SAA Committee on Education (CoE)

Full Report on Survey Regarding Proposed Resource Kit for Students and New Professionals

March 2016

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Background Information

In February 2014, the SAA Committee on Education discussed alternative educational formats. The Committee informally discussed the possibility of building educational kits, rather than traditional / online educational courses. We posited that creating an educational kit for students and new professionals might be an appropriate opportunity to explore this new format.

From June – August 2015, the Committee conducted a survey regarding possible content for this resource kit. This report provides the survey instrument and distribution information, a summary of the survey data gathered, and a list of resources mentioned in survey results.

CoE plans to work with other SAA component groups to determine how best to use this data. In particular, the Committee plans to write an *Archival Outlook* article on the results and explore opportunities and possibilities in developing a proposed resource kit.

The Committee welcomes feedback and asks that you direct it to Alison Clemens, Vice Chair.

Survey Instrument

Question 1: Are you a:

- MLIS (or other like degree) current student
- Paraprofessional
- Professional (with 5 years of experience or fewer)
- Professional (with 6 or more years of experience)
- MLIS (or other like degree) holder NOT currently employed in an archival capacity
- Other [fill in the blank]

Question 2: Do you think that you would benefit from an SAA resource kit for students and new archives professionals, as described above?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Other [fill in the blank]

Question 3: What kinds of information do you think would be most helpful to provide to students and new professionals? [check all that apply]

- Information on the structure of SAA
- Assistance locating resources for funding
- Information on graduate and continuing education opportunities
- Job seeking tips
- Networking advice and guidance

- Other [fill in the blank]

Question 4: If SAA were to create a resource kit for new archives professionals, what do you think would be the best format for such a kit?

- Webinar
- PDF or other document outlining information and resources
- Other [fill in the blank]

Question 5: Are there any other specific tools you would like to see developed by SAA for students and new professionals? If so, please describe them:

Question 6: Please provide any other comments here:

Survey Distribution and Results

We had a total of 323 total respondents during the course of the survey (June 15, 2015 – August 7, 2015)

The survey was distributed to:

- Students and New Archival Professionals (SNAP) Roundtable listserv
- SAA student chapters listservs
- Archival Educators Roundtable listserv
- Archives Management Roundtable listserv
- Archives & Archivists listserv

Question 1: Demographics

Demographic Breakdown of Respondents
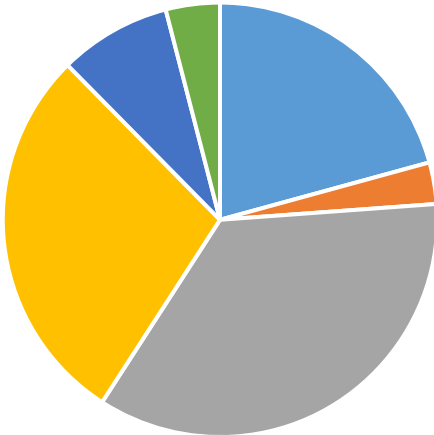
- MLIS (or other like degree) current student (67)
- Paraprofessional (10)
- Professional with 5 or fewer years of experience (114)
- Professional with 6 or more years of experience (92)
- MLIS (or other like degree) holder NOT presently employed in an archival capacity (27)
- Other (13)

Question 2: Respondents Indicate Whether or Not They Think They Would Benefit From a Resource Kit

Respondents Indicate Whether or Not They Think They Would Benefit From a Resource Kit

