

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
November 2-3, 2018
Chicago, Illinois**

**Visual Materials Cataloging and Access Section Merger
(Prepared by VMCAS and VMS Co-chairs)**

BACKGROUND

The Visual Materials Cataloging and Access Roundtable (VMCAR) was established in September 2013 as, among other purposes, a supplement to the Visual Materials Section (VMS). At that time, SAA members could join up to two sections; conversely, members could join as many roundtables as they liked and non-members were also able to join roundtable discussion lists. Given these distinctions, VMCAR allowed for more individuals to be involved beyond the Visual Materials Section.

In August 2016, the SAA Council redefined the component group structure so all groups would be “sections” and members could join as many of the 46 sections as they liked. (Likewise, non-members could participate in up to three sections from among any of the 46 sections.)

DISCUSSION

The VMCAS and VMS leaders began discussing a possible merger in July 2017, when the then-current chairs met and discussed the significant overlap in focus and content. They decided to host a joint section meeting in 2018 (along with the Audio and Moving Image Section) to bring their members together to discuss a possible merging of the groups. SAA staff provided statistical confirmation, as an analysis of the sections found a 60% overlap in the VMS and VMCAS sections’ membership. The leaders have communicated regularly through the summer and fall, preparing statements to share with their respective sections to keep the message consistent and clear.

VMS and VMCAS held a joint section meeting at *ARCHIVES*RECORDS 2018* in Washington, DC, and discussed the possible merger. Overall, members were very supportive.

A special referendum ballot was prepared for the VMCAS membership to vote on the proposed merger. (Given the powers of the VMS chair indicated below, a special referendum was not required to create the new standing committee in VMS.) The following language was included on the special referendum ballot:

“This online ballot is to decide the merger of VMCAS with VMS, as discussed at this year's joint section meeting at the 2018 Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. With a 60% overlap of VMCAS/VMS membership, and the relative inactivity of the VMCAS listserv, VMCAS/VMS leadership is hoping to establish a Cataloging & Access committee within VMS where it may continue VMCAS initiatives. A VMCAS committee of VMS would still be responsible for the "Voices" column of Views newsletter and would collaborate with other VMS committees to advance interest in cataloging and access issues.”

The special referendum launched on October 3, 2018, and closed on October 17, with multiple email reminders sent during the two-week period. The merger was approved with a 98% margin, from the 154 total respondents.

The VMS chairs, Kim Andersen and Sandra Varry, have agreed to create a standing committee on cataloging and access within VMS. Per the VMS Standing Rules, the chair can create (or disband) committees of the section at any time. The committee will follow the standard procedures for VMS committees, as dictated by the VMS standing rules; namely, leaders of the committee will be appointed annually (rather than being elected on the section's annual ballot). The current VMCAS co-chair, Ashley Levine, has agreed to serve as the inaugural chair of the committee.

Section leaders and staff are poised to begin a strong communication campaign to notify VMCAS members of the merger and encourage the 40% who currently are not subscribed to the VMS listserv to join that section to continue receiving the cataloging and access content. We should be able to complete the transition by the end of the year.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Visual Materials Cataloging and Access Section be merged with the Visual Materials Section and become a standing Cataloging and Access Committee of the section.

Support Statement: Leaders and members of both sections agree that consolidating the VMS and VMCAS sections will be a benefit to SAA members, as they can now find all things visual materials on one section discussion list.

Fiscal Impact: This measure will save staff time and resources that were allocated to the VMCAS annual election, annual section meeting, and other needs throughout the year.