

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
November 18/19, 2024
Chicago, IL – Hybrid**

Membership Committee Annual Report 2024

Prepared by Natalie Johnson Pearmain (outgoing chair) and Jenifer Monger (incoming chair)

Background

Per the Membership Committee’s Council-approved guidelines, the Chair must submit an annual report to the Council by September 1.

Subcommittee Assignments

Mentoring - Anastasia Karel (chair), Robert Weaver, Danielle Sangalang

Navigator - Lexy deGraffenreid (chair), Danielle Sangalang

Key Contacts - Lexy deGraffenreid (chair), Jessica Crouch, Jill Severn

Career Commons - Heather Perez (co-chair), Samuel Alexander (co-chair), Jill Severn, Danita Callendar

Blog - Robert Weaver (chair), Danita Callendar

Membership Committee Annual Meeting - July 10, 2024 (Zoom)

Members in attendance: Natalie Johnson Pearmain, Jenifer Monger, Anastasia Karel, Lexy de Graffenreid, Heather Perez, Jill Severn, Samuel Alexander, Danita Callendar.

Approximately 25 total attendees for the live Zoom meeting.

Agenda:

1. Intro (5 min)
2. Key Contacts report (5 min)
3. Navigator report (5 min)
4. Blog report (5 min)
5. Mentoring report (10 min)
6. Career Counseling report and counselor panel (30 min)
7. Q&A (15 min)

Committee Activities

In addition to its standing committee work (see individual reports below), the Membership Committee developed and distributed a survey for all members in April 2024. The purpose of the

survey was to gather information that would improve Membership Committee services at SAA's Annual Meeting.

After drafting the survey questions, we received valuable feedback from the Diversity Committee, which resulted in us incorporating an additional question about the nature of members' in-person versus virtual career development needs.

We distributed the survey via the SAA Leaders listserv, a news item, and other communication channels. We received 57 responses between April 5 and 26. We found that a significant majority of respondents prefer online career development services opposed to in-person offerings. The top reasons for selecting virtual services were personal preference, accessibility/disability, and finances. These findings allowed the Career Services Commons to focus their efforts on services that provided the greatest benefit to our members. By bypassing an in-person career center, they were able to offer a free month of career counseling to non-members throughout the month of August (see more details under their subcommittee report below).

Recommendations

There are many potential opportunities to collaborate with the Diversity Committee and SNAP Section, but greater clarity is needed around the Membership Committee Chair's role with those groups (and vice versa). We didn't hear from the SNAP chair for most of the year, so we hope that we can revitalize our connection with their section in the coming weeks.

We are excited to follow through on the initiatives identified in SAA's Strategic Plan and await further instructions from SAA leaders on the formation of the task forces that will lead the charge.

Career Development Subcommittee Report

Submitted by subcommittee chair Heather Perez

Heather Perez, member and co-chair, 2023-2024

Samuel Alexander, member and co-chair, 2023-2024

Danita Callender, member, 2023-2024

Jill Severn, member 2023-2024

The Career Development Subcommittee is responsible for providing career advising and job interview preparation assistance to SAA members through the online Career Services Commons. Previously this committee ran the Career Center at the annual meeting, which was only available once a year. Spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuation of online and hybrid conferencing, the Subcommittee focused on an online option that is now available year-round to SAA members. The Career Services Commons has been in existence since March 2021. The

subcommittee’s work involves the selection and training of the counselors, the technical support for scheduling the sessions, and the assessment of the program.

SAA Career Services Commons

The Career Services Commons is staffed by volunteers who apply to be part of the Career Counselor cohort which runs from March to March of each year. In March 2024, the Commons welcomed its fourth cohort of SAA Career Counselors.

Since March 15, 2021, SAA Career Counselors hosted a total of 544 appointments through the Career Services Commons. The counselors offer these services: mock interviews, resume review services, career advising sessions, or interview presentation practice. (The interview presentation practice option was added in March 2024 in response to feedback from members and the counselors.) The chart below shows the number and type of sessions each year.