■ Yes (247) ■ No (25) ■ Unsure (43) ■ Other (8)
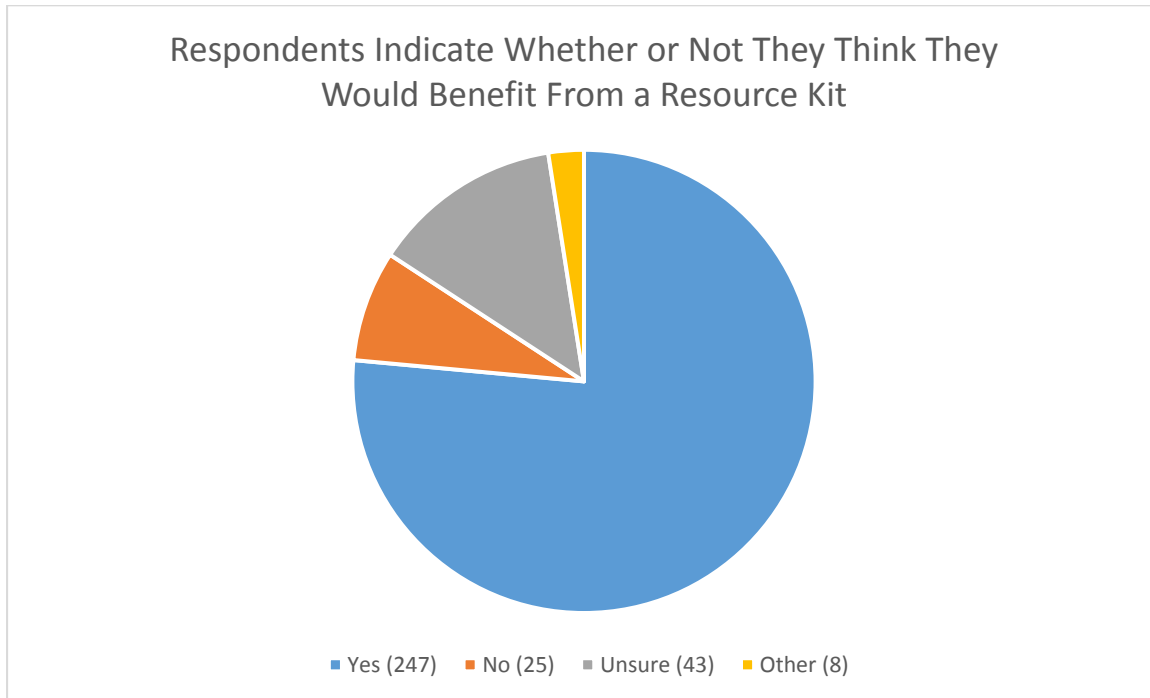
"Other" quotations:

1. People whom I would hire would benefit
2. Depends entirely on what would go in the resource kit
3. It would be helpful to share with others interested in the field who I work with as interns, fellows, students
4. I wouldn't (I'm already established in my career) but others definitely would.
5. Maybe. Depends on how advance it will be. I don't need introduction.
6. I would have
7. I wouldn't, but I think newer professionals would.
8. No, but it would have been helpful then

Question 3: What kinds of information would be most helpful to provide to students and new professionals?

What kinds of information would be most helpful to provide to students and new professionals?

Category	Value
Information on the structure of SAA	~167
Assistance locating resources for funding	~205
Information on graduate and continuing education opportunities	~245
Job seeking tips	~288
Networking advice and guidance	~281
Other (63)	~63

