

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
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Chicago, Illinois**

**Status Report: Task Force on Research/Data and Evaluation  
(Prepared by Michelle Light, Chair)**

The Task Force on Research/Data and Evaluation, created by the SAA Council in May 2017, convened in August. The charge requires that the Task Force provide a “written status report for each of the Council’s spring and winter meetings” with a final recommendation due in fall/winter 2018.

TF-CoRDE met by conference call in August and September 2017. As a first step, the task force is focusing on the first item in the charge, to “determine whether sufficient need exists to justify the effort and costs associated with establishing a standing body to conduct, facilitate, and/or evaluate research that is meaningful for SAA and the archival community.”

TF-CoRDE started by conducting an environmental scan to better understand the types of services or activities that other professional organizations engage in to support research, data collection, or access to data. After reviewing about 30 organizations, we concluded that professional organizations engage in a wide variety of services:

- Organizations conduct surveys. The frequency, scope, and audience of the surveys vary widely. Surveys might focus on studying member institutions (eg, their collections, users, services, or economic impact), studying the members themselves (eg, salaries, occupational status, educational needs, etc), or about member satisfaction with the professional organization.
- Organizations offer standardized surveys for institutions to administer locally, then aggregate the data to support institutional benchmarking or longitudinal evaluation.
- Organizations collect relevant data sets and then analyze and share them.
- Organizations offer evaluation and visualization tools for collected data sets.
- Organizations offer educational resources about data collection and evaluation, eg, guidance, templates, standards, etc.
- Organizations initiate, promote, commission, and/or support research on special topics, eg, in alignment with the organization’s strategic plan
- Organizations use data to illustrate professional impact.

What needs do these services address? Our initial discussion outlined several possibilities, such as providing evidence for advocacy, developing and sharing business intelligence, improving

practitioner or institutional effectiveness, creating value for members, and leveraging local innovations for profession-wide benefit.

In order to focus our exploration of needs on the archival profession, we are now developing user personas. Proposed user personas include a lone arranger, an executive director of a small institution, a government archivist, a business archivist, an archival user, a new professional, a tenure-track archivist, and an SAA staff person. Persona development should help us explore why, how, and when archivists might need access to research support or data.

After focusing on exploring needs, TF-CoRDE will then look at how to structure and sustain such a group.

### **QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION**

Are there any comments or suggestions for TF-CoRDE?