

Society of American Archivists

Membership Committee Annual Report 2021

Prepared by Jennifer Motszko, outgoing chair, and Alison Clemens, incoming chair

Background

Per the Membership Committee's Council-approved guidelines, the Chair must submit an annual report to the Council by December 31.

Membership Committee Meeting Minutes - August 27, 2020 Zoom meeting

Members in attendance: Samuel Alexander, Devhra BennettJones, Alison Clemens, Daniel Hartwig, Maggie Hoffman, Natalie Johnson, Tammi Kim, Jasmine Larkin, Jenifer Monger, Derek Moseley, Brittany Newberry, Jennifer Motszko, Chenoa Shull, Lydia Tang

Subcommittee assignments

Mentoring - Lydia (chair), Daniel (chairing next year), Jasmine
Navigator - Jenifer (chair), Samuel (chairing next year)
Key Contacts - Daniel (chair), Natalie, Jasmine (chairing next year)
Career Center - Maggie (chair), Jenifer (chairing next year), Samuel

Council Updates

Updates on Council activities; nothing specific for Membership.

Open presentation and discussion on Committee's activities - Subcommittee Updates

Career Development Subcommittee Report

Submitted by Subcommittee Co-Chairs Maggie Hoffman and Jenifer Monger

Career Center Subcommittee Membership

Brittany Newberry, Advisor for 2020-21
Maggie Hoffman, Co-Chair for 2020-21
Jenifer Monger, Co-Chair for 2020-21
Samuel Alexander, Rising Co-Chair for 2021-22

Designing SAA Career Services Commons

From September 2020 - August 2021, the Career Development Subcommittee focused its efforts on designing, developing, and launching the SAA Career Services Commons.

Since its founding, the SAA Career Center has served hundreds of SAA members. However, as an annual resource that requires in-person attendance at the SAA Annual Meeting, the Career Center fails to reach many students and early career members who would benefit from the resource but are unable to attend meetings in person for various reasons .

Throughout the planning process for the 2020 Career Center, subcommittee members discussed whether the online Career Center might pave the way for a permanent resource for SAA members. Surveys sent to participants at the close of the 2020 Annual Meeting confirmed the subcommittee's belief that a permanent, online version of the SAA Career Center would be a valuable resource for SAA's membership.

Following the 2020 Annual Meeting, subcommittee members immediately began developing plans for the new center, known as "SAA Career Services Commons" also known as "SAA Commons." The new name was selected to distinguish the resource from SAA's established online Career Center, a job application portal.

Services Offered

SAA Commons offers the same services traditionally offered in person at the SAA Career Center. Participants can choose from Career Advising sessions, Mock Interviews, or Resume Review sessions.

Career Counselors

Rather than relying on the volunteer model used at the SAA Career Center, subcommittee members solicited a call for SAA Career Counselors who would commit to offering three hours per month for a one-year period (March 2021 - February 2022). An applications review group was established that included all three subcommittee members, as well as a representative from the Mentoring Subcommittee and from the Diversity Committee. After receiving 26 applications, the review group selected 16 counselors for the inaugural cohort. Reviewers took a holistic approach to the process, selecting counselors not only for their individual strengths but for how their experiences contributed to the overall cohort. The review group also aimed to create a cohort with a wide range of expertise. Though all 16 applicants accepted their appointments, one counselor was removed from this cohort after several months of inactivity.

In March 2021, SAA Counselors were required to attend an orientation where they were given instructions and had the chance to ask questions of subcommittee members. Each counselor was given access to an online toolkit complete with technology walkthroughs, a guidebook, suggested interview questions, and additional resources. Since SAA Commons was launched in March 2021, subcommittee members have regularly kept in touch with counselors via email. The subcommittee also introduced a dedicated Slack channel where counselors can interact with one another and report any issues.

In June 2021, the subcommittee held a check-in with counselors where subcommittee members received largely positive reviews of the initiative.

Microsite

The Career Development Subcommittee in conjunction with SAA staff decided to redo the subcommittee's site for the Career Commons. This still serves as the Subcommittee's informational site where folks can find information related to the Subcommittee activities, however, general consensus was that this would be a great home for the new Career Services Commons.

Subcommittee members developed initial page plans for the site as well as a series of Commons banners for each page with a logo for the SAA Commons new identity. A designated subcommittee member handled all of the updates and changes, working directly with SAA's web when necessary.

New pages added to the Subcommittee microsite include a landing page for the Career Services Commons which members can access directly from the SAA home page in the top navigation under Careers. Another new page is the Counselors Biographies page which includes headshots from each counselor along with their areas of expertise and how long they've been in the archives profession. Lastly, an Appointments page has been added explaining step by step, how an SAA Member can make an appointment with a counselor.

