

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

Annual Report: Membership Committee

Prepared by Brittany Newberry, Outgoing Chair, and Natalie Johnson Pearmain, Incoming Chair

Background

Per the Membership Committee's Council-approved guidelines, the Chair must submit an Annual Report to the Council by September 1.

Membership Committee Meeting Minutes - July 11, 2023, Zoom meeting

Members in attendance: Daniel Hartwig, Samuel Alexander, Natalie Johnson Pearmain, Brittany Newberry, Jenifer Monger, Anastasia Karel, Lexy de Graffenreid, Heather Perez, Jessica Crouch

Subcommittee Assignments

Mentoring - Daniel Hartwig (Chair), Jasmine Larkin (chairing next year), Anastasia Karel

Navigator - Samuel Alexander (Chair), Lexy deGraffenreid

Key Contacts - Jasmine Larkin (Chair), Lexy deGraffenreid (chairing next year), Jessica Crouch

Career Center - Jenifer Monger (Chair), Samuel Alexander (chairing next year), Heather Perez

*Jasmine Larkin left the committee midway through the term and was replaced by Jessica Crouch

Council Updates

Updates on Council activities; nothing specific about Membership.

Presentation and overview of committee and subcommittees, followed by open discussion on the work of the committee and each of the subcommittees

Career Development Subcommittee Report

Submitted by Subcommittee Chair Jenifer Monger

Career Development Subcommittee Administration

Jenifer Monger, member, Chair for 2022-23

Samuel Alexander, member, Co-Chair, 2022-2023

Heather Perez, member, 2023-2024

The Career Development Subcommittee was previously primarily responsible for running the Career Center at the SAA Annual Meeting. Spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuation of predominantly online conferencing, the subcommittee shifted to an online option that is now available year-round to SAA members. The Career Services Commons has been in existence since March 2021. At the 2022 SAA Annual Meeting, the subcommittee was honored with a Council Resolution for its work developing and sustaining SAA Career Services Commons.

The Subcommittee continued to manage the SAA Career Services Commons (“SAA Commons”) during 2022-23.

SAA Career Services Commons

In March 2023, the SAA Commons welcomed its third cohort of SAA Career Counselors.

Since March 15, 2021, SAA Commons hosted a total of 436 appointments, with 240 in its first year, 127 in its second year, and between March and August 21, 2023, a total of 69 appointments. The Commons offers participants the option to choose mock interviews, resume review services, or career advising sessions.

	Resume reviews	Mock interviews	Career Advising	TOTAL
March 15, 2021-March 14, 2022	79	29	132	240
March 15, 2022-March 14, 2023	38	21	68	127
March 15, 2023 - August 20, 2023	23	10	36	69
TOTAL	140	60	236	436

Career Counselors

To secure members for the 2023-24 cohort, the subcommittee reached out to its 2022-23 Career Counselors in November requesting that counselors interested in renewing for a second term express their interest. Applications for first-time counselors were opened on December 6th, 2022, and closed on January 16th, 2023. Four counselors from the previous cohort expressed interest in joining for a second term. Those counselors were considered alongside sixteen new applicants by an application review group that met in January. The group included each member of the subcommittee, a representative from the Mentoring Subcommittee, and a representative from the Diversity Committee. The group approved the four returning cohort members, along with ten new applicants, making a cohort of fourteen career counselors.

On March 3rd, the subcommittee held an orientation for new members (made optional for returning members) following a similar model to the initial orientation held in the previous years. Appointments with new counselors went live later that month. The counselors were given access to a toolkit to help support their efforts and were given the opportunity to meet one another and ask questions of the subcommittee members.

Outreach and Assessment

The Subcommittee sends announcements via SAA email discussion lists about its new cohort of counselors and the service. To promote SAA Commons during the 2022 Annual Meeting, the initiative was opened beyond SAA Membership in August. The Subcommittee decided not to repeat this in 2023, as there was an in-person option for career services at the SAA meeting (see below), and the Subcommittee and counselors were not able to manage both initiatives simultaneously.

Each year, the subcommittee conducts assessment through two types of surveys - one that is to solicit feedback from the counseling cohort and one that requests information from the participants after each session. In Fall 2021, the subcommittee surveyed its inaugural cohort members to gain feedback on SAA Commons. In July 2022, the subcommittee participated in the Membership Committee's annual meeting, which solicited feedback in the form of focus groups. Some areas for improvement were noted, and the results of the survey were overwhelmingly positive.