(Y-axis: 0 to 350)
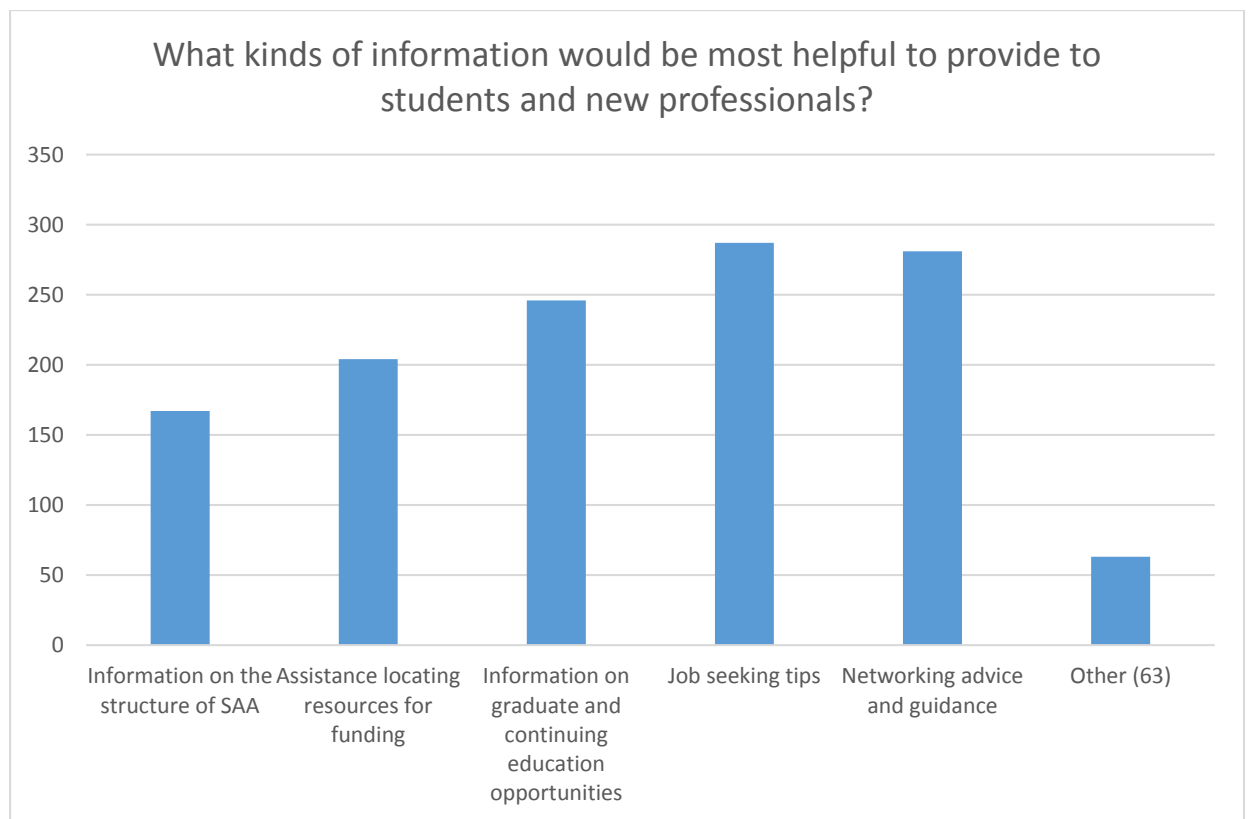
Summary of "Other" quotations regarding helpful information (sorted *very* loosely by frequency mentioned):

NB: This list provides a summary of ideas provided in response to the question; this is not the full data.

1. **Skills** that grad programs don't teach you but that are in demand (e.g. donor relations, advisory boards, digital tools)
2. **Mentoring** from seasoned professionals
3. **Interview** strategies
4. **Pre-degree information and guidelines**
5. **Landscape of the field**: types of repositories, salary rates across types of repositories, types of archival positions, and types of organizations that hire archivists or allied professionals
6. **Information on regional and other associations**
7. **Courses to take and how to prepare**
8. **Academic labor issues** - the rise of project work and decrease of permanent positions
9. Resources for people making a **career change** from a non-related profession to archiving
10. **Crash course on working as a lone arranger**
11. **Publishing information**
12. **How to find other employment** (temp agencies, etc.) while searching for an actual archives job.
13. **What to look for in an internship**
14. **Where to find out what's new and relevant in the profession**

15. **What should be expected from a graduate program and how to select one**
16. **Suggestions for hands-on experience**, perhaps stories from members of their first experiences
17. **Office etiquette / professionalism**
18. **How to survive a lack of training**
19. **Salary negotiation**
20. **Aggregation of existing sites/tools/advice**
21. **Information on how to get involved in SAA committees**
22. **Importance of attending conferences, professional memberships**
23. **How to work with donors**
24. **Research and practical resources for use on the job**: Conservation, AV, lists of digital reformatting companies, etc.
25. **Continuing education**
26. **Diversity initiatives**
27. **Paths to take towards the goal of working in the archives**. i.e.: MLIS, Masters in History, on the job training, etc.
28. **Current issues in the field related to diversity and social justice**
29. **Certified Archivist studying courses or CA practice tests**
30. **Information on mentorship and soft skills (**e.g. what to do when your manager isn't being what you need)
31. Case studies with **specifics about processing your first institutional/personal papers collection** or starting out in an archive from scratch.
32. Information on **how to get started publishing, presenting at conferences, and participating in professional organizations**