Outreach

SAA Commons maintains a Twitter account and is regularly promoted via SAA Listservs, emails to student chapters, and placement in In The Loop. In collaboration with the SNAP section, SAA Commons was profiled in the July/August 2021 issue of Archival Outlook. Subcommittee members have regularly been in touch with SAA staff to ensure the promotion of the initiative, which has also been featured on the main page of SAA's website. In July 2021, subcommittee members spoke about SAA Commons at the Membership Committee's annual meeting, as well as the Archivists and Archives of Color Section's annual meeting. To promote SAA Commons during the 2021 Annual Meeting, the initiative was opened beyond SAA Membership. From July 15th through August 15th, non-members were invited to schedule limited appointments with SAA Career Counselors.

Documentation

Subcommittee members have taken care to document the creation of SAA Commons and related policies and procedures. A Policies & Procedures Guide was created in 2021 and a pared-down version of the guide has been shared with all SAA Career Counselors.

Relationship to SAA Career Center

While the services offered are nearly identical, SAA Commons is a distinct initiative from the Career Center held at the SAA Annual Meeting. Because SAA's 2021 meeting was held remotely,

subcommittee members opted to promote the newly-launched SAA Commons as a stand-in for the Career Center. Subcommittee members expect to revisit the Career Center when SAA resumes in-person annual meetings.

Reception of SAA Commons

From its launch in March 2021 until August 31st, 2021, participants scheduled **160 appointments with SAA Commons**, including 87 career advising appointments, 17 mock interviews, and 56 resume review sessions.

Following each session, participants are sent a survey where they can provide feedback on their experiences. Feedback is kept confidential, but the subcommittee can report that it has been largely positive.

As of August 2021, there have been 45 responses to the survey. Responses have included:

77.8% shared that it was their **first time using SAA Commons**

22.2% shared that they had **previously used SAA Commons**

93.3% shared that they **would** use the service again in the future

6.7% shared that they **may** use the service again in the future

95.6% shared that they were **highly likely to recommend** SAA Commons to a friend

95.6% **strongly agreed** that their session was helpful in accomplishing their immediate objective(s)

Responses from the inaugural cohort of SAA Career Counselors have likewise been largely positive, and regular communication with that cohort via email and Slack has helped to overcome hurdles when they have arisen. In Fall 2021, a survey will be issued to the 2021-22 cohort, the results of which will help guide adjustments to policies and procedures as SAA Commons enters its second year.

Moving Forward

In less than six months, SAA Career Services Commons has seen significant success and shows promise for the future. As subcommittee members prepare to move into the initiative's second year, there is room for consideration of additional offerings, including workshops, talks, and collaborations with other SAA committees and sections.

Key Contact Subcommittee Report

Submitted by subcommittee co-chairs Natalie Johnson and Daniel Hartwig

Key Contact Subcommittee Administration

The Key Contact Subcommittee is primarily responsible for welcoming new and returning members to SAA. The committee is comprised of two co-chairs and approximately 60 volunteers serving as Key Contacts and District Representatives. Key Contacts are responsible for emailing new members each month. District Representatives act as a liaison between the co-chairs and Key Contacts and assist the co-chairs with filling vacant positions.

Current vacancies:

- District Representatives: District 1 (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)
- Key Contacts: Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, Nebraska, Kansas, California.

Subcommittee Activities

Our Key Contacts (KCs) welcomed over 1,200 new members (and up to 939 reinstated members) between August 2020 and July 2021. We were not initially aware that both new and returning members were included on the monthly new member report. The KCs reported some uncomfortable situations where a returning member was sent a welcome email, but their membership had only been expired for a month or two. We approached SAA staff with this feedback, and they added a column to the monthly report indicating the number of months lapsed. This has been a helpful addition allowing our KCs to make informed decisions about whether to welcome back returning members after a long absence.

Approximately 29 terms were either begun or renewed this year.

A survey was distributed to the subcommittee in August 2020 to get feedback about its current functions, effectiveness, and ideas for improvement. We held two forums with our subcommittee to discuss the survey and plan next steps. As a result of the survey and subsequent discussion, we made the following adjustments:

1. Created a Google Form to gather statistics about responses received from new members.
2. Created a Google folder for KCs and DRs to access the content of SAA's automated welcome emails and suggested templates for their welcome emails.
3. Started planning a new member orientation anticipated to launch in late 2021.

While discussing the future of the subcommittee and how it could add the most value, it was suggested that Key Contacts could host orientation sessions for new members. We began to develop

this idea and started creating resources. We anticipate that a basic version of this orientation will be available on-demand on our Membership microsite and that live sessions will be hosted by District Representatives and/or Key Contacts on a semiannual basis. The orientation sessions will follow the following outline:

1. Intro to SAA and its structure
2. Website and community
3. Resources and education
4. Local or regional involvement
5. Q&A

Information about local or regional professional involvement and the Q&A will only be available during live sessions. We plan to support our subcommittee by providing a slide deck and attending sessions when possible. We would like to provide a list of Frequently Asked Questions for the live Q&As. We will be exploring the possibility of providing access to orientation resources in Spanish and other languages in the future. We would like to offer orientation sessions to all members in each region at least once per year rather than limiting them to new members only.

