

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
December 3-5, 2019  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Executive Director's Report  
(Prepared by Executive Director Nancy Beaumont)**

Reports on Membership, Education, Publications, the Annual Meeting, and Technology appear elsewhere in the staff reports for this Council meeting (1219-VI-D). This report summarizes other Headquarters activities since August 2019.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

- The Strategic Plan dashboard for FY20 to FY22, which the Council discussed in detail in May, is available [here](#). As you will see in this and other staff reports, we're chipping away at the activities outlined in the dashboard.
- In late September we submitted a two-page preliminary proposal to the Institute of Museum and Library Services for implementation of A\*CENSUS II. (See appendix.)
- As noted on the October 2019 Council conference call, I met by phone with NHPRC Executive Director Christopher Eck and several program officers to discuss NHPRC's and SAA's priorities in order to determine if there might be an opportunity for a cooperative agreement to fund mutually significant projects. It is likely that we will submit a request for a cooperative agreement prior to the Commission's May 2020 meeting, most likely for a project to enhance our planned management education track.
- I worked with Native American Archives Section (NAAS) Co-chairs Caitlin Haynes and Rose Buchanan and the staff of the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums to coordinate preparation and shipping of materials for display at the ATALM conference in Long Beach in October. Melissa Stoner represented SAA's NAAS at the exhibit table.

**GOVERNANCE**

- Governance Manager Felicia Owens drafted the minutes of the [0819 Council meetings](#) and the [1019 Council conference call](#), which were approved and posted online per the accepted schedule.
- Felicia worked with Vice President/President-Elect Rachel Vagts to complete the call for volunteers for 2020 (see November/December issue of *Archival Outlook* as well as the

[website](#)) and prepared the worksheets needed by the Appointments Committee to manage its work.

- Felicia prepared an article for the November/December issue of *Archival Outlook* highlighting the 2018-2019 class of emerging professionals (formerly “interns”) who served on SAA appointed groups and section steering committees.

## **HEADQUARTERS OPERATIONS / HUMAN RESOURCES**

- See the Technology report (1219-VI-E-6-Tech) for details on our progress in implementing Nimble User.
- Peter worked with our external auditors in September and October to complete the FY 2019 (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019) audit.
- We’re pleased to welcome Lakeesha Thaddis to the SAA staff as our new Member Services Representative/Accounting Specialist. Lakeesha replaces Rachel Valdez, who left the staff in September.
- As noted (prospectively) in my August report, we have implemented a new telecommuting policy that allows eligible staff members to telecommute up to one day per week. We see this as an important recruitment and retention tool in an increasingly tight job market.

## **SAA FOUNDATION**

- We successfully negotiated a bequest agreement with a Foundation donor, which was fully executed as of November 1.
- The SAA Foundation Development Committee met at SAA Headquarters on October 21 to discuss the annual appeal and other development efforts for the coming year. The staff is currently working to implement the year-end annual appeal.

As always, I’m happy to respond to any questions or comments.

The Society of American Archivists (SAA) seeks \$250,000 from IMLS, with a 10% cost share, to perform a second cycle of its Archival Census and Education Needs Survey in the United States (A\*CENSUS II), a comprehensive, two-part survey of U.S. archivists and archival institutions. In this project, SAA will survey 1) every self-identified archivist in the U.S. to gather information about their demographics, education, employment, and career path, as well as their perspectives on key issues that the field faces, and 2) the directors of archival organizations to gather data about institutional characteristics, resources, strategic directions, and diversity and equity issues. Data and analyses will be made publicly available to support further research and use by archival institutions, archivists, and members of other cultural heritage communities.

**National Need for the Project:** Archivists are vital to identifying and preserving essential parts of the cultural heritage of society; organizing and maintaining the documentary records of institutions, groups, and individuals; assisting in the process of remembering the past through authentic and reliable primary sources; and serving a broad range of communities and people who seek to locate and use valuable evidence and information. Leaders of archival institutions face significant barriers in making data-driven decisions to benefit their organizations because of the paucity of recent, comprehensive national or regional data about the archival workforce and archival institutions. Further, the archives profession has not fostered a culture of routine and regular acquisition and assessment of critical data about the field, its practitioners, and the environments in which they function. As the U.S. population changes and becomes increasingly diverse, and as technologies for recording and disseminating information and evidence evolve rapidly, it is essential to gather baseline data about archives and archivists to assess how archival institutions, the profession, and archival education must also adapt and evolve in order for archivists to continue to fulfill their essential mission to society.