	Resume reviews	Mock interviews	Career advising	Interview Presentation Practice (new in March 2024)	TOTAL
March 15, 2021-March 14, 2022	79	29	132		240
March 15, 2022-March 14, 2023	38	21	68		127
March 15, 2023 - March 14, 2024	36	16	72		124
March 15, 2024 - August 19, 2024	17	5	26	5	53
TOTAL	170	71	298	5	544

Career Counselors

In an effort to secure volunteers for the 2024-2025 cohort, the subcommittee reached out to its 2023-2024 Career Counselors in November requesting that counselors interested in renewing for another term express their interest. Eight counselors from the previous cohort expressed interest in continuing to serve. Applications for first-time counselors were accepted from December 5,

2023 and closed on January 7, 2024. The subcommittee announced the application process through the SAA listservs, SAA social media, and other archives-related social media (Facebook's Archives and Archivists page, regional archives groups, etc.). Announcements and messages were sent twice during the month-long period. Seven people applied.

The application review group included each member of the subcommittee and the SAA Council liaison to the Students and New Professionals (SNAP) Section. The group approved the reappointment of the eight returning cohort members, along with six of the new applicants, creating a cohort of fourteen career counselors.

On February 21, the subcommittee held an orientation for new members which was optional for returning members. During the orientation, the counselors met one another, were guided through the online appointment scheduling process, given access to a toolkit to help support their efforts, and asked questions of the subcommittee members. Appointments with new counselors went live in early March. Departing counselors were asked to continue accepting appointments during the transition period until March 15.

Counselors are asked to accept three hour-long appointments per month, with the option to do more if the counselor chooses. On average, counselors spend 30-60 minutes preparing for these appointments.

The subcommittee hosts a mid-year check in with counselors as a way for the counselors to discuss any issues or questions and to share tips with each other.

Outreach and Assessment

The subcommittee sends periodic announcements via the SAA email discussion lists and social media about its services. Messages in 2023-2024 promoted the new cohort of counselors, the addition of the Interview Presentation Practice service, and the availability of the Career Services Commons to those outside SAA membership for the month of August 2024 (see below).

The subcommittee conducts ongoing assessment of its services through two types of surveys: one that requests information from participants after each session and an annual one that requests feedback from the counselors. Overall, the survey results continue to show that the Career Services Commons is a valuable service for both participants and counselors. Below are some of the highlights:

- 100% 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.
- 88% of the respondents said that "Yes, they would use the service again."
- 100% of the 2023-2024 counseling cohort responding to the survey rated their overall experience with the Career Services Commons 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 and 2023-2024. The subcommittee will plan ways to try to improve this.

The Career Development Subcommittee also participated in the Membership Committee's survey of the general SAA membership to gauge interest in having the Career Commons present at the Annual Meeting. (see below) This survey, which was distributed through the SAA announcements listserv received 57 responses, with 28% of the respondents indicating they had used SAA's offered career services resources.

Comments from Participants about the Career Services Commons:

"I appreciated getting advice from someone in the field"

"I am so, so, so grateful that SAA offers this service! It is unheard of in other work lives I've had."

"Every counselor I've met through the Career Services Commons has gone above and beyond in helping me with my career questions, thank you to them!"

Comments from Counselors about the Career Services Commons:

"It is rewarding to share experiences and provide support for people that might be going through career transitions that I have also navigated. It is also a great opportunity to hear from others in the profession about emerging employment trends and or persistent challenges. I feel that being a counselor is also a way to grow my ability to advocate for the value of our profession, since employment applications typically involve stating essential skills and their value or impact."

"A counselee that felt the session was worth the price of membership in SAA"

"A couple of people I helped got the job!"

SAA Annual Meeting Career Center

As mentioned earlier, the Career Center was initially an in-person offering at the SAA Annual Meeting, offered once a year. With the transition to the online modality in 2021, the Career Development Subcommittee decided not to host the in-person Career Center in 2022. Instead, the Career Services Commons was opened up to allow non-SAA members the opportunity to book appointments in the month of August.

