**Committee on Public Policy**

**Monthly Conference Call**

**Agenda**

**November 26, 2018**

Present: Nancy Beaumont, Rachel Greggs (intern), Wendy Hagenmaier, Daria Labinsky, Virginia Millington, Caryn Radick (ex-officio), Kathleen Roe, Sarah Quigley (chair), Bryan Whitledge, Sam Winn (vice chair), Audra Yun (Council liaison)

Absent:

1. Records Management and Unauthorized Destruction of Federal Records, NARA (Arian Ravanbakhsh and Donald Rosen)

* We were joined by Don Rosen and Arian Ravanbakhsh from NARA. Don is Director of Records Management Oversight and Reporting. Arian is Supervisory Records Management Policy Analyst in the Office of the Chief Records Officer
* Dennis had invited Don and Meg Phillips to speak to COPP in the summer about unauthorized destruction of federal records but schedules didn't align
* Purpose of meeting broadened slightly to include discussion of the scheduling process in light of recent controversies
* Don and Arian provided an overview of RM at NARA and some of the responsibilities of their units:
  + Records Management Oversight and Reporting has the authority to inspect agencies and investigate their compliance with schedules and policies. They also administer an annual RM self-assessment for all agencies and track unauthorized destruction claims, as well as operate a training program for federal employees.
  + Compliance and oversight process:
    - A team of about 12 people
    - Work with agencies to help them identify RM issues
    - Authority to conduct inspections since 2012
    - All inspections are posted online
    - Trying to build capacity to do more inspections
    - Inspections take 6-8 months
    - They also do assessments of particular RM topics across agencies
    - Assessments benefit larger groups than inspections since findings usually apply broadly
    - The self-assessment is sent to all agencies and includes an email management tool
  + Unauthorized disposition
    - Agencies can self-report. Reports must include corrective action taken
    - Department may hear about destruction through other means, such as media, and initiative an investigation
    - Open and closeout letters are posted online back to 2016
    - They handle about 20-30 cases a year
    - Most close quickly but some last quite a long time
  + They are starting up a systems team and hiring an IT staff to do some system audits
  + Records scheduling and appraisal, which happens on a different team, can take up to a year
    - NARA works with agency to draft a schedule
    - Schedule is published in the Federal Register
    - Publication opens public comment period
    - Archivist works with agency to tweak schedule in response to comments
    - People often don't fully understand this process and are unfamiliar with changes NARA has made in their scheduling processes that have simplified scheduling but may be confusing to the public (e.g. "big bucket schedules")
* We discussed the need for broader understanding of federal records management in the profession, particularly with heightened scrutiny on this administration
  + COPP was excited to have this conversation so we can increase our own awareness and be able to be more responsive when contacted
  + Kathleen asked if there is someplace online we can send people who have questions
    - Don and Arian agreed to pull together a list of resources
    - Mentioned their blog
    - Also mentioned that the bi-monthly meetings between NARA and the agencies are all available to watch on YouTube
  + Don and Arian discussed their desire to publicize their resources more broadly and increase transparency in the appraisal process
    - Ideally they'll get to the point where draft schedules and policies can be posted online on their website and not just in the federal register
    - Important part is helping people understand the differences between processes such as scheduling and unauthorized destruction
    - COPP can help by pushing messages out
    - We discussed Eira's idea of a jointly hosted COPP/Records Management Section Google hangout on federal records management and Don and Arian expressed interest in participating
    - We also discussed the possibility of more regular contributions to In the Loop from NARA

2. Preconference Workshop (All)

* We ran out of time to really discuss this opportunity. Sarah agreed to start a thread on the COPP list serve to brainstorm ideas and start working on a proposal.

3. Spring meetings (All)

* Sarah will be sending Doodle polls in December to schedule spring conference calls and an in person meeting

4. Other business (All)

* None