Society of American Archivists Council Meeting October 31 – Nov 1, 2023 Hybrid Meeting (Chicago, IL)

Archives in Context: Request to Make SAA's Podcast Team a Working Group
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The team behind SAA's podcast, *Archives in Context*, which launched in 2019, is requesting to become a formal Working Group within SAA. An offshoot project of the Publications Board, *American Archivist* Editorial Board, and the Committee on Public Awareness (COPA), the podcast team currently includes 7 SAA members (4 co-hosts, 3 producers, and 1 project coordinator), with support from 1 SAA staff, and a contracted sound engineer.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

SAA's podcast, *Archives in Context* ("the podcast about archives and the people behind them"), grew from three volunteers from the *American Archivist* Editorial Board and Publications Board, who hoped to create a publications-focused podcast with conversations on archival literature to promote and market SAA books and initiatives. The podcast launched in 2019, publishing seven episodes in its first season. Eventually, two volunteers from COPA joined the team, and then two more members joined in supporting roles, and the focus of the podcast broadened in scope beyond publications to explore conversations about:
- the archival literature,
- the archives profession and SAA, and
- archives and the public.

Since its launch, there have been seven seasons (41 episodes) with guests ranging from SAA book authors and awards recipients to the founders of SAA programs such as the Foundation and the Archival Workers Emergency Fund, and broader discussions on trends in archives. Episode downloads range from 300 to 1,300 per episode, and 12 SAA members have been part of the team since its inception. Current team members include:

- Co-hosts: Chris Burns, Camila Tessler (3 additional people to be named in October/November)
- Episode Producers: Mary Caldera, Rose Buchanan, and Stephanie Luke
- Project Coordinator/Chair: (person to be named in October/November).
- SAA staff: Hannah Stryker

The team would like to become a formal Working Group in SAA. With people cycling on and

off, the podcast has separated from its roots on the Publications Board, Editorial Board, and COPA, becoming its own volunteer group. As a Working Group with a formal Chair, the podcast team would have clear member leadership, better sustainability in the long-term as participants change, a path through SAA's formal appointments process when volunteers cycle off, and increased credibility for volunteers whose work will be part of a formal SAA component group.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended to create for this established volunteer team the Podcast Working Group, with a charge as follows:

The Podcast Working Group produces and publishes one season annually of *Archives in Context*, an open-access podcast exploring significant conversations around archival practice in SAA, the profession, and beyond.

I. Purpose:
The Working Group's purpose is to host via podcast dynamic and professional conversations with archivists contributing to the archival literature, to SAA and the profession, and public access and awareness of archives.

II. Working Group Selection, Size, and Length of Term
The Working Group consists of ten members. Working Group members serve staggered two-year terms with the possibility of reappointment. The Vice President, or project coordinator, on behalf of the Council and with the recommendation of the Working Group, makes new appointments and appoints the chair.

III. Duties and Responsibilities:
The Working Group has the following duties and responsibilities:
- Plan an annual season, ranging from 6 to 9 episodes, and set an editorial calendar that aligns with SAA's Strategic Goals and promotes to some extent the work of SAA and its members.
- Schedule and interview guest speakers, review and edit drafts of episodes, publish episodes to podcast platforms, and maintain the podcast's website as needed.
- Periodically review and update workflows as appropriate and meet on a regular basis to ensure timely delivery and support of episodes.

IV. Reporting:
The Working Group reports to the Council annually and upon request.

Support Statement: It is clear from both the listenership and dedication of the team that the podcast has proven itself 1) of interest to members and the archival community, 2) a sustainable project with ongoing work, and 3) of value for SAA's marketing in highlighting programs and products as well as important work by members and

Component groups. The podcast is already established, so this request is a matter of formalizing its relationship to SAA's governing process for member groups.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: The podcast has clear goals to advance public awareness of archives by discussing archival topics of broad interest (see the "Finding Aid to My Soul" archival storytelling episodes or Margot Note on creating family archives) and in helping archivists to share why archives are important (see "Elevator Going Up!" for archivists' "elevator pitch" on archives, or the discussion with Kathleen D. Roe on her book *Advocacy and Awareness for Archivists*) (1.1). As a format, the free podcast "delivers information and education via methods that are accessible, affordable, and keeps pace with technological change" (2.3), "facilitates effective communication among members" (4.1) as an additional marketing and content channel, and "creates opportunities for members to participate fully in the association" (4.2) through work on the podcast team and as episode guests. This last point is why it's important to have the team become a Working Group so that it can be governed and appointed according to other membership groups and processes.

Fiscal Impact: No fiscal impact is anticipated by the change in status. This podcast is already supported by 1 SAA staff, and a budget line item (of $1,000 for the sound engineer's services for the year) is included in the current *American Archivist* and program planner.