

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
November 20, 2020
Virtual Meeting**

**Annual Report: Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment
(Prepared by Paul Conway, Chair)**

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Completed

Advocacy: Reimagined and created mock-ups of the Facts & Figures webpage on SAA website.

Assessment and Evaluation: Implemented a Qualtrics survey on dataset availability to SAA section leadership (43 responses identifying at least 12 datasets or tools).

Education and Outreach: Offered a fully online (Zoom) workshop “Demystifying Data Analysis” for 49 SAA members as part of the 2020 Annual Meeting.

Education and Outreach: Established a working relationship with the organizers of the annual Research Forum, such that CODA and the RF will offer joint programs at future SAA Annual Meetings and develop plans for educational offerings on research strategies between meetings.

Outreach: Hosted a well-attended Open House at the SAA Annual Meeting (Zoom) on CODA activities. Each one-hour section reached the maximum attendance allowed of 100 participants.

Repository: Completed environmental scan of data repository platforms; identified Dataverse (Harvard) as the best option for SAA; negotiated a free instance of Dataverse through the Odum Institute at UNC Chapel Hill; extracted A*CENSUS I datasets from ICPSR and uploaded the datasets to the SAA Dataverse. Began to develop a list of repositories that CODA will develop, along with initial plans for gathering feedback from SAA members about repository policies.

Ongoing

Advocacy: In collaboration with SAA staff, launch a provisional Facts & Figures microsite on SAA website representing a reimagined portal to research and advocacy information for SAA and the profession.

Assessment and Evaluation: Further analyze and gather data from earlier survey; complete additional surveys of RAAC organizations regarding the existence and availability of research

datasets.

Education and Outreach: Offer “Demystifying Data Analysis” workshop as a virtual online educational offering for SAA members in the first six months of 2021.

Repository: Establish policies for SAA Dataverse, including collection scope, technical requirements, access procedures, and copyright and privacy limitations.

New

A*CENSUS II: Establish working liaison relationship with the A*CENSUS II Working Group. Help make sure that data gathered in the new census is organized and documented fully for analysis and ongoing use.

Advocacy: Publish regular updates in *In the Loop* on CORDA activities.

Assessment and Evaluation: Prepare and circulate for open peer review a white paper that defines research, evaluation, and assessment in the context of the archival profession, archival work, and roles and responsibilities of archivists.

Education and Outreach: Develop and offer up to three open online forums (or webinars) on research issues, methods, research advocacy, and the work of CORDA.

Repository: Negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding between SAA and UNC Chapel Hill (Odum Institute) regarding roles and responsibilities for SAA Dataverse.

Repository: “Publish” the SAA Dataverse as an open repository and upload additional datasets.

Repository: Work with the Council and staff to seek funding for resources needed to prepare research datasets for upload into the SAA Dataverse.

Repository: Work with the *American Archivist* editor to explore the feasibility of utilizing the SAA Dataverse as a repository for data related to published articles.

SAA STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1: Advocating for Archives and Archivists

CORDA addressed directly Goals 1.1 and 1.4 of the strategic plan. CORDA established a subcommittee with a charge to re-imagine, redesign, and rebuild the Facts & Figures webpage on the SAA website. We envision the new site to be a portal that assembles information on the archival profession in support of advocating for the value of archival work, the social and cultural values of archival organizations, and the contributions of the Society. In 2019-20, the subcommittee completed an environmental scan on the ways that allied professions present research and data. At its business meeting, CORDA accepted the redesign proposal presented by the subcommittee established a plan to build a new prototype site on the SAA website in the coming year.

Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth

CORDA addressed directly Goals 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 of the strategic plan. CORDA developed and offered a workshop at the SAA annual meeting. Forty-nine (49) archivists enrolled in and completed “Demystifying Data Analysis,” which was developed and taught by Jeremy York, a University of Michigan doctoral student. The workshop supported the professional development needs of SAA members and reflected the state of the art and best practices for analyzing the types of data that archivists may gather in their course of business. CORDA designed the workshop so that SAA could offer it multiple times in the future. Information gathered to support the workshop remains available to participants.

