



Society of American Archivists 2019-2020 Section Annual Reports

Compiled here are the 2019-2020 annual reports for all SAA section. For the fourth year, reports were collected through a Survey Monkey survey created and shared by SAA staff. This process proved to be very successful, as it limited email churn, standardized the reports to make compilation easier, and created a secondary record of the reports. Outgoing chairs were asked to complete the reports by September 1 and to include the most complete and accurate information for the 2019-2020 term.

The SAA Affinity Group Task Force of the Council, led by Eric Chin, Ricardo Punzalan, and Audra Eagle Yun, prepared a set of questions for each section to reflect and respond to their current state of their group. These questions, in the section “Self-Assessment,” were added to inform the Council’s ongoing discussions about the structure and health of SAA sections overall.

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Government Records Section

Council Liaison: Eric Chin

Report Submitted by: Stephanie Bayless

2019-2020 Steering Committee Roster

Position	Name	Term Start	Term End
Chair	Stephanie Bayless	8/1/2019	9/1/2020
Vice Chair / Chair-Elect	Brad Houston	8/15/2019	9/1/2020
Immediate Past Chair	Jessica Knox-Jensen	8/15/2019	9/1/2020
Steering Committee Member	Ashby Crowder	8/15/2019	9/1/2021
Steering Committee Member	Ryan Leimkuehler	8/18/2018	9/1/2020
Steering Committee Member	Gina Nichols	8/15/2019	9/1/2020
Council Liaison	Eric Chin	7/24/2019	9/1/2022

ACTIVITIES

Completed: Our plan for this year was to spend the time surveying members then setting up and planning activities that future steering committees could move forward with in coming years. To that end, we completed a member survey that was open for responses dueling November and December 2019. Although we only received 32 responses to this survey, quality of information gained was quite high and we were able to begin implementation for our annual meeting this year.

Ongoing: Other projects planned for this were largely sidelined as our steering committee and members dealt with the professional and personal impact of the COVID-19 public health crisis. We did begin an initial review of our standing rule, that would greatly benefit from a full overhaul. The marked-up version with suggestions and questions will be available for the steering committee to continue with in the 2020-2021 year if so desired. Our other main project to refresh and improve our section's microsite was unsuccessful after we failed to receive a response to two solicitations for volunteers in early to mid 2020. We will continue with this project in some form during the upcoming year.

New: No new projects are currently planned for 2020-2021. This will be discussed during the initial meeting of our new steering committee, currently scheduled for the first week of September.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1: Advocating for Archives and Archivists

As this was a planning year for us, much of our impact across all 4 Strategic Goals was in performing a pulse-check of our member state and needs. GRS surveyed the current employment state of our member (full, part, student, unemployed, etc.), as well as type of employment

(federal, state, non-government, etc.). Moving forward, we will be using the results to best determine the future role our section can play in advocating for our members and their institutions. GRS has the ability to be a strong advocate - whether or directly or through empowering our members.

Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth

GRS offered opportunities for our members to grow professional through election positions on our steering committee and an (ultimately unsuccessful) call for volunteers to service as webmaster. We surveyed our members interest in future offerings of in-person and online learning opportunities, as well as topical interest including email management, records management, collaboration, and appraisal.

Goal 3: Advancing the Field

We offered our members the opportunity to actively participate in the future of GRS and consequently in our future endeavors to advance the Field. The importance of this active participation cannot be understated, as we want our membership to be the ones setting the course for where they see the future of government archives. Directly, we offered an email management training session to assist our many members working for institutions that are now moving into digital avenues.

Goal 4: Meeting Members' Needs

This was the main focus of GRS activities this year beginning with a pulse-check of where the Section stands with our member survey. We utilized the information gained in that survey to focus on their most request topic - email management - in our very successful annual meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING

Number of Attendees: 214

Summary of Meeting Activities: The Government Records Section paired with the Electronic Records Section to host a two-hour joint presentation on email management. This particular topic was the highest rated need/want on our member survey and a popular topic with our members. The successful event was well-attended and featured presentations from Camille Tyndall Watson (North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources), Ashby Crowder (National Archives and Records Administration & GRS steering committee member) and Jessika Drmacich (Williams College). The Q&A period that followed was engaging and informative.

Link to Meeting Minutes:

SELF-ASSESSMENT

How would you describe the health or energy of your section? How engaged are your members?

Unfortunately, our section has been very quiet for a few years now and previous attempts at revitalization weren't sustained. This is mainly due to a failure of the steering committee to

harness member interest and not an indicator of an apathetic member base. The survey we completed this year is a first step at identifying exactly what our active membership is passionate and where they see our section being the most effective. The success of the annual meeting utilizing those survey results is encouraging for the strong future of GRS.

What forms of communication work best for your section members? (For example: email listserv, conference calls, in-person meetings)

Email listerv communications have been the most effective for GRS so far. Our members did indicate an interest in more in-person meeting opportunities however (both at SAA and at other regional meetings) and we would like to pursue these in the future.

**SAA is exploring programming and topical affinities between sections. ([Learn more here.](#))
Does your section share issues or scope overlap with other sections? If so, which sections?**

The initial sections that come to mind as possible overlapping areas of scope with GRS are Local Government Records, Records Management, and Native American Archives. Although the response to our member survey was low, it revealed that our members were also members of Records Management (59%), Reference Outreach and Access (40%), Local Government (31%), and Archives Management (31%).

If your section were to be part of an umbrella of affiliation with other sections, how would you describe the overarching theme of that umbrella?

It seems like Government Records itself could be an umbrella with sections for each type of government (federal, state, local, tribal, etc.), giving us a greater opportunity to offer support to our functional areas (such as a furlough guide for federal agencies that is often suggested as something of interest, but not necessarily beneficial to our full section membership) while coming together for overarching issues (such as records management, funding, and management). Our standing rules encourage representation from each type of government archives, but doesn't require it leaving us often dominated by federal and state volunteers. There are certainly opportunities that could be discussed here.

Do you have any concerns or questions about the potential for your section to merge or affiliate?

There is a lot of opportunity to strengthen sections here, but GRS would suggest caution to make sure current and former steering leadership have the ability to participate in and/or comment on any proposals. Although section member opinion is very important, it often doesn't reflect the reality of any particular section's capability (for example, members may want more varied representation, but do not acknowledge/understand the difficulty we often have soliciting volunteers for projects and/or elected positions).

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL

GRS has no questions at this time.