

Framing Research as Evaluation and Assessment: Introducing CORDA

PAUL CONWAY and JENNIFER GUNTER KING

Abstract: The Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment (CORDA) is a newly launched standing body in SAA that conducts, facilitates, and/or evaluates research that is meaningful for SAA and the archival profession. The complex concept of “research” is at the heart of CORDA’s ambitious multi-year plan of work. The purpose of the SAA Research Forum platform presentation is to introduce CORDA’s charge and, most importantly, to launch a conversation on the meaning of “research” in the context of professional practice. The presentation will argue the case for distinguishing between research activities motivated by hypotheses and scholarly inquiry from data gathering and analysis activities that foster a deeper understanding about archivists, archival organizations and practices, and the stakeholders who benefit from the work of the archival profession. CORDA is partly about advocating for archives by assembling and disseminating data and metrics about the profession. CORDA is also about training and supporting archivists to do more and better evaluation and assessment of their own work and its impact on individual users, communities, and our broader society.

About the Authors:

Paul Conway (Ph.D., Library and Information Studies, University of Michigan, 1991) is associate professor in the University of Michigan School of Information. His research and teaching focus on archival science, the digitization and preservation of cultural heritage resources, and the ethics of new information technologies. His funded research projects at Michigan have included developing a model of expert user interaction with large collections of digitized photographs, measuring the quality of large-scale digitization as represented in the HathiTrust Digital Library, and understanding the complexities of providing access to collections of original live audio recordings. His most cited work appears in *American Archivist*, *Archival Science*, and *Library Quarterly*. Prior to joining the University of Michigan faculty in 2006, he was an archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration and a senior administrator for the libraries at Yale and Duke universities. He is a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists and a 2011 recipient of the Provost’s Teaching Innovation Prize.

Jennifer Gunter King (M.A., M.L.S., University of Maryland, 1999) is the newly appointed Director of the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University. King’s experience includes fifteen years in the Five College Library Consortium; first as Director of Archives and Special Collections at Mount Holyoke College (2004-2012), and Director of the Harold F. Johnson Library and Knowledge Commons at Hampshire College (2012-2018). King is active in the New England Archivists, Society of American Archivists and the Association of College and Research Libraries. She served in a leadership capacity as the Vice-President, President, and Immediate Past President of the New England Archivists, 2015-2018. Her interests include adapting Libraries and Special Collections to 21st C challenges and opportunities, advancing the accessibility of archival resources and digital strategies that elevate access to art, archives and object-based collections.