If SAA were to create a resource kit for new archives professionals, what do you think would be the best format for such a kit?
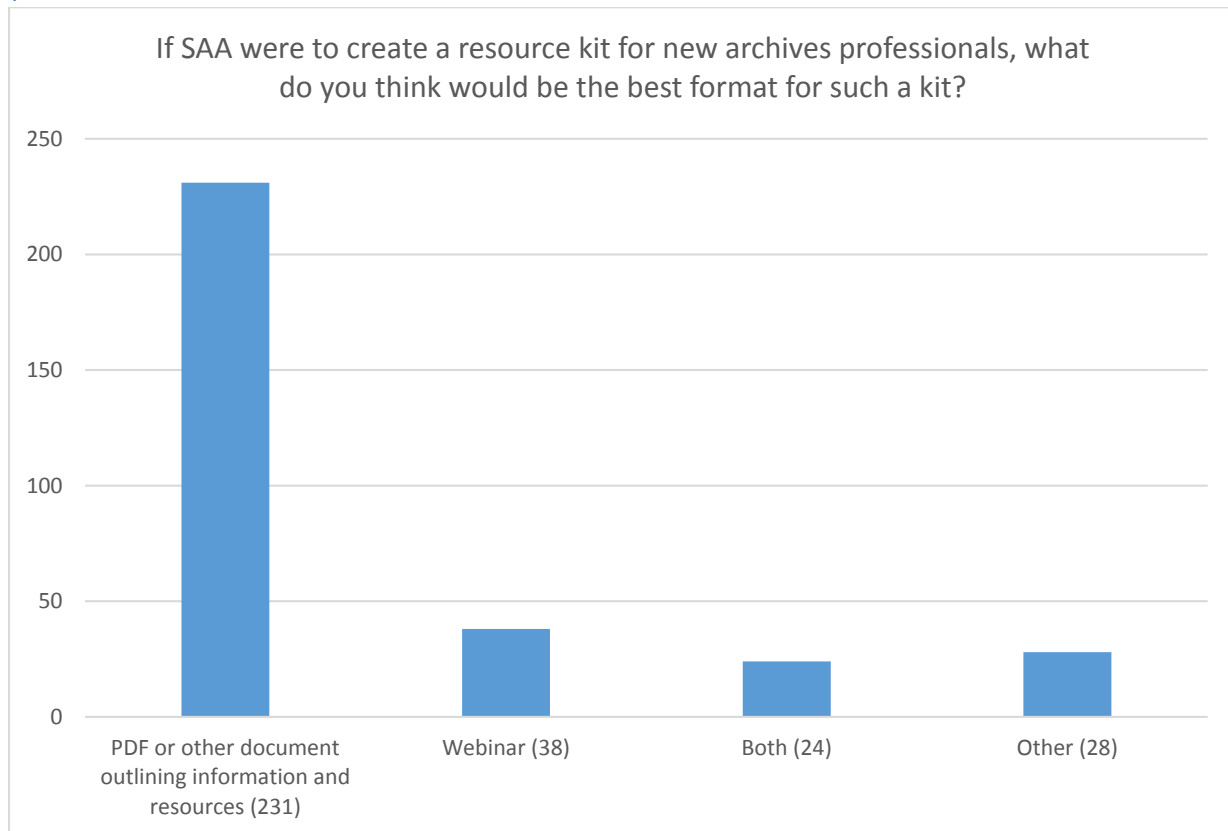
Other (28) sorted by frequency mentioned:

> *NB: This list provides a summary of ideas provided in response to the question; this is not the full data.*

1. **Webpage** (15 mentions)
    a.   with links out to examples
    b.   interactive, pick & choose the tools you need
    c.   a dedicated website that could be continually updated.
    d.   a web page that can be easily updated but is on the SAA site so it has a permanent home
    e.   micro-site
    f.   Dynamic web portal
    g.   I think a website with information and links would be best - and easily updated
    h.   Website
    i.   website / webpage that can be easily edited and updated
    j.   Website or section of SAA website
    k.   website w/ resources updated regularly
    l.   website with links to PDFs and webinars
    m.   website with text and video
    n.   Website, webinar, printable document - cover all bases
2. **Wiki** (5 mentions)

        a.   Wiki that could be regularly updated--the other options here are too static.
3. **Blog** (2 mentions)
        a.   Multiple parts, different contributors with various backgrounds and experiences, etc.
4. **Brochure or visual resources** through Prezi
5. **Google Doc** (for easy updating)
6. **Variety of formats**
7. **PDF**
8. **Video series** with electronic newsletters
9. **YouTube videos**

