

Congressional Papers Roundtable (CPR) Strategic Plan

Approved by Steering Committee October 2012

I. Strategic Priority: Advocacy

Issue Statement:

Archivists must take an active role in promoting the importance of archives and archivists in order to increase public support, shape public policy, and obtain the resources necessary to protect the accessibility of historical records that serve cultural functions as well as ensure the protection of citizens' rights and the accountability of organizations and governments.

Desired Outcome #1:

Identify public policy priorities in the legislative agenda that are relevant to the members of CPR including the public's access to information, rights to timely and reasonable use of information (copyright) and personal privacy, and the public's need for a comprehensive and comprehensible historical record, and strong institutional stewardship of the American historical record.

Measurable Activities:

- A. Establish ongoing communication with members of SAA's Government Affairs Working Group (GAWG). For example, have a GAWG representative periodically speak at CPR meetings. SAA Council tasks GAWG to track legislative and regulatory issues of concern to archivists, to prepare drafts of documents relating to government affairs issues that may benefit archives and archivists, to contribute to the education efforts on these issues, and to suggest possible collaborations with other organizations. Regular communication with GAWG will alert CPR about legislative and regulatory issues as they arise and also enable CPR to inform the GAWG about issues that CPR regards as important.
- B. To ensure the public's access to a comprehensive, comprehensible historical record (institutional stewardship):
 1. Place a summary and link on the CPR website Advocacy page to "The Documentation of Congress: Report of the Congressional Archivists Roundtable Task Force on Congressional Documentation" (1992) by Karen Dawley Paul. [Summer 2013]
 2. Provide a document to offer guidance about the resources needed to ensure that an institution is capable and willing to devote sufficient resources to administer congressional collections. [2013]
 3. CPR chair and/or chair-elect will continue a letter writing campaign to repositories with papers of members who recently left Congress to inform them about the resources provided by CPR. [Ongoing]
 4. Support and promote House Concurrent Resolution 307 from the One Hundred and Tenth Congress (2008), which urges the preservation of congressional members' papers. [Ongoing]
 5. CPR will endorse Congress Week, and promote Congress Week involvement among its members. This outreach can be a tool for advocating to the public about the mission of archives. [Annual]

Desired Outcome #2:

Identify resources that would serve as a “how to” or best practices guide for advocacy and outreach to educate and assist current and prospective political paper archivists. Solicit noteworthy examples of guidelines, recommendations, policies, and other documents from leading repositories. Provide tips and quotes from members. For example, describe how repositories use Archivists’ Toolkit and Archon to manage congressional collections.

Measurable Activities:

- A. Produce a Resource Kit for Advocacy on the CPR website with the following material:
 1. Provide a link to *Managing Congressional Collections* by Cynthia Pease Miller in order to raise awareness of standards for model congressional repositories. This document can serve as a best practices guide. [Summer 2013]
 2. Produce (or obtain existing examples of) an online flier to advertise the benefits of congressional collections, for example: how to connect people with holdings, how archives encourage engaged citizenship, how archives can promote democracy, or how congressional papers are your (the people’s) papers. [2013]
 3. Once several items are in place on the website, announce the site to the membership and ask for additional contributions. [2013]
 4. Survey members to assess what restrictions exist related to political papers and institute a dialog concerning this. [Summer 2014]
 5. Produce a flier (or obtain existing examples) that repositories may use to solicit papers from members of Congress. This brochure will include a description of services provided by the repository such as a having a secure facility with climate control and the staff to assist researchers as well as the ability to protect sensitive information and make it available at the appropriate time. It may even explain that records could be closed or redacted if necessary, and that researchers can sign non-disclosure agreements. The flier will emphasize the importance of placing electronic records with an institution that will maintain the information over the long term. [2014]
 6. Advertise or provide links to exhibits and programs related to Congress Week on the CPR Advocacy webpage. [Ongoing]
 7. Make fliers advertising Congress Week available on the website. [Ongoing]
 8. Provide examples of advocacy tools and case studies for building constituencies, crafting a message, communicating effectively with the media, and soliciting papers. [Ongoing]
 9. Provide links to exhibits and programs that our repositories and allied groups create for Congress Week and encourage group projects and traveling exhibits. [Ongoing]
- B. Increase outreach activities
 1. Encourage members to submit news, events, educational programs, and exhibits to the listserv, website, and newsletter. [Ongoing]
 2. Consider the use of social media and Wikipedia as outlets to promote interest in and understanding about congressional collections. [2014]

II. Strategic Priority: Diversity

Issue Statement:

The diversity of society challenges the archives community to attract an equally diverse membership and to have archival collections reflective of that diversity both in acquisition and in use.

Desired Outcome #1:

CPR will assess the diversity of its membership by reviewing SAA's statement on Diversity and the points regarding what diversity encompasses through identity, community, professional and geographical factors.

