed the following about the free-text responses:

See Appendix III for a full list of code abbreviations.



This chart shows where the highest levels of concurrence were between coders:

Policy	Other	Outr	Publish	Surv	Pos	Blank	Harm	Train	Neg	Glut	Stat	Grand Total
170	9	4	11	1	8	6	3	1	2		8	223
1	5	136	4	2	2	5		7	2			164
14	62	15	23	4	9		10	15	1	2	3	158
3	102	7	3	1	2	17	1	1		2	1	140
3	2	2	61	6	3	13	2	1		1		94
	2		4	80	1	3	1	1				92
3	3	3	1		57	4			1		1	73
	1	2	1			10	45	2	4			65
2	4	8	4	2		7	1	25	1			54
	2	1							1	22		26
	2	2				3	1	1	15			24
											1	1
196	194	180	112	96	82	68	64	54	27	27	14	1114

Both sets of coders “agree” that the most common free-text sentiment is that SAA should develop a salary policy (Policy), which aligns directly with the survey's quantitative results. Both coders also concurred that the next most mentioned actions were extending outreach efforts (Outr) and publicizing salary levels (Publish).

Not only do survey respondents support some form of improved salary inclusion, research from outside archives and libraries indicates that it’s better for workers and for companies.

- A 2013 study by Emiliano Huet-Vaughn, a UCLA economist, found workers are more productive when salary is transparent. http://econgrads.berkeley.edu/emilianohuet-vaughn/files/2012/11/JMP_e.pdf
- Pay secrecy reinforces racial and gender biases. In a 2018 study, Hernandez et. al found that when black job applicants negotiated for starting salaries, evaluators viewed them as more pushy than white job applicants who also negotiated. Evaluators also thought black job applicants who negotiated the same amount as white applicants had negotiated more. <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2018/11/bargaining-black>
- Pay equity laws are becoming more commonplace and work to induce employers to share more information regarding pay https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3373160

The data presented here suggests a variety of actions that SAA could take beyond providing support for salary transparency on the job board specifically. If a group with a broader mission around job-related advocacy emerges in the future, this data could provide a useful foundation for that work.

Based on the levels of concurrence between coders shown in the chart above, SAA would be responding well to the needs of this group of surveyed members by prioritizing actions for at least the top three consensus priorities noted above: develop a policy, extend outreach efforts, and publicize salary levels. The next priorities after these three actions are: conducting a survey; addressing concerns about or measuring unintended consequences of the policy; and further review of “other” codes. The high concurrence of “other” codes suggests that a diversity and

volume of unique ideas from our membership exist to help address issues of salary transparency and low pay in archives. And finally, the concurrence of general positive attitude (Pos) compared to general negative attitude (Neg) suggests that membership responds positively when SAA takes action or suggests they may take action on these issues.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How could SAA track the number of posts over time that include salary information?
- What balance of enticements versus penalties could SAA use to raise the number of companies that include salaries?
- What other support could SAA and its members share or create to support archivists in our efforts to improve salaries for ourselves and the profession?
- How will SAA continue to monitor the effects of the policy to potentially identify and address unintended consequences?
- What further data does SAA need to gather to both support and inform its members?
- How does SAA plan to address the top three actions that members have demanded in the free-text responses of this survey?

APPENDIX I: Survey Instrument

1. Are you a member of the Society of American Archivists? [Yes/No]
2. In which of the following situations should SAA require that job postings include salary or salary range information? (Choose all that apply.)
 - On the SAA Job Board
 - On the section lists, when postings are from SAA leaders/admins in their official capacity
 - On blogs and social media, when postings are from SAA leaders/admins in their official capacity
 - On the section lists, regardless of who is posting
 - On blogs and social media, regardless of who is posting
 - None of the above, SAA should not require that job postings include salary information
3. The SAA Job Board currently includes this statement: “Although SAA does not require that you include a salary figure in your job ad, we believe that including this information is advantageous to both the job seeker and the employer and we encourage you to include such a figure in all job ads that you may place with us.” Is this statement of preference sufficient to encourage this practice? [Yes/No]
4. How else would you like SAA to address the issue of low pay in the profession (regardless of your stance on the previous questions)? [free text entry]
5. Please include any further thoughts on this issue. [free text entry]

APPENDIX II: Source Data

Please note that this data is internal and cannot currently be shared outside of the SAA Council.

APPENDIX III: Code Abbreviations

This information is also included in the Source Data.

Code	Theme
Surv	Conduct a survey/study/A*Census II. Etc.
Publish	Publish member salary info/toolkit/other resources
Train	Conduct training to improve response to low salary
Policy	Update SAA policy on types of jobs accepted
Outr	Outreach/Publicity Effort, including general advocacy
Inapp	SAA should not dictate policy on X issue
Stat	SAA should issue a statement on X issue
Glut	Restrict new archivist supply in some fashion
Harm	Potential unintended side effects of this policy

Other	Anything that doesn't fit into the above
Pos	General Positive Attitude
Neg	General Negative Attitude