

**SAA Committee on Public Policy  
Annual Meeting  
July 26, 2017**

**Meeting Notes**

**1. COPP's Role in the SAA Public Policy Landscape**

General discussion regarding need to balance expectations of SAA members and the need to ensure public policy products position SAA to be a leader in advocating for archival equities.

Discussed areas where current process (or lack of clarity in the process) resulted in confusion and frustration. Specific areas discussed included the issue of how past products have gone back and forth without any clear procedures specific as to the how, when, and how often drafts get sent back and forth between requestors, COPP, and Council. Some of this will depend on the particular issue, required time sensitivity, and the nature of the final product (i.e. issue brief vs. statement).

Overall, members agreed there was a need to improve the business process of public policy actions and felt the following would be helpful moving forward:

- Need to delimit how the back and forth of drafting products should operate and what hard stops should be in place.
- Need to ensure any Council request for additional information is specific.
- Need to establish, up front, definite time limits and turn around expectations.
- Need to emphasize that background info provided as part of the request process is the opportunity for SAA members to express their expectations and to advocate how their request fits in with SAA strategic plan and public policy agenda.

General agreement on need to refine the current set of procedures and to submit recommendations to Council. In this regard COPP will also develop a template for submitting requests for public policy actions, as well as a flow chart that will outline the process.

COPP will:

1. Propose streamlined narrative language for proposing advocacy actions
2. Create template for proposing advocacy actions
3. Develop bullet-point or workflow based on narrative to illustrate steps

**2. Review of SAA Public Policy Agenda**

Discussed need to update Public Policy Agenda and committed to look at the whole document, bold areas as well as specific issues. COPP will develop suggested draft for Council

consideration at its November meeting. Urged to be creative and brainstorm what is missing from the current document.

Discussed the issue that “public policy” does not solely concern public records, but encompasses areas where archives and records issues are affected by public policy. Need to focus on areas and issue that SAA can weigh in on and move the debate in order to impact specific policies. In other words, areas where SAA can have influence, legitimacy, and credibility with policy makers (i.e. legislative and executive).

### **3. Pending Issue Briefs**

- a) Police Mobile Cameras – consensus to send revised draft back to Council for further action.
- b) Over-Classification of Federal Records – General background discussion on history of the brief which essentially endorses recommendations of the Public Interest Declassification Board. Some minor edits suggested to reflect current state of CUI as evident on NARA’s website, but otherwise general agreement to share with sections and external parties.
- c) Congressional Records – Need to add language to end of brief to tighten up expectations and specify goal of increased access.

### **4. Federal Funding Advocacy**

Brief review of current state of play re FY2018 appropriations: NHPRC is at \$4mil, which is a decrease of \$2 million, but better than zero. NEH is down \$4.8 mil, while IMLS funding is even with no cuts.

No sense there is the need for additional products for FY18 and will await next opportunity for member action alert.

Should probably start looking towards FY2019 and building relationships with members of Congress. To this end, it would be helpful to start paying attention to legislation introduced to Congress, having SAA weigh in on the pros and cons regardless of whether a particular bill is likely to become law. In this way, the SAA name brand would at least resonate when it comes time to seek increased funding. This cannot be a full-fledged legislative tracking effort, but should be viewed, hopefully, as an opportunity for an easy win to raise SAA’s external profile. COPP can develop a letter template to make this process less labor intensive and facilitate analysis. COPP can also start identifying bills that have been introduced that touch on archives and records management equities. COPP can discuss with the Issues & Advocacy Section ways in which their research teams or members can facilitate this effort.

Also discussed possibility of identifying SAA members willing to follow-up on legislative issues as constituents. Would also be helpful to identify willing SAA members whose elected representatives sit on the relevant appropriations and oversight committees. Question was raised as to how we encourage and reassure members to invoke their SAA membership (without them speaking on behalf of SAA) in their communications with members of Congress, and how to keep a disparate membership focused on a unified message.

Raised the possibility of harnessing public service metrics to quantify impact of archives and need to contact the Reference, Access, and Outreach Section in this regard.

## **5. COPP Transparency**

Due to time constraints, no real discussion. Raised the possibility of a blog post (Off the Record) about the process after updating the public policy agenda.

## **6. SAA 2018, Washington DC**

Main discussion centered on planning for Hill visits prior to the annual meeting. On-site training and visits most likely will occur the Tuesday during the annual meeting week. SAA will need to agree on talking points ahead of time and determine which issues will be the focus of this efforts. Funding is the obvious choice. Possibly copyright as a second issue, depending on the state of play.

Suggestion was made that instead of a forum, that COPP and COPA host an edit-a-thon type event to encourage SAA members to draft impact stories and possibly op-eds. Such an event would provide a collaborative framework to help publish stories with real impact. This would also be a way for folks to participate who are not comfortable with direct meetings.

Discussed possibility of developing a framework for SAA members not going to annual meeting to invite members of Congress to visit their repositories during the August recess. Possible preliminary actions include:

- COPP provide advice and support to frame personalized talking points and resources
- SAA educational webinar on legislative advocacy and outreach

Noted need to have COPP representative(s) attend the National Coalition for the Humanities and the Council of State Archivists spring events in DC prior to the annual meeting. Expressed the hope that this could be an annual occurrence.

## **7. Other Business**

Need was raised for “3 beautiful paragraphs” to be used when an archive closes.