Suggestions for Future Actions

1. Key Contacts have frequently requested that new member reports include the sections that new members have joined. This feature was available in the old system, and Key Contacts felt that they could better tailor their welcome emails when they knew about the new members' areas of interest.
2. Although we are very excited about this new member orientation, we still have questions about the potential redundancy of this subcommittee with SAA's automated welcome emails and the efforts of the Students and New Archives Professionals (SNAP) Section.
3. The Key Contacts and District Reps are an amazing built-in network of SAA membership; perhaps this network could be better-utilized to garner nominations for awards, mentoring opportunities, or career services?
4. We would like to explore the possibility of partnering with other subcommittees or sections for specific projects or information sessions. There is a lot of interest in working with the Committee on Public Policy and/or Committee on Public Awareness to assist with regional engagement.

Mentoring Program Subcommittee Report

Submitted by Subcommittee Co-Chairs Lydia Tang and Daniel Hartwig

Mentoring Program Administration

The Mentoring Program Subcommittee administers the SAA Mentoring Program. The Mentoring Program supports career development, networking, and information sharing by connecting SAA members with shared professional interests into mentoring relationships.

The impact and effectiveness of the Subcommittee's work is entirely due to the dedication and passion of the Subcommittee members. We acknowledge with gratitude the following members rotating off the Subcommittee on September 1, 2021:

- Devhra BennettJones, Member
- Faith Charlton, Member
- Elaine Nadeau, Member

Subcommittee Activities

In the 2020-2021 year, the Mentoring Program **doubled previous years' participation numbers by supporting approximately nearly 300 participants and launched a Mentoring Cohort pilot track**. In addition to standard workflows for matching participants, checking on in-progress matches, and acknowledging match conclusions, the Mentoring Program accomplished a number of ambitious organizational updates, including:

- Mentoring Cohort pilot: Inspired by the NEA and MARAC mentoring cohort models, in this initial pilot run (June - November), we are supporting cohorts for Students and New Professionals, Accessibility & Disability, and BIPOC. The insight we gain from this pilot will determine if we make this an ongoing branch of the Mentoring Program.
- Replaced "Protege" with "Mentee," with the goal of equalizing the relationship. Protege can have a more loaded interpretation, and we wanted to equalize the power dynamics and message that anyone can serve as a mentee at any stage of their career, not only early career or younger professionals
- Encouraged SAA to include brief blurbs on the Mentoring Program in the monthly In-the-Loop emails to expand awareness and participation in the program.
- Updated websites for the Mentoring Subcommittee, Mentoring Program, and Tip Sheet
- Tweaked email templates for the Call for Mentors and Mentees Emails, Match Introduction, 6-month check in, End-of-Match, and Early Match Conclusion
- Revised the application form to include identity elements and updated the End-of-Match Survey

Matching statistics

| Mon/Yea r | Applicants | Matches | Unmatched |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Aug-2020 | 80 | 30 | 29 |
| Sep-2020 | 22 | 27 | 0 |
| Oct-2020 | 24 | 22 | 2 |
| Nov-2020 | 7 | 14 | 11 |
| Dec-2020 | 18 | 11 | 8 |
| Jan-2021 | 31 | 13 | 18 |
| Feb-2021 | 20 | 22 | 4 |
| Mar-2021 | 30 | 14 | 6 |
| Apr-2021 | 8 | 6 | 5 |
| May-2021 | 12 | 6 | 0 |
| Jun-2021 | 25 | 14 | 3 |
| Jul-2021 | 18 | 9 | 4 |
| <i>Totals</i> | <i>295</i> | <i>188</i> | |

Suggestions for Future Actions

- The Cohort pilot will need to be assessed for the Subcommittee capacity to administer it, and workflows on how co-mentor recruitment and mentee selection, among many other details, need to continue to be refined and streamlined.
- The 1-to-1 mentoring application needs to be evaluated because it is too long and Subcommittee matchers need more explicit prioritization on what elements to match upon. Conducting focus groups or surveys to establish a lightweight but impactful application would be ideal. Adopting the native AirTable intake form, as opposed to the current approach of using Google Forms and the API to import the data to AirTable, is also recommended. The current set up can easily break if the application questions are tweaked.
- At some point, legacy database exports will need to be purged. The Mentoring Subcommittee has never attempted to compile a full number of participants in the program, which is why the data is still in our google drive, but once that data and anything else relevant for keeping is derived, it should be purged for privacy.

- Continuing to develop ongoing training and resource development (tip sheet and website) for effective mentoring partnerships.

