

Society of American Archivists

Council Meeting

Chicago, IL

Group Name: Diversity Committee

(Prepared by: Teresa Mora, Chair)

Year: 2024- 2025

Current Rosters:

Chair: Teresa Mora (2025)

Vice Chair/ Chair-Elect: Zachary Tumlin (2025)

Members: Elizabeth Heu (2027); Renee James (2027); Jim Kuhn (2027); Gayle O'Hara (2026); Elspeth Olson (2026); Judy Tyrus (2025); KayAnn Warner (2026);

Ex Officio Members: Kimberley Barzola (Archivists & Archives of Color Section); Vina Begay (Native American Archives Section); Alexandra deGraffenreid (Membership Committee); Carrie Mastley (Women Archivists Section); Jenifer Monger (Membership Committee); Jennie Rankin (Women Archivists Section)

Council Liaison: Selena Ortega-Chiolero

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

(Please indicate all projects and activities that your component group has completed this year, continues to work on, or plans to implement in the following fiscal year.)

Completed:

- Began the year by reviewing action items from the previous year, notes from the 2024 Diversity Forum and the DEIA Workplan to set priorities for the year.
- Established three subcommittees to carry out identified work for the year:
 - Affinity & Resource Groups: focused on action item identified in SAA Workplan on DEIA 1.6: “pilot and/ or create guidance for creating affinity or employee resource groups that bring together archives workers who share cultural commonalities.”
 - Restrictions on DEIA: focused on developing a statement and/or guidance in response to recent restrictions on DEIA.
 - Diversity Forum Planning: focused on planning the 2025 Forum.

- Discussed the [Open Letter to SAA from Archivist of the United States](#) (January) and submitted a related [agenda item](#) request to Council. No response from Council received, assumed due to subsequent firing of the Archivist of the United States.
- In January the Restrictions on DEIA Subcommittee contributed text to “SAA Draft Statement on Restrictions on DEI Work” in advance of Council Meeting (February 5th-6th, 2024: 0224-V-F-CM). [Draft text](#) provided by the subcommittee called for:
 - research to document the impact of legislative interference in archival work,
 - investigation of ways SAA can assist archivists encountering restrictions on their work,
 - a revision of the advocacy toolkit to address legislative threats to archival work
- Submitted funding request to secure recurring annual funding to support speakers at the Diversity Forum which was approved by Council. Submission also requested that the Diversity Forum be offered along the lines of a plenary as a truly hybrid program with no competing scheduling. Upon the release of the 2025 Annual Meeting program we realized that the latter request (a standalone program) was not granted nor was the funding support granted on a recurring basis. **ACTION: We respectfully request that both of these items be reconsidered by Council.**
- Provided feedback to Council in re: to strategic planning. Specifically noting the need for future strategic plans to include clear (and resourced) deliverables as well as the need for more transparency within the organization and stronger lines of communication between Council and committees to clarify expectations. The Committee also stressed the need to develop SAA’s advocacy work, specifically calling out the need to reactivate the Committee on Public Policy and the Committee on Public Awareness and revisit the Advocacy Toolkit in light of the current political atmosphere (as also noted in our contributions to the “SAA Draft Statement on Restrictions on DEI Work” as referenced above.
- The Affinity & Resource Groups Subcommittee facilitated a session on the topic: “Archival Community Conversation on ERGs/Affinity Groups” on April 10 in support of Workplan on DEIA Action Item 1.6.
- In April the Committee convened and hosted a meeting of representatives from affiliated sections (Native American Archives Section, Women Archivists Section, Accessibility and Disability Section, Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section) to discuss how the organization might better advocate for the profession and how we might better activate allyships and advocate for one another. Committee leadership brought the concerns voiced at this meeting to the May Council meeting, presenting a [joint letter](#) on behalf of various sections.
- The Committee published a [Statement on Nationwide Attacks against DEIA Programs and Initiatives](#) in April.

- The Affinity & Resource Groups Subcommittee gathered relevant resources and posted them on SAA Connect in June: [Community Conversation on ERGs/Affinity Groups | Announcements](#) in support of Workplan on DEIA Action Item 1.6.
- Throughout the year the Committee reviewed and provided feedback on a number of proposed new and revised standards:
 - Revision of the Archival Continuing Education Guidelines by the Committee on Education.
 - Revision of Best Practices for Internships Standard by the Graduate Archival Education Subcommittee of the Committee on Education.
 - Draft Principles in Indigenous Archival Repatriation by the Archival Repatriation Committee.
 - Delivering Archives and Digital Objects: A Conceptual Model.
- Developed and organized the 2025 Diversity Forum for the Annual Meeting. The forum was held on Monday, August 25 and offered participants the opportunity to discuss how their work has been directly impacted by anti-DEIA measures. Participants were also asked to brainstorm about how SAA might best support them and their work in this moment. A fully hybrid event, approximately 100 individuals (not including facilitators) attended the event. Although we had hoped for greater participation, given competing programming and the fact that the Forum was held during the lunch break for in-person attendees we were happy with the turn out. The Diversity Committee will focus its efforts in the coming months on compiling feedback gathered during the Forum into a report to present to Council recommending specific action items to consider in order to better support our membership.

Ongoing:

- The Diversity Committee will continue to review new and revised standards upon request.
- The Diversity Committee will continue to monitor anti-DEIA actions that directly impact our membership and the archival profession.

New:

- Review notes from 2025 Diversity Forum and compile report to present to Council with recommendations of specific actions to support the membership in the wake of attacks on DEIA.

