

# **Society of American Archivists Council Meeting Chicago, IL**

## **Committee on Public Policy: Annual Report (Prepared by: JF)**

Year: 2024-2025

Current Rosters (Include full name, position title, and term end date for each):

Ending in 2025:

- Daniel Noonan (Committee member)
- Brad Houston (Immediate past chair)

Other Committee Members:

- Gina Nichols (Chair and Joint Working Group for Issues and Awareness Liaison, 2025-2026)
- Alex Meregaglia (Committee member until 2027)
- Phillip Stone (Vice Chair and Chair Elect, 2025-2028)
- Katelyn Fair (Committee member until 2026)
- Jess Farrell (Immediate Past Chair)
- Bryan Whittedge (Council Liaison and NHA Liaison until 2027)
- Jill Burgos (Staff Liaison)
- Jacqueline Price Osafo (Staff Liaison)

New Members:

- Katherine Fisher, Committee Member, 2026-28
- Ashten Vassar-Cain, Early career member, 2025-26
- Abby Robertson, Early career member, 2025-26
- 1 vacant committee position, 2026-28

Council Liaison: Bryan Whittedge

## **PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES**

*(Please indicate all projects and activities that your component group has completed this year, continues to work on, or plans to implement in the following fiscal year.)*

## **Completed:**

- 1) Sent Action Alerts to SAA members
  - Developed a [template](#) for sending these alerts
  - Sent 4 action alerts
- 2) Our 2024 joint annual meeting program with Issues & Advocacy section was a workshop on organizing your workplace, a topic that we chose based on member requests and feedback from previous program years
- 3) Our 2025 joint annual meeting program with Issues & Advocacy section, Committee on Public Awareness, and Regional Archival Associations Consortium was a mini workshop series that taught internal and external advocacy skills such as developing an elevator pitch, revising it to plain language, and talking to legislators about archives.
  - Both programs received positive feedback from participants and SAA staff in attendance.
- 4) COPP worked to ensure archivists have a seat at the table for messaging and advocacy around archival issues:
  - Nominated 2 SAA members to the national FOIA committee. (Neither nominations were successful)
  - Maintained coalition ties with Joint Working Group (CoSA, NAGARA, AASLH, ALA, NHA)
  - Helped SAA maintain their partnership with National Humanities Alliance, Association of Research Libraries, and members of the joint working group: CoSA, NAGARA, AASLH, ALA
- 5) Kept SAA leadership, Council, and Members informed about policy issues affecting archives with legislative updates:
  - [March 2025](#) via SAA Announcements
  - [July 2025](#) via joint advocacy groups annual meeting
- 6) Helped facilitate actions by Council and SAA leadership, such as:
  - [SAA Letter on Historical Advisory Committee Representative Dismissal](#) (member brought to SAA, CoPP chair coordinated, Council statements working group drafted)
  - [SAA Calls on Members to Advocate for Robust NARA Funding](#) and [Statement on FY2026 NHPRC Funding](#) (Council statements working group coordinated and drafted from prior statements developed by CoPP, CoPP chair reviewed)
  - [SAA Statement on the Firing of the Register of Copyrights](#) (IPWG coordinated and drafted; CoPP chair reviewed)
  - Endorsing opposition to [Pro Codes Act](#) (IPWG led and drafted statement, CoPP helped advocate and coordinate; ARL brought to us; leadership approved)
  - At least 7 additional statements were coordinated and drafted by the Council Statements working group or Council members prior to the formation of the working group that CoPP may not have directly participated in; but many statements originate from past CoPP work.
- 7) Drafted [SAA Advocacy Guide](#) for internal SAA groups to use in mobilizing SAA membership in collective advocacy projects

### Ongoing:

1. Shared and digested as much news about archives as possible, staying on top of personnel and programmatic changes in NARA and other government archives
2. Kicked off the revision process for the SAA Legislative Agenda
  - Reviewed internally within CoPP
  - Developed plan for next rounds of review. Status:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xRk53dXjWRRjoiWLwIE1m0PgQ5NXyOt68PESeGCXEjA/edit?tab=t.0#heading=h.ximffmup2wci>

### New:

Developed a sample advocacy strategy [RACI chart](#) for consideration by SAA Staff and leadership in coordinating SAA advocacy activity.

## SAA STRATEGIC PLAN

*(Please review the current [Strategic Plan](#) and indicate below how the component group has or plans to contribute to one or more of the four main goals.)*

### Goal 1: Advocating for Archives and Archivists

3. Strategic Plan
  - Summary of CoPP strategic goals status:
    - Goals 1.2.A., 1.2.D , and 1.4.A.:
      - Draft legislation: **Complete** – Public Archives Resiliency Act: [Information](#) | [Organizing Toolkit](#)
      - Seek co-sponsors for federal funding initiative: **Complete** in 2024 but session ended, so cosponsors no longer exist; **could be restarted for 2025**. See resources above.
      - Rally archivist to conduct district visits: **Complete** – see annually renewable [Humanities Advocacy Day materials](#)
    - Goal 1.2.B. Develop letters/editorials on public policy issues: **Complete** - CoPA and CoPP developed a Scripts toolkit to develop talking points on issues, and gave a workshop on different ways to express those talking points, including via letters to the editor, talking directly to legislators, etc. See [2025 Annual Meeting slides](#) on Advocacy Scripts Toolkit
      - **Recommendation:** Extend this goal. Phase II would be to provide the toolkit on the CoPA and CoPP microsites and make an announcement that they are available.
    - Goal 1.2.E. and 1.4.B.: COPP, CORDA, and COPA met several times in 2024-2025 to coordinate activities, led by Angie of COPA. COPP plans to include CORDA and COPA in legislative agenda revisions that would provide a structure for drafting messages about funding for archives and archivists. This activity is still **in progress**.
    - Goal 1.1.B., media training cohort: Activity moved to Education Committee.

