

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
November 5-7, 2017
Chicago, Illinois**

**Annual Report: Committee on Public Policy
(Prepared by Dennis Riley, Chair)**

For the 2016-2017 term, the Committee on Public Policy (COPP) worked on a number of issues, including:

- Updated the issue brief on the Freedom of Information Act to reflect changes implemented under the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016. The revised brief was approved by the Council in November 2016.
- Through the Joint Working Group on Issues and Awareness, COPP helped develop Recommendations on Federal Archives and Records Management Issues submitted to the Presidential transition team in December 2016. The Joint Working Group is composed of representatives from SAA (including COPP Chair Dennis Riley), the Council of State Archivists (CoSA), the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA), and the Regional Archival Associations Consortium (RAAC).
- In response to a request from an SAA member, and pursuant to instructions from the Executive Committee, COPP drafted language related to an anticipated Muslim-targeted immigration registry based on the defunct National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS). During discussion of this draft, COPP decided to hold off on further action until the Federal government's policy was clear. To date this registry has not been publicly activated; however, Riley provided input on SAA's statement regarding the Executive Order Restricting Entry into the United States by Individuals from Seven Muslim-Majority Countries, which was drafted by the Council and issued on January 31, 2017.
- Per the Council's request, COPP further revised the issue brief on Confidentiality of Private Information Held in Records of the Federal Government's Executive Agencies. This brief was initially submitted to the Council in 2015, was resubmitted in November 2016, and finally was approved in February 2017.
- Drafted a letter signed by SAA President Nancy McGovern on March 15, 2017, expressing concern about the current funding and facility issues faced by the Indiana Archives and Records Administration.

- Submitted issue briefs on Declassification of Federal Records and Federal Grant Funding for Archives, both of which were approved by the Council in May 2017.
- Also in May 2017, the COPP Chair provided input for a statement drafted by the Council on the Importance and Value of the U.S. Census. This statement was approved by the Council in October 2017.
- Developed a background document supporting funding for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) and consulted on a similar document for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which was drafted by the Council. Both were posted to the SAA website in June 2017.
- In response to a request from an SAA member, drafted a statement objecting to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity Request for Voter Roll Data, which was revised by the Council and issued on July 13, 2017.
- In response to an SAA member request, developed an issue brief on police mobile camera footage as a public record, an issue that COPP had been discussing for some time. After extensive internal discussions, COPP consulted with seven sections to ensure that a broad perspective of SAA members was considered. The feedback received was incorporated into the brief, which was submitted to the Council for its consideration in May 2017. The Council liaison returned the draft to COPP with instructions to consult the original requesters and ensure that their initial intent was adequately represented. COPP continued its deliberations and agreed to a revised draft at its annual meeting in July, with a view to re-submitting to the Council at its November 2017 meeting. Sections were not consulted on this revised draft.
- During this term, COPP also continued work on two issue briefs related to the over-classification of Federal records and treating Congressional records as public records. After considerable internal deliberations, COPP agreed to the drafts at its annual meeting in Portland in July 2017, with a view to consulting relevant sections and external parties before submitting them for the Council's consideration.
- Together with the Committee on Public Awareness and the Issues & Advocacy Section, coordinated the second annual Advocacy Forum at the SAA Annual Meeting in July 2017. The forum at the Portland meeting focused on Archival Advocacy and Awareness Amid Social/Political Upheaval.

To improve COPP operations and transparency:

- COPP instituted a practice of posting work plans, meeting agendas, and notes of committee deliberations on its microsite: <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/committee-on-public-policy/copp-documents>.
- COPP held a conference call in March 2017 to discuss its work. Beginning in September 2017, COPP will hold a monthly conference call.

To enhance collaboration and cooperation in areas of public policy and the larger arena of advocacy:

- Riley participated on two conference calls organized by the Issues & Advocacy Section that included representatives of COPA and RAAC. The purpose of these calls was to improve communication among advocacy-oriented groups.
- Riley participated in monthly conference calls of the Joint Working Group on Issues and Awareness with members of CoSA, NAGARA, and RAAC. In addition to lengthy negotiations about recommendations to the new Presidential administration, these calls focused primarily on the status of Federal funding for archives and the state of play of the appropriations process. The group also discussed potential advocacy efforts during the 2018 Joint Annual Meeting.

For the 2017-2018 term, COPP plans to engage on the following priorities, in addition to other issues that may emerge:

- Propose revisions to the Procedures for Suggesting SAA Advocacy Action in order to: a) streamline the narrative language for proposing advocacy actions; b) create a template for proposing advocacy actions; and c) develop a workflow based on the narrative to illustrate the steps involved. These have been submitted for the Council's review at its November 2017 meeting.
- Review and revise SAA's Public Policy Agenda. This has been submitted for the Council's review at its November 2017 meeting.
- Finalize the draft issue briefs on Classification of Federal Records and Controlled Unclassified Information. This has been submitted for the Council's review at its November 2017 meeting.
- Continue work on the draft issue brief related to Congressional Records as Public Records. The latest round of consultations with sections and external parties contuse to raise points that need to be addressed.
- Continue developing strategies to position SAA as a leader in advocating for Federal agencies with funding to support archives, including NHPRC, NEH, and IMLS.
- Plan for the 2018 Joint Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., to include a pre-meeting advocacy training and visits to appropriate members of Congress.
- Develop standard language that can be used when an archive closes. While not directly related to public policy, COPP is well positioned to take the lead on this topic, unless the Council feels otherwise.
- Monitor NAFTA re-negotiations and possible impact on copyright. The Intellectual Property Working Group has the lead on this issue, but COPP will keep abreast of developments.

- Develop an issue brief dealing with net neutrality, the digital divide, and the ability of repositories to provide access to digital collections if they are not paying internet providers for the “fast lane.”
- Develop legislative priorities to guide federal-level advocacy efforts.

We welcome Council members’ questions and comments.