SAA STRATEGIC PLAN

(Please review the current [Strategic Plan](#) and indicate below how the component group has or plans to contribute to one or more of the four main goals.)

Goal 1: Advocating for Archives and Archivists

The Committee considers it paramount that it use its voice to advocate for our colleagues who are currently under attack due to anti-DEIA measures. In April it issued a [Statement on Nationwide Attacks against DEIA Programs and Initiatives](#). The Committee used its Annual Business Meeting as an opportunity to surface the good work being done by Council to speak up on behalf of our colleagues through the work of the Statements Working Group. The 2025 Diversity Forum was centered around the objective of understanding how SAA might better advocate for the profession at large.

Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth

The Affinity & Resource Groups Subcommittee developed and facilitated a session on the topic: "Archival Community Conversation on ERGs/Affinity Groups". The Subcommittee also gathered relevant resources and [posted them](#) on SAA Connect.

Goal 3: Advancing the Field

Throughout the year the Committee reviewed and provided feedback on a number of proposed new and revised standards:

- Revision of the Archival Continuing Education Guidelines by the Committee on Education.
- Revision of Best Practices for Internships Standard by the Graduate Archival Education Subcommittee of the Committee on Education.
- Draft Principles in Indigenous Archival Repatriation by the Archival Repatriation Committee.
- Delivering Archives and Digital Objects: A Conceptual Model.

Goal 4: Meeting Members' Needs

The Committee continues to advocate for the needs of members to Council by surfacing concerns of the membership and speaking out against anti-DEIA measures that directly impact the membership and the archival profession.

SAA ANNUAL MEETING

Number of attendees: approx. 40

Link to meeting minutes:

<https://www2.archivists.org/groups/diversity-committee/2025-annual-business-meeting-minutes>

Summary of meeting activities and highlights:

In addition to a review of the year's work the Diversity Committee Business meeting featured presentations by members of the SAA Council's Project 2025 and Statements Working Groups. The presentations were well received with attendees asking questions to better understand how the groups have approached their work and the anticipated outcomes of their efforts.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

How would you describe the health or energy of the group, and how engaged are the members?

The Diversity Committee is a highly functioning and energized committee whose members are committed to advancing Diversity in the profession and are eager to be given clear direction from Council as to how they might best do this work as well as how they might best support SAA's advocacy efforts in regards to DEIA.

Did the component group's leadership encounter any challenges in achieving its goals for the year?

The following is in direct response to Council's request earlier in the year for the Committee to comment on the Committee's ability to execute deliverables as identified in the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan and touches on other larger breakdowns in communication and unclear expectations that have generally made our work challenging:

1. Committee functioning would have benefited from *at least* annual check-ins between our leadership and liaison, during which they reviewed and prioritized upcoming fiscal year goals. Considering member and leadership turnover, this would have kept the Committee moving forward on completing goals, rather than losing momentum between each chair. We do not necessarily blame any of our liaisons during this period (2022-2025) for this (although we will say that one was largely MIA). Instead, we question how much direction or preparation they received as first-year members.
2. Given the ongoing expectation that this Committee produce the annual Diversity Forum, it is particularly important that goals not only be prioritized but also be **clear and achievable**. This expectation reduces the Committee's overall capacity, which is why we have urged that the Forum either be treated like a true plenary or scaled back.
3. We received little to no communication from other component groups which were tasked with leading efforts for which the Committee was identified as a collaborator. Last year (2024), we also discovered that not all groups supposed to be sending an ex-officio member to our Committee meetings were aware of this responsibility, again showing a lack of communication and collaboration. The Committee should act as a facilitator of communication between diversity-related sections so that we can achieve goals together.
4. There were significant timeline and communication issues with the formation of new, related task forces, specifically the Membership Funding and Pathways for Diverse Archives Workers Task Force. Goals tied to their work could not be completed. This highlights the need for more timely and transparent communication between SAA Council and staff and component groups. Delayed, stilted or unanswered communications (such as waiting on Council talking points) leaves volunteers feeling neglected, causes them to question their role and to feel underappreciated and underutilized.

What suggestions do you have for the SAA Council and staff that might help address these challenges in the coming term?

As noted above, **a greater focus on transparency and regular and timely communication with standing committees, especially those from which Council expects to see action and deliverables** would be greatly appreciated by committee members.

What questions or concerns do you have for the SAA Council and staff?

The Committee would like Council to provide clear direction around its expectations of the Diversity Forum. Since its inception in 2013 it has become a primary programmatic effort of the Diversity Committee but without the support the Committee feels it merits for the amount of work entailed. The Committee has requested that it be considered a standalone program akin to the plenary and has also sought recurring funding to compensate speakers for their time but neither has come to pass. If Council wants the Committee to continue to devote significant time and energy to this endeavor in order to highlight DEIA as a key priority of the organization it needs to commit resources accordingly. **We again respectfully request that the Diversity Forum be offered as a stand alone offering (with no competing programming), during the normal conference schedule (not during the lunch hour) in whatever modality the Annual Meeting is being held (virtual only/ hybrid/ in-person only). Additionally we request recurring funding of \$1000 to provide up to two invited speakers with an honoraria for their time.**

In order to foster better communication among component groups and committees, the Diversity Committee suggests that **in addition to the annual Leadership Training (to be held in the fall) SAA organize a mid-year check-in for SAA leaders to come together and discuss potential for collaboration, concerns with regard to the organizational structure and how SAA might better serve its members**. Consider having this be led by first year Council members to help inform their planning of the Leadership Training the following year.