Measurable Activities:

- A. Determine diversity issues other SAA roundtables and sections are facing in regards to their membership.
 - 1. Contact other roundtables/sections to discuss the diversity of their membership. [February 2013]
 - 2. Determine if there is a need to create a sub-committee in the Diversity Task Force to discuss the demographics of the CPR Roundtable and how to attract new members to archives and librarian positions.
 - 3. Look for social networking opportunities. [March 2013]
- B. Identify and review other related organizations which have created resource pages on their websites outlining various topics and issues on membership diversity. [January 2013]
- C. Evaluate if the name "Congressional Papers Roundtable" accurately reflects the mission of the roundtable. [June 2013]

Desired Outcome #2:

CPR will encourage collection policies that promote acquisition of diverse collections.

Measurable Activities:

- A. Identify archival and related organizations that promote the collection of public policy, special interest and under-represented interests to analyze involvement in acquiring other collections related to public policy issues. Need to acquire collections that tell "the other side of the story" since congressional papers transcend a particular member of congress [January 2013].
- B. Determine how partisan beliefs, historical relations, and stereotypes can keep politicians from giving papers to particular repositories [June 2013].
- C. Determine if collections acquired and ancillary collections could attract more diversity [June 2013].
- D. Assess the need to create a task force sub-committee to:
 - 1. Determine the process of having a volunteer place articles in newsletter (ex. "One Collection, Many Voices") and guest columnist from another roundtable to exchange ideas with each roundtable on collections. [2014].
 - 2. Analyze benefits of CPR member repositories which collect more than political papers [June 2013].
 - 3. Analyze changing verbiage describing collections to show they represent a whole continuum and determine how to educate fellow archivists about this issue [June 2013].

Desired Outcome #3:

Users whom archivists serve will reflect the evolving diversity of society.

Measurable Activities:

- A. Survey the types of research being done by users [June 2013].
 - 1. Use survey results to identify researchers from different scholarly fields.
 - 2. Determine underrepresented ethnic groups.
 - 3. Identify any language barriers.
 - 4. Consider how technology might attract a more diverse audience.
- B. Examine CPR website content to determine what it says and whether it communicates what CPR intends.
- C. Consider establishing a sub-committee in the Diversity Task Force to examine language issues and identify resources to communicate CPR information in other languages.

III. Strategic Priority: Technology

Issue Statement:

Rapidly changing information technologies challenge archival principles, practices, and communication protocols, demanding effective leadership from the archives community to access, capture, and preserve records in all formats.

Desired Outcome #1:

CPR will monitor technological developments in congressional offices; identify resources of assistance to archivists seeking to acquire, preserve and make electronic records accessible; and communicate their findings to members.

Measurable Activities:

- A. Transform the CPR Electronic Records Task Force into a permanent standing committee in order to provide ongoing surveillance and reporting on the issues.
 - 1. Revise CPR bylaws to create a permanent Electronic Records Committee and submit amendment to vote. [August 2012]
 - 2. Solicit nominations for new Electronic Records Committee appointments by the Steering Committee. [Fall 2012]
- B. Conduct an annual review and update of Electronic Records documents posted on CPR website. Create new resources as necessary. [Annual. New abbreviated checklist for congressional offices created Summer 2012]
- C. Consult Senate Archivist, House Archivist, and Center for Legislative Archives annually to determine technological developments and problems in congressional offices. [Annual]
- D. Promote discussion and member education.
 - 1. Submit case studies, best practices, and lessons learned for publication in the *CPR Newsletter*. [Ongoing]
 - 2. Organize panels for CPR pre-conference meeting. [Ongoing; electronic records program organized for 2012 meeting]
 - 3. Organize panels for SAA conference. [Ongoing; SAA panel on electronic records in political collections accepted for 2012 conference]

Desired Outcome #2:

CPR will improve communications among repositories, the offices of donor members, and congressional software vendors to ensure greater success in the acquisition, preservation, and ultimate accessibility of electronic records.

Measurable Activities:

- A. Develop resources that archivists may use to survey electronic records management in congressional offices and to educate office staff about archival needs and practices. Train CPR members in the use of these resources. [Ongoing]
- B. Invite congressional software vendors to sponsor and attend the 2014 Washington, DC CPR pre-conference. [Begin 2014]
- C. Open discussions with congressional vendors to consider solutions to archival issues created by proprietary software. [Begin 2013]

Desired Outcome #3:

CPR will coordinate information-sharing on the subject of electronic records with professional groups sharing similar interests and will advocate for action on matters of particular interest to CPR.

Measurable Activities:

- A. The Electronic Records Committee will develop a working relationship with the SAA Technology Futures Working Group and the SAA Electronic Records Section through shared communication and/or joint appointments. [Begin 2013]
- B. The Electronic Records Committee will develop a working relationship with external professional organizations with shared interests such as ARMA International, the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM), and State Historical Records Advisory Boards (SHRABs). [Begin 2014]
- C. Encourage federal granting agencies such as the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and the Library of Congress to create grant opportunities or programs that will help repositories acquire needed equipment, labor, and training to support electronic records in congressional collections. [Begin 2015]