- Goal 1.2.F., legislative visit tracking: Not started – **Recommendation:** Remove from strategic plan.
- More info if needed: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tXgyAAThxJu-cnLY4w\\_QherHeww88sUgowXkkAfWB6k/edit?tab=t.0](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tXgyAAThxJu-cnLY4w_QherHeww88sUgowXkkAfWB6k/edit?tab=t.0)

## **Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth**

## **Goal 3: Advancing the Field**

## **Goal 4: Meeting Members' Needs**

## **SAA ANNUAL MEETING**

Number of attendees: 88 registrants and 56 attendees

Link to meeting minutes: [https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1yg8kRJexnwB-uBneswVJPHPUTRPqY\\_umpw4jwTP3FBs/edit?slide=id.p1#slide=id.p1](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1yg8kRJexnwB-uBneswVJPHPUTRPqY_umpw4jwTP3FBs/edit?slide=id.p1#slide=id.p1)

Summary of meeting activities and highlights:

It was a virtual joint annual business meeting of the Society of American Archivists' Committee on Public Awareness (COPA), Committee on Public Policy (COPP), the Issues & Advocacy Section (I&A), and the Regional Archival Associations Consortium (RAAC).

We had a 30-minute business session followed by a special program of Archival Advocacy mini-presentations, discussion, and workshops. Topics included communicating financial and business metrics up to your administration, crafting elevator speeches for a variety of audiences from high-level to plain language, and how to talk to your legislators about archival issues.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT**

*How would you describe the health or energy of the group, and how engaged are the members?*

It is a reasonably engaged group. The members meet monthly at about 50-75% attendance. Most people do not have much time out of meetings to commit. The chair and vice chair worked consistently over the past year to engage members who were absent from meetings, coordinate resignations where people could no longer engage, and initiate a process for filling seats with people who are able to engage. Overall, across professional associations and other volunteer archives communities, there are certainly not enough archivists to fill the service roles that exist, so in that landscape, this group is very healthy.

Our council liaison Bryan Whitledge is very engaged and provided a much-needed layer of leadership and consultation as we navigated a difficult year in archives policy.

*Did the component group's leadership encounter any challenges in achieving its goals for the year?*

I think it is well known in volunteer groups that the chair or leadership team ends up doing a lot of the work because the buck stops at them and we weren't really trained on delegation skills so it can be hard to delegate. That said, we had a great team that was always engaged in meetings and over email, took on parts of projects we were trying to move forward, and maintained our microsite. It was difficult to delegate work given our limited capacity, the rapid change of the policy landscape, and the lack of a documented advocacy coordination method among SAA advocacy groups and leadership. With so much going on in the policy landscape, we had to figure out how often and what to respond to.

As the year moved along and the issues to respond to kept emerging at a steady pace, the Council Statements Working Group formed and smoothed the process of addressing advocacy actions. At the same time, we developed a template for sending advocacy alerts to mobilize members to action. Our council liaison did an excellent job of funneling information to us for advocacy alerts.

*What suggestions do you have for the SAA Council and staff that might help address these challenges in the coming term?*

I recommend keeping the Council statements working group going for the next few years at least. Statements emerge from different places in the community, and with the volume of statements and endorsements we are making right now, it is necessary to rotate coordination and leadership of them.

I suggest continuing to rotate roles among advocacy groups to achieve SAA's strategy moving forward. In the SAA Strategic Plan section above, I tried to illustrate how we rotated roles among various component group leaders in 2024-2025. But I also believe that the coordination of these groups and an advocacy strategy should be the work of an SAA staff member or contractor.

Having a policy/advocacy advisor, project manager, or staff coordinator of strategic and advocacy goals would be much more fair than the current method of asking groups to coordinate this level of work for SAA. We had incredible leadership teams this past year on COPA, CORDA, I&A, and RAAC, with folks on each who stepped up and coordinated a multi-group project on top of managing their own group's activities. This is commendable but it's a bit much to ask of volunteers. I think a project manager bringing together these groups is more appropriate. Working together is ideal but we need someone outside of our groups to bring us together and tell us what the priority is and help us divide up the work. I created a [RACI chart](#) that shows how SAA could rotate statement and advocacy communications work among SAA COPP, COPA, CORDA, I&A, and RAAC in 2025-2026.

The Joint Working Group is a great space for getting information that can be shared with membership. It should continue. SAA should broaden coalitions to other organizations beyond the Joint Working Group. SAA should continue building a relationship with ARL (started this year) and broaden coalitions to new organizations. SAA would benefit from hiring a policy

advisor consultant who can coordinate endorsements and actions from several groups and who can engage more on SAA members' behalf to legislators.

Please see above in the Strategic Plan discussion for recommendations about removing and extending some items from the Strategic Plan.

*What questions or concerns do you have for the SAA Council and staff?*

1. COPP would appreciate more guidance about what SAA needs from the committee from staff and leadership based on the priorities of the organization. What would you like to see COPP work on in 2025-26?
2. Does SAA leadership want COPP to work on the Legislative Agenda? COPP began review and updates on this document based on the documented process that we shall review it every two years. However, the legislative landscape has changed a lot, and SAA leadership has also changed. COPP would like SAA leadership to advise on whether to continue editing the legislative agenda in its current form in response to our current legislative landscape. What does SAA leadership and members need most out of a policy document at this time?