Navigator Program Subcommittee Report

Submitted by Jenifer Monger and Devhra BennettJones

The Society of American Archivists Navigator and Mentoring Programs collaborated in 2021 for a virtual networking experience. Navigator Program Sub-Committee members Devhra BennettJones and Jenifer Monger collaborated to bring the Virtual Navigator Program to fruition.

The Navigator Program matched experienced conference attendees with new members, first-time meeting attendees, and any attendee who was interested in guidance or advice about the 2021 SAA Virtual Conference. Navigators shared their experience, advised archivists on sessions and special events that fit their interests, and facilitated networking with other conference attendees.

Multiple calls for both Navigators and Navigatees to submit applications were sent out in May, June, and July to the following SAA Sections via the Connect platform:

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acquisitions & Appraisal ● Announcements ● Archival Educators ● Archives Management ● Archives & Archivists of Color ● Archivists of Religious Collections ● Audio & Moving Image ● Business Archives ● Collection Management ● College & University Archives ● Congressional Papers ● Description ● Design Records ● Diverse Sexuality & Gender ● EAS ● Electronic Records ● Government Records ● Human Rights Archives ● Independent Archivists ● International Affairs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manuscript Repositories ● Metadata & Digital Object ● Military Archives ● Museum Archives ● Native American Archives ● Oral History ● Performing Arts ● Preservation ● Privacy & Confidentiality ● Professional Writing Virtual Group ● Public Library Archives & Special Collections ● Records Management ● Reference, Access & Outreach ● Research Libraries ● Leader List ● SNAP ● STHC ● Visual Materials Cataloguing & Access ● Visual Materials |
|--|---|

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issues & Advocacy ● Labor Archives ● Latin American & Caribbean Cultural Heritage ● Local Government Records ● Lone Arrangers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Web Archiving ● Women Archivists ● Women's Collections |
|---|--|

During the week of July 19, 2021, 45 Navigatees were matched with 35 Navigators. Due to the imbalance in numbers this year, the Co-Chairs reached out to several Navigators asking that they consider being matched with more than one Navigatee resulting in 13 Navigators being assigned 2 Navigatees each.

One component of the Navigator Program that was enhanced for 2021 was the inclusion of a Tip Sheet for Navigators which proved to be highly beneficial to all participants.

Following the conference, a survey was sent to the participants for feedback on the 2021 Navigator Program and received 15 responses. The evaluations were mixed though predominantly positive. Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage in the program.

Respondents indicated that the following worked well:

- The tip sheet for Navigators was very helpful!
- Great matches and having the freedom to contact each other on a flexible schedule.
- The match-up was great. And it was very easy for me and my match to take our conversation to our personal e-mails and arrange for a video meeting.
- I was matched with someone interested in the same type of archives - doesn't always happen!
- Worked well - great conversation with my navigatee. Fun networking for me, hope it was useful for her, too.

Respondents identified the following suggestions for improvement:

- Perhaps consider doing the matches earlier so that new attendees can get involved in the various section meetings, not just the annual conference program sessions and events.
- Consider asking those who sign up whether they are seeking advice on navigating the conference or short-term mentoring/networking.
- If folks want help for the conference, perhaps SAA should consider doing a pre-conference orientation call to assuage any confusion/fear about the conference itself.
- If they signed up for networking and mentorship, add a field for navigators to indicate if they are willing to take on more than 1 Navigatee.

- Consider a field for Navigatees to indicate their willingness to be placed in small groups to gain flexibility if there's an imbalance in numbers.

Respondents also offered additional feedback:

- Surprised by the lack of participation on the part of Navigators.
- Thank you for providing this opportunity - I hope there are more chances to meet other SAA members in the future.

The Navigator Program Chair is taking into consideration some of the suggestions based on the feedback form and will pursue these in the 2022 program year.

SAA Membership Blog Report

Submitted by Alison Clemens

In May 2021, the Membership Committee launched the new SAA Membership Blog (<https://membership.archivists.org/>). This effort was made possible by the past and ongoing members of the blog team: Devhra BennettJones, Cheryll Fong, Daniel Hartwig, Natalie Johnson, Helen Kim, Megan McShea, Jennifer Motszko, and Lydia Tang. SAA staff were also instrumental in the launch of the blog.

The blog shares the work of the SAA Membership Committee and its Key Contacts, Career Development, and Mentoring programs; highlights the perspectives and experiences of SAA members; and shares resources about SAA and archival work. New posts (one to three posts a month) are added at the beginning of each month, and posts are solicited via subcommittee calls and open calls via SAA email lists.

The Membership Committee vice chair administers the blog. Future planned work for the blog includes determining readership statistics, exploring setting up an online submissions process (submissions currently go through saamembershipcommittee@gmail.com), and continuing to post one to three posts of interest a month.