Question 5: Are there any other specific tools you would like to see developed by SAA for students and new professionals? If so, please describe them

NB: This list provides a summary of ideas provided in response to the question; this is not the full data.

1. Publishing Master's theses
2. What experience / skill set a student or new professional should expect in different information environments.
3. Resume review.
4. Links to local and regional organizations to help with networking.
5. Distinguish better between universities' MLIS programs.
6. Resources to help find internships, volunteer positions, or practicum positions that can be done outside of normal business hours.
7. Resources for librarians and other information professionals who are considering a transition to archival work.
8. Where to look for ""outside-the-box"" jobs, i.e. those that may not have ""archivist"" in the job
9. Creating your own job, essentially
10. Writing a grant proposal for funding.
11. Organize and advocate for changes to archival education
12. A job board that has faceted searching based on things like location, qualifications, pay
13. Lists of websites that have job postings
14. List of journals that look for submissions of articles.
15. Have some way of setting people up with practice interviews?
16. Salary information would be great
17. List of professional journals in the field and terms of access to them.
18. Information on structure of the profession beyond SAA, e.g. certification, regional and specialized archival associations, continuing education, NHPRC and state advisory boards, NEH and IMLS programs related to archives.
19. Guidance on preparing cover letters and planning for interviews
20. Histories of the SAA sections and roundtables, esp. as relates to people involved (networking)
21. Tips on gauging what jobs to apply for
22. How to approach colleagues in the profession for informational interviews
23. Signs of a good internship
24. Template for creating a five-year (or shorter term) career development plan
25. Knowing how to find listservs would be helpful.

26. A rubric or some other way of linking common I-school classes (digital preservation, processing, etc.) to existing continuing-education resources, thus providing an easy way to see the continuation of subject-based learning from classroom to on-the-job archival positions.
27. I love Arlene Schmuland's guide/survey: http://elusivearchives.blogspot.com/ The SAA should consider developing something similar and up-to-date. Perhaps they could do the same thing for students applying to grad school and for financial scholarships/grants - what do the reviewers look for in accepting/rejecting applications?
28. Is there one place where summer internships can be posted for students to search besides sorting through ArchivesGig?
29. Statistics about the field - avg. salaries for new as well as established archivists, average number of graduates, avg. entry-level job openings in recent years, short-term vs long term job opportunities, how long on average the job hunt takes - let the students know what to expect! You could also provide links to sites that contain this information like the Occupational Outlook Handbook and O*Net.
30. What options to weigh in deciding to accept an offer, how to conduct salary negotiations, etc.
31. Info on attending international programs or finding international jobs
32. Run profiles on recent graduates to show other new professionals that success in the field is possible.
33. Resume packages, tips on Skype interviews (clothing, lighting, makeup, presentation), tips on phone interviews; humorous videos on how not to be interviewed, conduct oneself in an office/archives/library, etc.; a periodic webinar on new trends in technology, publication reviews, dress codes, hot topics, budgetary constraints, ISO, etc.
34. Maybe some kind of salary info aggregator, where archivists can put their information and title (anonymously of course) so that us newbies have some idea of what the going rate is, what we're worth, etc. It would have salary, title, state, type of organization and type of locale.
35. Another useful tool would be some kind of FAQ or Q & A forum for ""dumb questions."" Some answers are obvious to seasoned professionals but newbies like me might be afraid to ask for fear of looking dumb.
36. How to interact with non-archivists in your workplace
37. Explanatory information on basic elements of an archivist's daily duties. A day in the life of an archivist. What is a finding aid? How do you make one? What software does an archivist use? How to request an informational interview. Maybe a list of members that don't mind be contacted for an informational interview."
38. Tips on establishing a professional identity online
39. A guide to SAA committees and roundtables, a timeline for when you can apply to join a committee or run for an office, and a list of ways to get involved even if you're not on a committee, i.e. writing for a blog or providing reviews. An easy to read guide to the structure of SAA might also be useful. Additional career related resources geared towards leadership, especially how to be a leader when you're not in a role that supervises or directs, would be useful.
40. A listing of policies/procedures/guidelines on various topics (web archiving, e-mail archiving, collection management guidelines, etc.) that are available from other institutions. Instead of having to make a request on the listserv, it would be nice if there was someplace I could go to gain access to this information. Given linkrot, even just a listing of institutions willing to share would be helpful.
41. Tools on how to find early-career opportunities, like paid-internship opportunities, Fellowships for new professionals, etc.

