

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

**Annual Report: Committee on Public Policy
(Prepared by Sarah Quigley, Chair)**

BACKGROUND

During the 2018-2019 term, the Committee on Public Policy worked on the following issues:

- August 2018: The committee had a lengthy discussion about the case against the University of Michigan regarding access to the John Tanton papers. Decided to continue to monitor the case but took no action at the time.
- September-October 2018: The committee discussed ways to encourage local advocacy follow ups from Archives on the Hill during October (American Archives Month). Sent email messages encouraging AOH participants to follow up with the staff they met with in D.C.
- September-October 2018: The committee reached out to Teresa Mora and Nancy Lenoil in California regarding a state Net Neutrality bill and whether a letter to Governor Jerry Brown from SAA would be helpful in encouraging the governor to sign the bill. Due to timing, we did not send a letter to Governor Brown, but we did draft a template letter on Net Neutrality to have at the ready as the issue comes up in other states.
- October 2018: Wrote "Statement on the Importance of Public Comments on NARA Appraisal and Scheduling Decisions."
- November 2018: Following reports of Ivanka Trump using personal email to conduct public business, wrote news item, "Use of Non-government Email Accounts for the Conduct of Public Business," issued on November 30.
- November 2018: Following a number of reports of unauthorized destruction of federal records, we invited Don Rosen and Arian Ravanbakhsh of NARA to join us on a conference call to discuss federal records management policies and procedures.
- January 2019: Drafted news item, "Government Shutdown Compromises the Work of Federal Archivists," issued by the Council on January 22.
- February 2019: Offered feedback to the Council on the advocacy section of the SAA Strategic Plan.
- February 2019: The committee had a lengthy discussion about various news items reporting on the Obama Presidential Library's planned access policies and encouraged SAA to make a statement. COPP did not contribute to writing the statement issued on February 27.

- March 2019: Responded to a new draft of a statement on Congressional records from the Congressional Records Section. COPP was not supportive of the statement as it was written and we are now working with CPS to convene a small group to work on a new brief together.
- March 2019: Wrote a statement in response to reports of Jared Kushner using WhatsApp for official government communication.
- April 2019: Discussed bill before Texas Legislature that would enable legislators to withdraw records of the legislature from the state archives. Recommended that SAA endorse CoSA's statement on the matter, which it did.
- April 2019: Publicized changes to the NARA process for commenting on proposed records schedules via various SAA lists.
- June 2019: Drafted "Statement on ICE Records and Government Transparency," issued by the Council on July 8.
- July 2019: Sent a letter to the editor of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* regarding the Georgia Open Records Act. It was not published.

In February 2019, the committee met in Atlanta, Georgia, for a day-and-a-half-long planning retreat. Led by facilitator Jenny Trautman, we engaged in a number of visual planning exercises to articulate a shared vision and goals for the committee for the next three years. The workplan for 2019-2021, including a RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) chart for 2019 and priorities sketched out by year, was approved by the Council at its May 2019 meeting.

We accomplished the first set of goals on the work plan, which were due by the business meeting in August 2019:

Committee Governance:

- Write the work plan and submit to the Council for approval.
- Write onboarding documents for new committee members.
- Plan and host brown bag lunch forum at 2019 Annual Meeting.

Communication and Outreach:

- Plan and host a brown bag lunch forum at 2019 Annual Meeting.
- Review and update COPP microsite.

Federal Legislative Advocacy:

- Revise Public Policy Agenda according to the two-year revision cycle (approved by the Council, May 2019).
- Revise the Legislative Agenda according to the two-year revision cycle (approved by the Council, May 2019).
- Plan and teach a pre-conference workshop, Advocating for Archives in State and Local Policymaking. Sixteen individuals attended the workshop. The feedback on the workshop was overwhelmingly positive, with the session receiving ratings of 4-5 across the board and

numerous comments articulating the utility of the session. There was also a small amount of constructive feedback that can be incorporated next time the workshop is offered.

This year, Chair Sarah Quigley served as COPP's representative to the SAA/CoSA/NAGARA/RAAC Joint Working Group on Issues and Awareness. Quigley also sat in as an *ex officio* member of COPA on their monthly conference call. Quigley and Caryn Radick, chair of COPA, initiated discussions on improving the collaborative relationship between the committees.

In the next year, COPP plans to work on the following issues:

- Committee Governance
 - Standard Operating Procedures: Define roles and responsibilities of committee members.
 - Develop a set of assessment metrics by which we can evaluate the success of our initiatives.
- Communication and Outreach
 - Collaborate with Congressional Records Section to revise issue brief on congressional records.
 - Update and improve searchability of SAA statements page.
 - Assess existing statements and briefs to identify gaps and needs for revision; schedule and assign briefs and statements to be written.
 - Write and submit for approval an issue brief on judicial records.
 - Develop communications strategies.
- Federal Legislative Advocacy
 - Develop questions about archives and records for 2020 presidential candidates.
 - Assess 2018 Archives on the Hill initiative.

We will continue to monitor issues on the public policy and legislative agendas and issue statements on policy issues as they arise. We will also continue to identify opportunities for collaboration with COPA and other SAA constituent groups.

2018-2019 COPP Members:

- Sarah Quigley, Chair
- Sam Winn, Vice Chair
- Audra Eagle Yun, Council Liaison
- Wendy Hagenmaier
- Daria Labinsky
- Virginia Millington
- Kathleen Roe
- Eira Tansey
- Bryan Whitledge