

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

**Annual Report:
Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct
(Prepared by Nikki Lynn Thomas and Ashley
Williams Clawson, Co-Chairs)**

For the 2023-2024 term, the Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct (CEPC) worked on the following:

Committee Membership and General Information:

Co-chairs for this term were Nikki Lynn Thomas and Ashley Williams Clawson. Other members Celeste Brewer (2021–2024), Carrie Hintz (2023-2026), Ryan Lee (20023-2026), Dennis Riley (mid-year appointment, 2023–2025), Haley Doty Vaden (2023-2026). Our SAA Council liaison for this term was Michelle Ganz, who was fulfilling that role the first time. For at least the past few years, the CEPC has organized its work around three areas: case studies, documentation, and outreach. During this term, each committee member contributed to at least one of these areas, as noted under the headings below.

The CEPC held eight regular committee meetings during this term and had an annual meeting on July 23 that has further details below. Committee members had rotating assignments to take notes and keep time during these meetings. The CEPC used a Google Drive space to manage files and share information among the group in addition to the SAA Connect Community space.

Case Studies Subcommittee:

After several years of soliciting [case studies in archival ethics](#) via general calls for submission and via direct communication, last year's subcommittee members (Celeste and Grace) began the process of transitioning to less formal ways to share ethical case study information. They met Amy Cooper Cary and Stacy Williams of the SAA Publication Committee and decided that instead of a fully peer-reviewed, formal case study, we would create a blog. Haley Doty Vaden joined the subcommittee this year and worked with Celeste to set up the CEPC blog, which launched in June 2024. Current blog content has all been created by current CEPC members, but subcommittee members next year will continue to promote the blog and solicit content around issues concerning archival ethics. An example of the call used for outreach about the blog:

The SAA Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct (CEPC) seeks submissions for [a new blog](#) engaging with the principles set forth in the current [SAA Core Values and Code of Ethics](#). Suggested length is **500 to 1,500 words**. Blog posts should address one or more of the areas covered by the SAA Core Values and Code of Ethics and can take a variety of formats. To submit a blog post, please use the [SUBMISSION FORM](#). All submissions will be reviewed by a member of CEPC and may be edited in collaboration with the author before publication.

Outreach Subcommittee:

Ashley, Carrie and Nikki led outreach and programming work during the term. The subcommittee continued with the informal discussions begun in 2022-2023. Programming was designed to require limited preparation and a low commitment by the guest speaker. Guest speakers are asked to provide a 5–10-minute overview of their work or specific project followed by 45 minutes of questions and group discussion. The discussions are facilitated with prepared questions to get the discussion started. January 30 was a community discussion with Chela Weber on the OCLC white paper [Total Cost of Stewardship: Responsible Collection Building in Archives and Special Collections](#). There were 78 attendees. The May 21 community discussion featured Laura Uglean-Jackson and Marcella Huggard¹, who summarized the work they have been doing regarding retrospective accessioning, reappraisal, and deaccessioning and the ethics surrounding those decisions. There were 95 attendees and the discussion centered around anonymous and theoretical situations shared prior to the event.

Ashley and Nikki developed the annual meeting program after Ryan put them in touch with a team of archivists about to publish an article on reappraisal at BYU, which aligned closely with the year's theme around ethical acquisitions and responsible stewardship. More details on the annual meeting to follow.

Documentation Subcommittee:

Dennis, Ryan and Nikki worked in the documentation realm during the term, continuing work to improve the CEPC's footprint in SAA's archives, as well as improving how internal records are maintained. He communicated with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) archivist who oversees [SAA's records](#) and developed a plan for transferring digital files to fill gaps there. The subcommittee developed a schedule and workflow for management of committee records using SAA preferred tools, SAA Connect and the Committee microsite. Also included in the workflow is the Committee's internal working files, maintained via Google Drive. Along with creating the Committee's annual report, the outgoing senior co-chair

will be responsible for:

¹ Marcella Huggard, Laura Uglean Jackson; Practices in Progress: The State of Reappraisal and Deaccessioning in Archives. *The American Archivist* 1 September 2019; 82 (2): 508–547. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc-82-02-04>

- Ensuring the previous year’s files are on the SAA Connect
- Ensuring the previous year’s files are on the CEPC microsite
- Transferring the Google drive folders to next chair

Ethical Acquisitions Statement Working Group

At the May 2024 CEPC meeting, we briefly discussed student encampments, whether any of our places of employment were collecting materials from the encampments, and how the situations were impacting our working lives. After a discussion of some of the ethical implications of collecting materials from campus encampments, the committee decided that further discussion and a statement was needed. The Ethical Acquisitions Statement Working Group, composed of Nikki, Dennis, Carrie and Celeste, met twice over the course of 3 weeks to draft the statement and pull together a list of relevant resources. The statement was reviewed by the full committee and released on the [CEPC microsite](#) and blog.

Celeste and Nikki were invited to discuss the statement at the SAA Diversity Committee’s Annual Business meeting on July 18. They provided an overview of the impetus for the statement, the process by which it was written, and fielded questions from the audience and prepared questions.

Annual Meeting:

The CEPC annual meeting occurred virtually on Thursday, July 23, with 30 attendees at the highest point. After Nikki welcomed everyone, subcommittee representatives provided a brief overview of subcommittee accomplishments, which are outlined in this report. A plug was made to contribute to the newly launched CEPC blog and Nikki provided a brief overview of the creation of the [Ethical Acquisition of Campus Protest Materials](#) statement and working group. The meeting shifted to a [presentation](#) that was recorded. Nikki introduced the panelists, who discussed a recently published article² in the *Journal of Western archives* about a project at Brigham Young University applying the Total Cost of Stewardship framework to reappraisal. The panelists were:

- Karen Glenn, Archival Processing Section Supervisor
- John Murphy, Curator - 19th - 20th Century Latter Day Saint Movements & Western

Americana Manuscripts

- Cory Nimer, Archivist - University Archives
- Dainan Skeem, Special Collections Department Chair; Curator - 21st Century Manuscripts

Glenn, Karen; Murphy, John; Nimer, Cory L.; and Skeem, Dainan M. (2024) "Stewardship and Sustainability: Applying the TCOS Framework to Reappraisal," *Journal of Western Archives*: Vol. 15: Iss. 2, Article 6

After the panelists' prepared remarks, the recording was stopped, and attendees were encouraged to ask questions. In the meantime, panelists were asked a set of questions prepared by the annual meeting organizing group. After the discussion, the meeting concluded.

Changes in Committee Membership and Leadership:

Nikki will complete her term on the committee this year, Ashley will become the senior co-chair, and Ryan will become the junior co-chair. In addition to Dennis's mid-year appointment that will run until 2025, Carrie Hintz was a surprise appointment (2023-2026), along with Eirini Melena Karoutsos (2024-2027). The CEPC will add an Early-Career Member in the near future. Michelle Ganz is continuing as SAA Council liaison for another term. The committee will meet soon to establish priorities and a work plan.