

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

**Annual Report: Committee on Public Policy
August 2019-July 2020
(Prepared by Sam Winn, Vice-Chair)**

During the 2019-2020 term, the Committee on Public Policy worked on the following issues:

- August 2019: Presented a pre-conference workshop to 16 SAA 2019 attendees on local and state advocacy. COPP's brown bag FAQ session was also well-attended during the 2019 conference. The committee met to review planned changes to the committee's microsite, assign tasks from the 2019-2021 workplan, and follow up on SAA member concerns regarding government records and copyright claims.
- September 2019: Conducted a gaps assessment of existing COPP statements and began developing questions for presidential candidates. Committee members began formal review of the 2018 Archives on the Hill initiative and discussed evaluations from the pre-conference workshop. COPP continued monitoring NHPRC reauthorization and federal budget efforts.
- October 2019: Continued monitoring net neutrality legislation and reviewed action items regarding the *Allen v. Cooper* amicus brief. Designated members to attend National Humanities Advocacy Day in DC. Worked with Congressional Papers Section to form a joint working group to resolve member concerns with the issue brief adopted in 2019. Continued working on candidate questionnaire, monitoring federal budget issues, and updating the committee's microsite. Recommended that SAA acknowledge the passing of Rep. Elijah Cummings as an acknowledged advocate for the archival record. COPP chair Sarah Quigley spoke to NPR on the record about the historic value of presidential tweets.
- November 2019: Prepared first draft of candidate questionnaire for SAA Exec Committee, finalized Standard Operating Procedures document, completed draft assessment of Archives on the Hill, began developing a webinar for the Local Government Records Section, and continued working with the Joint Advocacy Working Group to monitor federal budget concerns.
- December 2019: Reviewed president candidate questionnaire for distribution by SAA. Continued working with the Congressional Papers Section towards a potential joint statement.

- January 2020: Finalized president candidate questionnaire for distribution by SAA. Continued to assess the Archives on the Hill event. Reviewed Spring 2020 workplan, with an emphasis on internal governance and external outreach. Hosted a joint webinar for the Local Government Records Section, based on the Brown Bag session hosted at SAA 2019. Committee submitted draft statement to the SAA Council on “targeting of cultural heritage sites for destruction” and advised the SAA Executive Committee on a memorandum regarding the NARA Seattle closure. The committee held a lengthy discussion on the National Archives Museum’s use of an altered photo in a women’s rights exhibit.
- February 2020: Identified potential appointees to fill leadership vacancy in 2020-2021. Began developing internal assessment metrics and communication plans, continued to review gap analysis of public statements and collaborate with CPS on a potential joint statement. Assigned authors for a judicial records brief and reviewed plans for National Humanities Alliance advocacy day. Continued to monitor federal budget legislation and the NARA Seattle shutdown with the Joint Working Group.
- March 2020: Continued to advance workplan and reviewed outcomes of National Humanities Alliance advocacy day. Worked with Joint Working Group and SAA leadership on a potential NARA/NHPRC Dear Colleague Letter. At this point, COVID concerns began to necessitate modifications to the work plan. Worked with SAA staff to distribute resources from the National Humanities Alliance to help members advocate for supplemental archives funding in Federal stimulus bills.
- April 2020-June 2020: Revised spring work plan in light of COVID contingencies and continued to advance priority items. Congressional Records statement revisions were put on hold, pending feedback from the Congressional Papers Section. Opted to postpone the development of advocacy training for SAA Council, given the uncertainty of the 2020 Annual Meeting. Added new content about state and local advocacy to SAA’s web guide, “Advocacy, Public Policy & You.” Discussed changes to governance documentation and practices for the Joint Working Group. Drafted initial questions for the 2021 legislative advocacy agenda revisions. Began planning 2020 business meeting. Monitored and held extensive discussions on *Ahmad v. University of Michigan*. COPP sent 50+ emails asking people to write and/or meet with their legislators; archivists in nine states responded and volunteered to contact their Senators.
- July 2020 – August 2020: Held a virtual business meeting with incoming and outgoing members, as well as several guests. Agenda included onboarding of new members, a review of ongoing work plan initiatives, and an update on cultural heritage concerns in federal relief bills. Monitored reports of illegal records destruction by the EPA.

Following the August 2019 meeting, we began pursuing the second set of goals from the 2019-2021 workplan approve by Council at its May 2019 meeting. While the committee’s work was significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, we made progress on the following goals due by the August 2020 meeting:

Committee Governance:

- Define roles and responsibilities for Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members. [complete]
- Develop a set of assessment metrics by which we can evaluate the success of our initiatives. [in progress]

Communication and Outreach:

- Make periodic contributions to internal SAA communications vehicles, including On the Record/In the Loop and Archival Outlook. [in progress]
- Develop internal and external communications plans. [in progress]
- Renew and revitalize partnerships with allied groups. [ongoing]
- Continue to respond to and advise Council on legislative and policy issues as they arise. [ongoing]

Federal Legislative Advocacy:

- Assess Archives on the Hill initiative. [complete]
- Build on Archives on the Hill and subsequent trainings to increase capacity for future advocacy events such as NHA Advocacy Day or additional Archives on the Hill initiatives [ongoing]

This year, Chair Sarah Quigley served as COPP's representative to the Joint Working Group on Issues and Awareness (comprising representatives from SAA, CoSA, RAAC, and NAGARA). Quigley also sat in as an *ex officio* member of COPA on their monthly conference call. Quigley and Nick Pavlik, Chair of COPA, initiated discussions on improving the collaborative relationship between the committees.

In the next year, COPP plans to work on the following issues:

Committee Governance

- Develop a set of assessment metrics by which we can evaluate the success of our initiatives.

Communication and Outreach

- Collaborate with Congressional Papers Section towards a unified issue brief on congressional records.
- Update and improve searchability of SAA statements page.
- Finalize for approval an issue brief on judicial records.
- Finalize communications strategies.
- Collaborate with COPA to identify, write, and schedule "evergreen" press releases/statements about recurring archival issues.
- Develop an in-reach strategy to encourage relationship building/new partnerships with SAA constituent groups.

- Collaborate closely with COPA to map areas of overlap and synergy.

Federal Legislative Advocacy

- Revise Public Policy Agenda for Council approval in May 2021.
- Revise Legislative Agenda for Council approval in May 2021.

We will continue to monitor issues on the public policy and legislative agendas and issue statements on policy issues as they arise. We will also continue to identify opportunities for collaboration with COPA and other SAA constituent groups, and to expand awareness of and resources for legislative advocacy throughout SAA.

2019-2020 COPP Members:

- Sarah Quigley, Chair
- Sam Winn, Vice Chair
- Audra Eagle Yun, Council Liaison
- Krista Ferrante
- Brad Houston
- Virginia Millington
- Kathleen Roe
- Eira Tansey
- Bryan Whitledge
- Logan Lozalde