

# **Society of American Archivists**

## **Annual Report: Diversity Committee**

**(Prepared by Cheryl Beredo, Chair)**

The 2019-2020 term was unlike any other. With the COVID-19 health crisis came the temporary closure of most committee members' workplaces. As the killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery prompted an unprecedented number and diversity of people to protest state violence in the United States, the Diversity Committee was prompted to consider its role within SAA to advance the organization's commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion. Thus, the committee's activities were primarily on hiatus from March-June of 2020, with activity resuming in time for the Annual Meeting.

*For the 2019-2020 term, the Diversity Committee worked on the following:*

**Consultation with Committee on Education** - SAA's Committee on Education sought counsel on how to diversify the pool of available instructors and offerings in areas relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Diversity Committee's chair and vice-chair worked with the Committee on Education to generate ideas for outreach, training, and networking that would advance the diversification of SAA's educational offerings. Committee members and liaisons to the Diversity Committee offered suggestions of potential instructors.

**Case Studies on Diversifying the Archival Record** - In the 2019-2020 term, the Diversity Committee received one submission for the online publication series, Case Studies on Diversifying the Archival Record. The submission was received in May 2020, and review of it was assigned in summer 2020. The review process was not completed before the end of the 2019-2020 term, and should be completed in 2020-2021 term.

**American Archivist process review** - The Diversity Committee sought to address the controversy surrounding the *American Archivist* Brown Bag Lunch discussion that was scheduled to take place at the Annual Meeting in 2019. The Committee drafted a statement, met with the *American Archivist* editor to determine how the Diversity Committee could help to create mentorship and writing opportunities for diverse authors, and prepared a list of recommendations for Council to enact to ensure consideration of diversity issues in publication activities. This work was paused in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Black Lives and Archives Listening and Strategy Session** - After releasing [“Statement on Black Lives and Archives,”](#) Council committed to hosting a listening session on the topic with the archival community. The Diversity Committee worked with a subgroup of Council and other SAA officers to host a listening and strategy session on July 24, 2020. Through moderated small-group discussions focused on key elements of the “Statement on Black Lives and Archives,” the Diversity Committee and Council members heard concerns, ideas, and reflections from over 800 registered participants. Notes from the session were compiled and analyzed for presentation at the Diversity Committee’s open meeting on July 28, 2020.

**Diversity Forum** - The 2020 Diversity Forum on August 7, 2020, served as a continuation of the Black Lives and Archives Listening Session that was open to attendees of the Annual Meeting. Diversity Committee members, Council members, and SAA member volunteers moderated small-group discussions in the same manner as during the listening and strategy session of the previous month. Feedback compiled from both sessions will inform the Diversity Committee’s agenda for the 2020-2021 term.