Overall, the results of the surveys indicate that the services provided are appreciated and that both the counselors and the participants have favorable impressions. A sampling of the data shows that:

- 98% of the participants scored their sessions as 4 or 5 (out of 5) in terms of helpfulness, usefulness, and value in accomplishing their career goals.
- 92% of the respondents said that "Yes, they would use the service again."

- Counselors from the first two cohorts (2021-2022 and 2022-2023) self-reported conducting between 4 and 24 sessions each year, with the average being about 12 sessions per year per counselor (or 1 session per month).
- 100% of the counselors responding to the survey rated their experience conducting the sessions at 4 or 5 (out of 5).

It must be noted that the response rate is very low for the participant satisfaction surveys, with only 25% responding in 2021-2022 and 9% in 2022-2023.

Comments from Participants about the Career Services Commons:

“I’m feeling very down concerning my job search, and [counselor name] was helpful and helped provide input on ways I can improve the task. I’m hoping to work with them on interviewing techniques next.”

“This is such a great service! I got an appointment very quickly which was so good because I only learned about the service a few days before my interview. It helped a lot!”

“[Counselor name] was amazing, she looked at my resume beforehand and sent me the interview questions. Of course, she gave great feedback”

SAA Annual Meeting Career Center

In July 2023, SAA held a hybrid annual meeting. Due to an eagerness and multiple requests for an additional in-person Career Counseling option, the Career Development Subcommittee included an on-site opportunity for those seeking counseling to meet with the CSC counselors. Five of the counselors offered in-person appointments at the conference, each with availability of up to 3 hours. In all, 10 participants booked in-person appointments with the counselors.

Although this in-person offering requires some logistical work from the subcommittee - such as coordinating with the conference planners and the in-person counselors - it was less strenuous than planning a full-blown Career Center. The counselors were already trained and familiar with the counseling offerings and the same scheduling program (Appointlet) was used. Because the members of the Subcommittee were unable to attend the conference in person or were already scheduled to assist elsewhere, a volunteer who had contacted SAA asking to help with the conference was brought in to assist. The volunteer set up the space with the name tents for each counselor and was on hand to welcome some of the participants.

Moving Forward

A demonstrated desire by members for the continuation of an SAA Career Center at future annual meetings indicates the need to consider options for holding an in-person presence at

future meetings. However, it's important not to strain Career Development Subcommittee capacity, since the management of the year-round Commons is ongoing and requires a certain amount of dedication monthly. Furthermore, counselors already contribute 3 hours of their time per month, so it's imperative not to tax them either.

A possible avenue of capacity-building may involve creating a distinct Annual Career Center Subcommittee of the Membership Committee that would take over the duties involved in hosting that particular event on an annual basis which will allow for the Career Services Commons to continue as it has been. Another possibility might be assigning another committee member to work with the subcommittee - either for the whole year or for 2 months leading up to the Annual meeting.

Following last year's model, the subcommittee will once again survey SAA Career Counselors in Fall 2023 to gain insight into their experience and to identify any need for changes going forward.

Key Contact Subcommittee Report

Submitted by Subcommittee Chair Lexy deGraffenreid

Program Summary

The Key Contact Subcommittee is a unit of the SAA Membership Committee that works with volunteers at the grassroots level to provide an engaging and cohesive orientation experience for new SAA members, including promoting and clarifying the scope of SAA resources and enabling members to establish relevant professional connections. It is composed of 2 or 3 co-chairs that work with 11 district representatives and 60 key contacts overseeing geographic regions throughout the United States and other countries.

Current vacancies:

- Staff are working with district representatives and SAA to identify potential candidates to fill those roles.

State of Affairs in 2023

Our key contacts recruited and onboarded 4 new district representatives and 23 new key contacts this year due to long-serving members rolling off the subcommittee. There is now a full roster.

Subcommittee Activities

Our key contacts welcomed 919 new members and 719 reinstated members between September 2022 and July 2023.

Mentoring Program Subcommittee Report

Submitted by Subcommittee Co-Chairs Daniel Hartwig and Anastasia Karel

Overview

The Mentoring Program Subcommittee administers the SAA Mentoring Program. The Mentoring Program supports career development, networking, and information sharing by connecting SAA members with shared professional interests through one-on-one and cohort mentoring relationships.

The impact and effectiveness of the subcommittee's work is entirely due to the dedication and passion of the subcommittee members. We acknowledge with gratitude the following members rotating off the subcommittee at the SAA Annual Meeting in August 2023: Daniel Hartwig, Monika Lehman, Marian Matyn, and Lauren White. Thank you for your dedication and hard work.

