

# College and University Archives Section

## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

Zoom online meeting, attended by 176

### Business meeting

The meeting called to order by section chair, Benn Joseph, who thanked fellow steering committee members for their service this year, particularly those whose terms of service expire at the end of this meeting.

Joseph thanked all members for their engagement with the section throughout this year, particularly in our weekly coffee chats, which will continue in the foreseeable future.

Katie Nash has taken over responsibilities as editor of our [Academic Archivist blog](#), please take time to read it and consider writing for it.

Ellen Engseth, representing this year's nominating committee (with Christy Fic and Tracy Jackson), reported results of the election, as follows:

- Karen Trivette, Vice Chair / Chair-Elect
- Sandra Varry, Steering Committee, 2020-2023
- Angel Diaz, Steering Committee, 2020-2023
- David McCartney, 2020-2022 (appointed to complete Trivette's term)
- Elizabeth James, Early Career Professional, 2020-2021

Thanks to all who nominated themselves and stood for election.

Karen Trivette and Engseth reported on the weekly coffee chat discussions, initiated by the section at the end of March, due to COVID and the need to work from home. Over the 20-week period, we met via Zoom 18 times with an average of 20-30 attendees. We had over 40 attendees when we co-hosted a chat with the Privacy & Confidentiality Section. Topics have been wide-ranging, focused on matters reflective of current events (COVID and BLM), collecting protest-related material, facilities management, budget concerns, interns and student worker remote-based projects, reopening protocols. Resources are compiled in a [Google document](#). The next chat is scheduled for August 12 at 1 p.m. Eastern.

Michelle Sweetser reported that the section leadership applied for an SAA Foundation grant. We submitted a preliminary proposal last fall and were invited to submit final proposal, but ultimately did not receive funding. Our proposal was modeled after the SAA-WArS salary survey of a few years ago; we requested funding to hire an external consultant to assist with survey design and analysis. Our goal is to collect baseline data on the current landscape of the archival profession within college and university archives. Many years ago, the section completed semi-

regular surveys of members (as early as 1949) but that stopped at some point and there isn't really any data on C&U archives in about 20 years, during which time there have been major changes in the profession and higher education, including the rapid growth of digitization and digital preservation systems; the wide-scale online delivery of finding aids; the use of institutional repositories for dissemination of university scholarship; the emergence and development of professional standards such as EAD and EAC-CPF (and in some cases, possibly even the adoption of MARC at the institution); a growing emphasis on data management for faculty data; the use of the Internet to publish many standard reports and university publications; electronic records and email management; equity and inclusion work and evolving campus histories; and many other practices; and more. We would still like to capture data like this; while we are uncertain what the next A\*Census will look like, we expect it is unlikely to give us the level of insight on these kinds of questions if it looks like the previous one. Thus, we are looking for another way to get the survey off the ground; if you are interested in being involved, email Sweetser. Survey results will be used to help inform section projects as well as the revision of the SAA Standard for which the section is responsible ([Guidelines for College and University Archives](#), 1999)

Petrina Jackson, our Council liaison, provided a Council update, reporting on the approved budget for the upcoming fiscal year (including a move to digital-only publication of *American Archivist* and *Archival Outlook*, suspension of the pilot project for funding if section initiatives, leaving Education positions empty). In June, Council passed a [Statement on Black Lives and Archives](#) and hosted two sessions on what it means for our work going forward, with 900 joining on June 11 and 300 on July 24. Both sessions were recorded and are available on SAA website.

At its virtual meeting in May, Council approved revisions to SAA's Statement on Diversity and Inclusion and minor revisions to the SAA Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy to specify political and religious beliefs; approved the establishment of a pilot instance of Dataverse at UNC-Chapel Hill for a duration of five to six years; reviewed the final report of the Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force and agreed to establish a standing working group; voted to increase the size of the DAS subcommittee of the Education Committee to ensure adequate coverage, removing the requirement that subcommittee members must hold the DAS certificate (just the majority). Melissa Gonzales will serve as the 2020-2021 Executive Committee member and Jackson and Ricardo Punzalan will serve on the 2021 Nominating Committee.

At present, over 1700 are registered for the virtual annual meeting; that number will likely go up. Council will meet again on Monday, August 3. Feel free to reach out to Petrina with questions or concerns at any time.

## Educational Program

Katie Howell from UNC-Charlotte shared details of implementation and takeaways from the COVID-19 collecting project developed at her institution. Her institution was able to act quickly

due to their previous experience in tragedy response; they had many of the digital submission pieces in place. However, they modified that form, adding information about multiple person interviews and an agreement regarding personal health information that might be discussed related to COVID. Due to interest in the project from outside the library (e.g., faculty who needed projects for students), they needed a plan to share more broadly. They included safety precautions noting that people shouldn't go out and interview others face to face. To date, they have 25 submissions, about half being text. A few take aways: self-documentation can be cathartic and/or retraumatizing; it is important to offer empathy and support resources to participants (check in on colleagues' well-being and offer emotional support). Moving forward, they look to fold this into other collecting experiences, including projects with classes (oral histories, autoethnographies); connecting with other archivists who used their form to discuss successes and roadblocks; host an open call for drop-in Zoom oral histories; collaborate with a local museum to collect stories from community; and more. The jury is still out as to whether their approach of treating COVID similar to a tragedy response was the best. Tragedies are generally a single event on one day versus an ongoing event that seems to have no end, and they are definitely different.

## Break-Out Sessions

Attendees spent a short period in topical discussion groups of their choice (collecting COVID stories; working and managing remotely; combating systemic racism at our institutions; plans for returning to campus) before the meeting came to an end.