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. Because of the dual scheduling and the effort required for this hybrid approach, the decision was made not to open appointments to non-SAA members in 2023.

At the behest of SAA Council, the subcommittee again considered offering the in-person Career Center for the 2024 Annual Meeting. However, following the Membership Committee's survey of April 2024, the data supported focusing on the online-only Career Services Commons. The majority (86%) preferred to use the services virtually or did not have a preference. The subcommittee therefore decided not to host an in-person Career Center at the Annual Meeting and to offer non-SAA members the opportunity to use the Career Services Commons in August 2024.

One of the recommendations from counselors was to provide a forum for them to share what they have learned. At the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Membership Committee three of the counselors participated in a roundtable to share advice and their experiences working with participants. This type of programming could be expanded or formalized to bring career development services to a wider SAA audience.

Recommendations

The Membership Committee surveys should continue to ask about the awareness and usefulness of the Career Services Commons offerings periodically in order to provide valuable assessment data for the Career Development Subcommittee's work. The initial popularity of the new Interview Presentation Practice shows that the Career Services Commons is adaptable to needs and wants. The subcommittee will continue to be responsive to the results of its internal assessments and will make efforts to solicit a better response rate to the participant survey.

Very little "train-the-trainer" material exists in the archival field for career advising and coaching. The subcommittee should continue to work with counselors to provide group training and opportunities for them to share best practices, as well as fora for them to share their knowledge with a wider audience. The subcommittee may wish to work with the Education Committee to develop a workshop or with the Publications Committee to share a regular column in *Archival Outlook* or on the Membership Blog.

Recruiting applicants for the new counselor cohorts remains difficult, but counselors who chose to remain from year-to-year have helped to bolster the ranks. Initially, counselors were restricted to serving 2 terms, but the subcommittee unintentionally ignored this. (Four counselors have served 3 terms.) The subcommittee should make a decision if counselors should be allowed to serve at will.

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.

Subcommittee Activities

Our Key Contacts welcomed 1,204 new members and 344 reinstated members¹ between September 2023 and August 2024 (for members who joined between August 2023-July 2024).

Subcommittee chairs recruited and onboarded 1 new District Representative and 11 new Key Contacts this year due to long-serving members rolling off the subcommittee. Now have a full roster aside from one Key Contact vacancy (Ohio).

The subcommittee chairs updated the Key Contacts email templates in Fall 2023 following Key Contact feedback. These templates had not been updated since 2012 and were due for revision.

Mentoring Program Subcommittee Report

Submitted by subcommittee chair Stasia 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 of the subcommittee at the SAA Annual Meeting in August 2024: Genevia

¹ Reinstated members with fewer than 12 months of lapsed membership are not sent a welcome email and are excluded from these numbers.

Chamblee-Smith and Sarah Lundy. Thank you for your dedication and hard work. Equally notable are those subcommittee members who are re-upping for another two-year term: Theresa Berger, Danielle Bishop Stoulig, Greta Suiter, and Kaitlin Trainor.

Subcommittee Activities

For a variety of reasons, the subcommittee felt it prudent to scale back on how many activities it engaged in during the 2023-2024 year. Feedback from those involved with supervising the Mentoring Cohorts earlier in 2023 resulted in a pause of that service in 2024. We hope to take what we learned and apply it to a new set of cohorts in 2025. Additional feedback from the Self-Service Mentoring pilot suggested that there wasn't enough planning prior to the 2023 Annual Meeting for those participating to meet in person. Based on subcommittee members' availability, we chose not to do an on-site event at the 2024 Annual Meeting.

Matching Statistics

The 1-1 Mentoring Program continues to be a popular service, with demand outpacing supply on one end or the other. Despite the subcommittee's best efforts, there were periods throughout the year where we had a surplus of either mentors or mentees, or matches were not being made consistently which led to a backlog of applicants. As of this report we have 27 people waiting to be matched; 16 mentees and 11 mentors. In at least two cases, the specificity of the participant's interest has made it difficult to find an appropriate match. We will be looking at revising our current rolling application system in favor of a more structured approach to making matches.