Subcommittee Activities

In addition to following standard workflows for matching participants, regular check ins for matches, and surveying participants after match conclusions, the Mentoring Program accomplished a number of additional projects, including:

- A third round of mentoring cohorts focused on three themes (two of which were new): BIPOC, Special Libraries, and Supervisors. The feedback we have received thus far from participants is very positive, but we will examine ways to shore up and streamline this track of mentorship in terms of management and sustainability as described under “Suggestions for Future Actions” below.
- Developed a new self-service mentoring pilot held in conjunction with SAA’s Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.
- Revised the application form to streamline it, removing little used topics, and updated the End-of-Match Satisfaction Survey.
- Revised the cohort application and participant documentation.

Matching Statistics

Overall, the 1-to-1 Mentoring Program has continued to serve a high capacity of participants year after year. We had a major dip in participation compared to last year, which anecdotally may be a course correction back to pre-COVID levels.

We also noticed that since early this summer (May or June onwards), we have a very robust availability of mentors on-hand in our database. This could be because of the increased outreach and visibility of SAA issuing membership-wide announcements for the cohorts’ program (and possibly volunteers accidentally applying for the 1-to-1 track instead) and possibly a confirmation of our hope earlier that shortening the 6-month time commitment freed up willing mentors to more frequently volunteer again.

Mentoring Program Participation Statistics:

Year	Participation number (not including cohorts) ¹
2023	189
2022	290
2021	295

¹ The following statistics are approximate figures since occasionally mentoring records are duplicated in our system if mentors volunteer to assist more than one mentee.

Suggestions for Future Actions

- The cohort track will need to be assessed in terms of subcommittee capacity to administer it, and workflows on how cohorts are developed - ranging from selecting the theme to co-mentor recruitment and mentee selection. Especially important will be handing off scheduling duties to co-mentors, which occupies too much time for subcommittee staff. Additionally, it would be ideal if the BIPOC cohort could be continued with a greater relationship to the Mosaic Scholarship, perhaps recruiting past scholarship recipients as co-mentors and building a “pipeline” of mentorship among current and future Mosaic Scholars.
- The current 1-to-1 mentoring application has an identities section to both optionally self-identify and/or indicate identities they wish their mentoring partner to have. This aspect has been particularly helpful in connecting BIPOC, LGBTQ+, disabled, and other historically marginalized identities. However, this also means that the subcommittee may see potentially very sensitive information in the process of matching people. Annual training for new subcommittee members and refreshing the importance of confidentiality and tact for handling this information is needed, as well as a potential workflow for redacting this information at a later point.
- Legacy database exports will need to be purged. The Mentoring Subcommittee has never attempted to compile a full number of participants in the program, which is why the data is still in our google drive, but once that data and anything else relevant for keeping is derived, it should be purged for privacy. We recommend an annual compilation of mentors for tracking and acknowledgment prior to purging database content.
- Continuing to brainstorm and pursue approaches to recognizing participants, particularly mentor volunteers, would be helpful for encouraging robust participation and enabling participants to feel proud about their professional contribution. Additionally, exploring creative funding options (SAA Foundation grants, SAA discretionary funds, credits for the SAA Education webinars and/or bookstore, etc.) for participants in both the cohorts and 1-to-1 track would be ideal. Some recommendations have been distilled in the [SAA Mentor and Career Counselors Volunteering Rewards Proposal](#) in development by the Membership Committee.

Navigator Program Subcommittee Report

Submitted by Subcommittee Chair Samuel Alexander

In 2023, The Navigator Program matched experienced conference attendees with attendees interested in guidance or advice about the 2023 SAA Hybrid Conference. Navigators shared their experience, advised archivists on sessions and special events that fit their interests, and facilitated networking with other conference attendees.

For the 2023 Navigator program, several changes were implemented based upon issues encountered in the 2022 Navigator program alongside methods to increase efficiency.

1. Application Process

- a. One application but with two periods, one for Navigator, one for Navigatee, was sent.
 - i. Application period for Navigatees went out first on May 9th, 2023, with a soft deadline of June 2, 2023.
 - ii. Applications for Navigators went out second on June 7, 2023, with a deadline of June 20, 2023.
 - iii. Matches were made the week of June 19-23, 2023.
 - iv. Participants were notified through June 23-July 4, 2023.

