

Description Section

Council Liaison: Audra Yun / Stephen Curley

Report Submitted by: Cyndi Shein

2019-2020 Steering Committee Roster

Position	Name	Term Start	Term End
Chair	Cyndi Shein	8/3/2019	9/1/2020
Vice Chair / Chair-Elect	Katherine Duvall	8/15/2019	9/1/2020
Immediate Past Chair	Elizabeth Wilkinson	8/3/2019	9/1/2020
Secretary	Sarah Jones	8/18/2018	9/1/2020
Member-at-Large	Helice Koffler	8/15/2019	9/1/2021
Member-at-Large	Katy Rawdon	8/18/2018	9/1/2020
Newsletter Editor	Lori Dedeyan	6/3/2019	9/1/2022
Web Liaison	Scott Kirycki	3/1/2019	9/1/2021
Ex Officio (TS-DACS)	Susan Luftschein	10/31/2019	9/1/2021
Ex Officio (TS-DACS)	Daniel Michelson	10/31/2019	9/1/2020
Council Liaison	Audra Yun	7/29/2017	9/1/2020
Council Liaison	Stephen Curley	7/30/2020	9/1/2023

ACTIVITIES

Completed:

- 1) Established Section-owned Google Drive record-keeping structure to provide continuity from one year to the next and reduce the learning curve for incoming committee members. (Set up Section gmail address for file ownership.) Back-filled documentation for the past two years.
- 2) Officially retired Description Expo, which had been inactive since 2014.
- 3) Renewed collaboration/communication with TS-DACS. In recent years, the chairs of the two groups had not assumed their assigned roles as ex-officio members of the committees. Chair Shein and chairs Luftschein and Michelson renewed the practice, opening communication between the groups and supporting one another's agendas.

Ongoing:

- 1) Continue developing the Description Documentation Portal on the microsite <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/description-section/description-section-documentation-portal>
 - a. Call for contributions to the portal from the community
 - b. Official launch of web page
- 2) Continue publishing Section newsletter, Descriptive Notes, Focusing issues on relevant topics

- 3) Reviewed and began updates to Section Standing Rules
 - a. Identified and struck obsolete and incorrect information (with Council permission)
 - b. Identified areas for revision that will require member vote and Council approval

New:

- 1) Began expansion of the scope of Portal to support the archival community's commitment to inclusive description
- 2) Successfully recruited candidates and conducted election

STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1: Advocating for Archives and Archivists

Expanding the scope of the Portal to include resources on inclusive description supports the strategy of providing leadership in ensuring the completeness, diversity, and accessibility of the historical record.

Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth

The Portal provides content that reflects the latest thinking and best practices in the field and delivers the information via a method that is accessible and affordable.

Goal 3: Advancing the Field

Contributions to the portal are sought from the archival community as a means of collaboration to enhance professional knowledge. Development of portal content is focused on constituent needs.

Goal 4: Meeting Members' Needs

Planned interactive joint meeting focused on topics of interest that were expressed by survey respondents (derailed by pandemic). Added points to the section committee's agenda that were suggested at the 2019 annual business meeting. Discussed the viability of these ideas and, based on the committee's priorities and capacity to research the suggestions, placed suggestions on future agenda (e.g. suggestion to adopt a more interactive/dynamic format for newsletter).

ANNUAL MEETING

Number of Attendees: 178

Summary of Meeting Activities: At the Description Section business meeting, leadership shared election results, and provided updates on the section's ongoing projects including the newsletter and revisions to the Section's Standing Rules. A presentation on the progress of the Section's portal of descriptive resources followed. In addition, representatives from the SAA Technical Subcommittee on the new DACS Principles, the SAA Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards, and the Social Networks and Archival Context (SNAC) project provided updates on their ongoing work.

Link to Meeting Minutes:

<https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/Annual%20Meeting%20Minutes%202020-07-29.pdf>

SELF-ASSESSMENT

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

The committee members were very active and productive. It is difficult to judge the level of engagement of our members.

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

The email listserv was effective for communicating with the section members. Our virtual annual meeting saw a lot of Q/A in the chat box. In-person was not an option during the pandemic.

**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?**

Description is a foundational component of archival work that has relevance to every section, including archives management, collection management, encoded archival standards, metadata and digital objects, web archiving...

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?

Archives management

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

If you merge sections, the leadership and roles of committee members need to be clearly defined. The charge/focus must be clearly articulated.

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL

None