Mentoring Program participation statistics:

Year	Participation number (not including cohorts)²
2020	177
2021	295
2022	290
2023	189
2024	142

Recommendations:

² The following statistics are approximate figures since occasionally mentoring records are duplicated in our system if mentors volunteer to assist more than one mentee.

The turnover in subcommittee leadership was difficult to say the least, and that trickled down to the ability of everyone to keep up with the rate of applicants. One lesson learned is that there needs to be a training session held for new subcommittee members (and optional for returning members), rather than assuming they read and understand the manuals. Earlier communication from SAA and the Membership Committee is also necessary for knowing who has been appointed to the subcommittee for the next year.

We applied for SAA's Component Funding request for FY25 in order to support a future Accessibility & Disability cohort. We have not yet heard if the amount requested was granted, but this type of support is important for the continuation of the program. We cannot always meet the needs of our members without additional support from the larger organization, and assuming that everyone has access to the same tools does not ensure success.

Navigator Program Subcommittee Report

Submitted by subcommittee chair Lexy deGraffenreid

In 2024, The Navigator Program matched experienced conference attendees with attendees interested in guidance or advice about the 2024 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.

1. Application Process

- a. This year's program continued with issuing a single application form to recruit both mentors and mentees.
 - i. The application was launched on June 1, 2024. The application was distributed later because SAA 2024 was scheduled later this year.
 - ii. The application closed on July 15.
 - iii. The Navigator Program was advertised through multiple venues between June and July, including the Announcements list, SAA Leader list, Section lists, SAA In the Loop, and Archivist Think Tank.
 - iv. Subcommittee members matched volunteers in late July and distributed matches in the final week of July and first week of August.

This application form continued to ask Navigator volunteers whether they would be willing to be matched with two navigates this year.

2. Navigator Gmail account

- a. Due to technical complications, the SAA Navigator Gmail account was abandoned. The subcommittee co-chairs utilized their own email addresses to communicate with navigators and navigates this year.

3. Applicants overview

- a. Navigator applications: 31
 - i. Navigators accepting two navigates: 18

- ii. Navigators accepting one navigate: 13
- iii. Navigators recruited after the application closure: 6
- b. Navigatee applications:
 - i. Total navigatee applications: 57
 - ii. Ineligible navigatee applications (confirmed non-members): 2
 - iii. Withdrawn applications: 1
- c. Additional Navigator recruitment:
 - i. After the initial application period, there was not a sufficient number of Navigator volunteers to match all eligible Navigatees.
 - ii. Subcommittee members reached out separately to attempt to recruit additional Navigators. As a result, 6 additional Navigators were recruited and all eligible Navigatees were successfully matched.
- d. Total Navigator/Navigatee matches: 54**

This year’s program represented an **increase** in the number of Navigator Program matches from 2023. This year, we had an additional 14 matches, an increase in demand of **35%**. Navigator recruitment continues to be a challenge and demand for Navigators significantly outpaces the number of Navigator volunteers. One third of Navigatees relied on a Navigator who was willing to take on two Navigatees. This could be a challenge for program sustainability moving forward.

SAA Membership Blog Report

Submitted by Subcommittee Chair Robert Weaver

Overview

Last year, the Membership Committee’s Blog Subcommittee redesigned the SAA Membership Blog (<https://membership.archivists.org/>). Updates will continue during 2024-2025. 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. 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 generally fall into three categories: committee member highlights, mentoring partnerships, and career journeys. The subcommittee is also reaching out to other national, regional, and state organizations in order to solicit blog entries from them geared toward their relationship with SAA and how that benefits our membership. The same is being done with the other SAA committees and groups alongside our continued general calls to the SAA Leaders listserv. No posts were added over the past year in order to facilitate the website redesign and the reimagining of our post content, but solicitation of the above-mentioned organizations and groups should lead to more posts in 2024-2025.