42. Examples of standard (if any exist) resume/CV templates that should be used. For instance, the style of resume changes depending on if someone's applying to an academic institution or a federal agency.
43. Resume writing (including cover letters and follow-up correspondence) and interviewing techniques.
44. It might be nice to have an overview of the variety of institutions one can work at (corporate, academic, government, museums, etc) and maybe alternative/ non-conventional uses for the degree.
45. Links to project/people management skills-building resources (including managing "up")
46. REGIONAL meet-ups with potential mentors or with current professionals to help build relationships.
47. Some kind of salary map, i.e. average regional salaries for entry-level archivists.
48. A guide to archival literature.
49. I would suggest building some structure into the SAA mentoring program, even if it's presented as entirely optional. As it stands, my mentor only hears from me when I have a problem, and I only hear from her in response to my problems--it feels a lot like whining, and I don't think she's getting anything out of it. Maybe some tips to keep the relationship going, suggestions on what to seek from your mentor/mentee and what to realistically expect for the relationship, might be nice.
50. Lists of supplies if you're starting to process a collection (especially a large collection, 100 linear ft.+). Maybe a basic shoestring version and an expanded version if your institution can afford additional supplies.
51. Publishing resources - How to sign up as a reviewer, journals that sometimes have special issues or opportunities for student authors

Question 6: Please provide any other comments here

NB: This list provides a summary of ideas provided in response to the question; this is not the full data.

1. Testimonials from seasoned professionals outlining how they got involved in the field and tips that they have for new professionals.
2. A combination of diverse case studies and some compiled strategies and advice
3. Collaborate with the steering committees of the SNAP RT at minimum, and ideally other groups like the Archival Educators and Archives Management roundtables.
4. Ensure that student SAA chapters are made aware of the end product
5. Access to internetships
6. Practical job skills such as time management, public speaking, interviewing techniques (both what interviewers might ask and preparing for interviews)
7. Tips for entering the workforce, especially how to best position yourself before graduation
8. Demonstrating how to review archival program curricula: Underscore the need for students to develop comfort working with digital materials. The course offerings should be investigated by viewing the course schedules for the past two years. It's okay to ask for a syllabus to the intro to archives course in advance. The student may get turned down, but it's worth an ask. I also recommend getting a sense of which faculty teach the archives courses and if they have real world experience and what their research interests are.
9. Students also should be encouraged to seek out mentoring and advising