Goal 3: Advancing the Field

CORDA addressed directly Goal 3.3. CORDA’s charge is central to the success of SAA’s goal to foster and disseminate research in and about the field. Nearly all of the work of CORDA this year in some way advances this goal. CORDA surveyed the field to identify research data sets that are appropriate for preservation and discovery in a new Dataverse data repository. CORDA’s education and communication activities faced the profession, including particularly close collaboration with the annual Research Forum. CORDA’s work to re-imagine the way the Society marshals data to advocate for the profession is also central to Goal 3.2.

Goal 4: Meeting Members’ Needs

CORDA addressed directly Goal 4.4. CORDA is committed to making information about its work, its priorities, and its activities transparently available through the SAA microsite.

CORDA BUSINESS MEETING AT 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

Number of Attendees: 16 CORDA members + 32 guests via Zoom. Some guests participated actively in the Q&A sessions and in the Zoom chat function.

Summary of Meeting Activities: The annual business meeting took place via Zoom on 30 July 2020. The business meeting served two purposes: introduce the new members of CORDA and review the accomplishments of the committee in the past year. The meeting devoted roughly equal time to the work of the four subcommittees: Research Data Collections Policies, Data Repository, Education and Training, and Advocacy. The CORDA co-chairs introduced the members of the subcommittee, introduced new members, thanked outgoing members, and reviewed the charge. The leader of each subcommittee summarized accomplishments and identified ongoing work. Open discussion with meeting participants took place between subcommittee reports.

Link to meeting minutes on microsite: <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/committee-on-research-data-and-assessment>.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

[Staff Note: Although this form was intended for Section annual reports, CORDA chose to use it for its annual report.]

CORDA is very active and fully engaged with its charge. CORDA members recognize the importance of its charge to the SAA strategic plan. Committee members have been working diligently to implement its charge and lay the groundwork for vibrant ongoing activities. The committee's work has benefited greatly from the active engagement of all CORDA members. In the past year, CORDA met bi-monthly on average via Zoom. Attendance at committee meetings was nearly always 100%. The co-chairs developed and disseminated agendas for each meeting and kept thorough notes. The co-chairs carried on an active biweekly correspondence regarding the work of the committee.

Zoom is fully adequate for regular committee meetings. Individual and group email works well for routine committee communication. The committee shares a secure Box folder (University of Michigan) for working documents and meeting notes. The co-chairs are co-owners of the Box. The committee uses the SAA microsite to post completed minutes and fixed documentation on the work of the committee.

CORDA's closest affinity is with the annual Research Forum (RF). The leaders of CORDA and the RF value this affinity. We are working to integrate the advocacy and educational aspects of CORDA into the RF. CORDA's plans to foster research activities in the Society and the profession generally dovetail with the Research Forum's mission to promote and disseminate research in the profession.

Beyond the Research Forum, CORDA likely has a growing affinity with the Archival Educators Section, although both groups have much work to do to establish and foster ongoing communication with this Section. CORDA also has a natural affinity with the major SAA sections whose mission and agenda involves gathering systematic information about SAA members, archival repositories and functions, and advocacy efforts on behalf of the profession. Examples include Reference, Access and Outreach, SNAP, and Issues and Advocacy. Finally, CORDA's work is intimately related to the Task Force on A*CENSUS II.

In some ways, CORDA itself is a potential umbrella. Research, Data, and Assessment is the primary mission of the committee and all three of these ideas have direct relevance to any number of sections, committees, and task forces. Positioning CORDA to serve as an umbrella for SAA affinities in research, data, and assessment would require a significant adjustment to CORDA's charge and the resources available to the committee to create an umbrella of affiliation.

QUESTIONS FOR THE COUNCIL

In the coming year, it is very important that SAA negotiate and complete a Memo of Understanding with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The MoU will codify the rights and responsibilities of SAA in its partnership with the Odum Institute to create the SAA Dataverse and make the contents available to the public.

It is likely in the coming year that CORDA will propose to seek grant funding for a modest initiative to prepare datasets for uploading to the SAA Dataverse. CORDA will provide a heads up to the Council well in advance.

CORDA foresees no extraordinary budget needs for FY 2022. Further out on the planning horizon, CORDA may identify the need for specialized expertise on the SAA staff to support aspects of the SAA Dataverse as well as maintaining the newly configured Facts & Figures portal.