A\*CENSUS II would address both needs. Access to data about national and/or regional trends would help archival organizations set goals or benchmark against their peers when seeking to improve hiring and retention practices or addressing diversity and equity issues. When archival institutions advocate for additional resources within their communities, they would benefit from identifying and comparing themselves to peer institutions or similar cultural heritage organizations. When educational institutions or professional organizations assess education offerings or design new curricula, they would benefit from access to more accurate information about known gaps or needs. Researchers who study trends in the changing archives workforce, challenges in responding to community needs, or the impact or value of archives in their communities would benefit from access to comprehensive baseline data about archivists and the institutions in which they work.

SAA seeks to gather and provide detailed, reliable information about archivists and the institutions in which they work, and to make these data accessible and useful to all in the archives field, in order to strengthen the abilities 1) of archival institutions to make informed, data-driven decisions about their resources and workforce, 2) of archivists to advocate for themselves and their institutions, and 3) of educational and professional organizations to develop responsive services that support archivists' professional needs. This project aligns with an IMLS goal to build the capacity of archival institutions to recruit, train, and develop their workforce and to identify trends to support more informed decision-making.

**Selected Project Category / Community Catalysts:** SAA is the oldest and largest archivist association in North America, serving the education and information needs of more than 6,000 individual archivists and institutions. SAA is especially interested in how workforce data might enhance efforts to increase diversity and equity within the profession.

**Phase of Maturity / Scaling:** In 2004 IMLS funded [A\\*CENSUS](#), the first comprehensive, nationwide survey of the archives profession. With a distribution list of just under 12,000 names and 5,620 respondents, the survey provided

demographic data about archivists and covered their education, career, and professional development needs, with analyses and data made widely available. In 2020 SAA proposes to build on and expand this survey. Repeating key questions from 2004, the longitudinal data from A\*CENSUS II will provide opportunities for comparative analysis. Additional questions will address emerging trends. A follow-up survey for directors will focus on developing a baseline of data about archival institutions.

SAA will partner with a research firm to develop and implement the survey instruments and conduct the analysis. SAA will deposit the data with ICPSR to ensure that they are widely available to support further research. Moreover, SAA recently established a standing Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment to support members in their use and reuse of research data and to ensure that key aspects of A\*CENSUS II will be re-administered on a more frequent basis to provide more longitudinal data. SAA recognizes that many archivists and archival workers are not SAA members. To ensure the broadest possible participation in A\*CENSUS II, we will partner with state and regional professional associations, state archives, state and local historical societies, the National Archives and Records Administration, and others to gather names and contact information for potential participants.

**Project Design | Proposed Work Plan:**

Aug 2020 <i>Project Launch</i>	Issue funding award announcement; complete arrangements with research firm partner; schedule working group meetings and other preliminary management tasks.
Sep – Dec 2020 <i>Develop Instruments and Invitee Lists</i>	<b>Survey of Individuals:</b> SAA working group to review previous instrument and findings; identify continuing areas of interest, those that can be retired, and new areas of emphasis; revise instrument; program survey; conduct 5-10 cognitive interviews to test instrument; finalize instrument; gather lists of invitees. <b>Survey of Organizations:</b> Develop thematic areas of interest (including DEI); draft instrument; iterate with working group on revisions; program survey; conduct 5-10 cognitive interviews to test instrument; finalize instrument; gather list of invitees.
Jan – Mar 2021 <i>Field Survey</i>	Develop survey communications (e.g., blog posts, invitation/reminder messages); field surveys to SAA members and other listed invitees via survey platform; field surveys to nonmembers via outreach with other organizations; close surveys.
Apr – Jun 2021 <i>Analyze Results</i>	Conduct preliminary analysis of results; share with working group for input/feedback; conduct further analysis of results; draft report of findings; share with working group for input/feedback.
Jun 2021 – Feb 2022 <i>Reporting</i>	Publish findings in conjunction with major release event at SAA Annual Meeting in August 2021; conduct major communications/outreach effort to ensure that findings reach broadest possible audience; present results at conferences of other cultural heritage organizations; deposit dataset with ICPSR.

**Diversity Plan:** In support of the critical need to ensure the completeness of the American record, we will use all available means to survey all individuals (professional archivists and records managers, “lone arrangers,” community archivists, and public historians) and institutions that are responsible for identifying, preserving, and providing access to records of enduring value in order to identify 1) the demographics of the archival workforce, 2) the needs created by seminal shifts in archival practice and non-custodial archival work since 2004; and 3) basic assessment of physical repositories and resources.

**Budget Summary:** Because the scale of the proposed surveys is beyond the capacity of SAA’s 12 staff, SAA intends to 1) partner with a research firm to conduct the studies (estimated expense of \$150,000), 2) provide support for member/volunteer participation (estimated at \$50,000), and 3) ensure strong administrative support from the SAA staff office (estimated at \$50,000).