Prior to last year, there was just one application that asked the same question for each party. For 2022, we had tried using two different forms for Navigatees and Navigators with the aim of getting a better sense of interests, experiences, and needs for more accurate matches and to make the matching process easier for us. This year, to improve the efficiency of the matching process, we combined the two forms together, but made it so that the combined form could still provide us with the same information the. Additionally, anticipating another shortage in Navigators, we kept a field in the form asking Navigators if they would be able to handle having two Navigatees.

2. Reach out to participants outside of Navigator gmail account

- a. Due to how the emails sent through the Gmail account repeatedly went straight into multiple participants' spam folders, the Navigator subcommittee reached out to participants with a different email on July 17, 2023, to make sure they received their matches.

3. Follow up

- a. Alongside the July 17, 2023, email checking with participants to see if they received their matches, we asked if they had been able to make contact with their partners. This was useful, as five participants responded to us that they had not heard back from their partners, and we were able to help them reach out to those partners.

Multiple calls for both Navigators and Navigatees to submit applications were sent out in in May and June to the SAA Announcement Section.

During the week of June 19-23, 2023, 40 Navigatees were matched with 24 Navigators. Thankfully, 16 Navigators were willing to be matched with 2 Navigatees. Given that this is the third year that the number of folks willing to be Navigators is diminished, perhaps the Navigator Program needs to be revisited and revitalized to reflect the needs of both newer and seasoned professionals.

It is worth noting that the ways in which the application was structured builds upon the information gained from how the applications were formatted last year. Once again, this information may be useful through filtering out either the Navigators or Navigatees.

Program Feedback Highlights:

1. What Worked Well

- a. "Communications from organizers were clear and helpful."
- b. "I was happy to have been matched with someone even though I signed up late."
- c. "My partner was friendly and proactive. She introduced me to several contacts and gave me good advice. It was helpful to have a coffee session to meet, and then the general session right after to go to."

2. Suggestions For Improvement

- a. "Give people ideas about where to meet so they can get to know each other, give other opportunities to meet (I couldn't meet up with my navigator due to CoSA meeting)."
- b. "Be clearer with potential Navigatees about what the program is designed to do."
- c. "The process needs to happen sooner in order to have a enough time for people to connect before the meeting."

3. Additional Feedback

- a. "Probably don't have enough Navigators, but if they are virtual and I'm in person, we shouldn't be connected. The vibe is just not the same."
- b. "We hear a lot about how SAA isn't a welcoming organization, or we need to do more to be welcoming. Despite that, every year I see that we are in dire need of more Navigators -- some of us get paired up with multiple Navigatees every year. If there was some way of letting the membership know that complaining about programing or the sense of belonging has its place, but solutions and action are what is needed, because a member-driven organization like SAA needs members to drive it. And one effective way to make the organization welcoming is to step up and join the front lines as a Navigator. But this complaint has very little to do with the program or what you all put on -- so please, keep up the great work!"
- c. "I didn't mind having two people assigned to me but would love for us to think about some ways to increase the pool of navigators. I'm not sure there's enough

information about who should do it, the time involved, etc. Might be useful to have former navigators share that and/or reach out. I'd definitely be willing to help with that."

Annual Meeting Suggestions:

At the Membership Committee's annual meeting, the following suggestion was given after the Navigator subcommittee's presentation. Depending on capacity the subcommittee members may choose to implement:

1. See what Navigatees expect from the program.
 - a. This idea was put forward as a way to help ensure that only applicants who are interested in what the program offers sign up for it.

SAA Membership Blog Report

Submitted by Natalie Johnson Pearmain

Overview

Last year, the Membership Committee launched the SAA Membership Blog (<https://membership.archivists.org/>). The blog shares the work of the SAA Membership Committee and its Key Contacts, Career Development, and Mentoring programs; highlights the perspectives and experiences of SAA members; and shares resources about SAA and archival work. New posts (one to three posts a month) are added at the beginning of each month, and posts are solicited via subcommittee calls and open calls via SAA email lists.

The Membership Committee blog (<https://membership.archivists.org/>) continues to share experiences of the Membership Committee and individual members. Posts fall into three main categories: committee member highlights, mentoring partnerships, and career journeys. In an effort to solicit new posts, we sent out a general call to the SAA leaders' listserv, invited the membership committee to submit content, and invited the Key Contacts and Mentoring subcommittees to contribute. We only added three new posts this year but are hopeful that we can expand our reach to include more content in 2023-2024.