10. A significant portion of students are unable or unwilling to move for a job. As such, I think a guide should give tips on how to find online contract work (if such work can be found) and to help students achieve realistic expectations.
11. Faculty will try to help, but admissions, recruitment info, and course scheduling may be entirely out of the hands of archives faculty. Thus, I recommend connecting directly with the faculty of the program being considered ahead of time to get a sense of fit.
12. Seeing if any of the graduate schools have useful career guides online that can be linked to or borrowed from when writing this guide.
13. Be honest about the job prospects and entry level salaries for new archivists, so that potential grad students enter the profession with their eyes open. So many graduate programs quote the Bureau of Labor statistics about the demand for information professionals, but the stats haven't been accurate and are quite misleading about the type of paid opportunities that are available.
14. Project archivist positions (that are temporary and often require the archivist to move frequently) are a common way to get a foothold in the profession.
15. Regional archival associations.
16. Working in a Lone Arranger capacity, as well as being part of a larger institution.
17. One on one advice. Visiting the SAA career center during an annual meeting & having someone tear apart my resume was possibly the most productive 30 minutes of my career
18. It would be nice if there was one webinar per year with different experienced SAA members leading each year, so that each round a new group students/young professionals could participate. I realize this is probably outside of the scope of what the committee could commit to! But the theme here is getting a lot of more experienced professionals to participate in the development of our students/young professionals - that is the key, and if through the development of your resource guide you can make a dent in that issue you've done a great service to SAA!
19. Importance of networking.
20. Sampling of questions candidates often face will be of value and that candidates would benefit from suggestions re interview preparation, appearance and demeanor.
21. No one actually outlines what it means to be an archivist.
22. Types of courses/internship opportunities to look-out for.
23. I also think we look to SAA for professional guidance for entry-level archivists, as well as mid-career archivists. I would also be interested if SAA focused on the latter as well, because there are so few options for mid-career guidance.
24. A suggestion to become a Certified Archivist and provide a link to http://www.certifiedarchivists.org/
25. Intersection between SAA and groups like RBMS (ALA) and ARMA. I don't know where my job fits in and what each organization focuses on, let alone how they collaborate.
26. A professional toolkit for both new students and recent graduates would be helpful so students have a timeline for obtaining experience.
27. The #1 lament i hear from new archivists is how low the salaries are (minus federal government), how difficult it is to live off the wages, and how difficult it is to get promoted / salary increases throughout one's career. Realistic assessments and tools that do service to these issues would be a great resource to those entering the workforce.
28. I would love to see SAA create a tool to track SAA student members to see where they are 1 year, 5 years, and 10 years after graduation. I think this data would be valuable both within SAA and to those entering the profession.
29. It might also be good to interview (younger, mid-level) leaders in the field and have a place to put that so new archivists can trace those leaders' career paths.

30. I think an effort should be made to encourage the faculty at library schools to review this kit as well so they might incorporate some practical job-seeking skills into the curriculum
31. Need a broader understanding of the environments in which they work, particularly academe and the academic library.
32. Need to be able to communicate what they do and advocate for it.
33. Importance of interning and volunteering at archival repositories prior to/during a job search.
34. Info on continuing education
35. Information on other related orgs - regional, metro, and similar orgs - ACA, ARMA, CoSA, etc.
36. There definitely seems to be an overemphasis on having an MLIS/MLS.
37. Need for job placement, assistance finding entry-level jobs, and ways to meaningfully grow one's career to find permanent employment.
38. I'd also like to see addressed the increasingly adjunct, part-time, and short-term nature of employment in the archival/special collections field.
39. A guide to SAA structure and tips on funding might prove useful to everyone
40. More collaboration with SAA and LIS-granting schools to integrate the curricula and exams for the Certified Archivists and DAS as part of a degree program.
41. How to advocate for oneself
42. Negotiate for a higher salary
43. Guidance for "librarians" moving into "archivist" positions and priorities for training and continuing education to do so.
44. What to do when your job isn't what you expected.
45. Having a PDF that can be searched. Someone might want to find a topic in your tool kit and not have to listen to the whole Webinar to find the answer.
46. Integrated with the SAA Mentoring program. It would be great to have some tangible resource list or checklist of things that a mentoring archivist could go over with a mentee new professional.

Resources Mentioned in Survey Results

1. Professor Ciaran Trace at the University of Texas at Austin's – PDF guide for new professionals
2. The AMIA Education Committee article on becoming an AV archivist: https://amiaeducomm.wordpress.com/about/so-you-want-to-be-an-av-archivist/
3. Public History Navigator (look at format): http://ncph.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/The-Public-History-Navigator-2015-Web.pdf
4. New Professional's Toolkit by Bethan Ruddock; possibility of making something similar but specifically for archivists
5. Arlene Schmuland's guide/survey: http://elusivearchives.blogspot.com/
6. Occupational Outlook Handbook and O*Net.
7. *How to stay afloat in the academic library job pool,* edited by Teresa Y. Neely for university archives/special collections jobs
8. INALJ articles for recent graduates