

[Diversity Committee charge](#): “The Diversity Committee works to ensure that the organization's services, activities, policies, communications, and products **support the goal of a more diverse SAA and professional archival community**. It functions as a catalyst for new diversity-related initiatives, developed in coordination with various SAA entities, and monitors, evaluates, advocates for, and reports on matters pertaining to the diversity of archival practitioners and documentation.”

Diversity Committee duties and responsibilities:

1. **Guides members and staff to recognize the integral links of diversity to all SAA entities and concerns.**
2. Develops diversity-related initiatives either on its own or in conjunction with other SAA units or the SAA office. Identifies prospective initiatives through reviews of the annual reports of SAA units and other means.
3. Regularly informs the membership of SAA's progress regarding the organization's efforts.
4. **Monitors within and outside the organization issues that pertain to diversity concerns and advises the Council on how to address them.**
5. **Gathers, reviews, and analyzes feedback from the general membership, SAA leaders, and the Council.**
6. Explores strategies with the SAA Membership Committee for recruiting and retaining individuals from underrepresented populations into the organization.
7. Cultivates relationships with allied professions to seek out opportunities for collaboration.

The undersigned SAA component group leaders are writing to make Council aware of significant concerns that have been raised among our members about SAA's perceived lack of support for us and our work in light of the recent, renewed attacks on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) efforts nationwide.

The general feeling among our members towards SAA is one of frustration due to the lack of transparency, as well as the lack or speed of action. SAA seems to have been unprepared to meet this moment, despite issuing 29 statements, issue briefs, and “backgrounders” between the 2016 General Election and the end of 2020 (including “Reaffirming Our Commitment to the Importance of Diversity and Inclusion” on 16 November 2016). This is compared to the following four years, (2021-2024), when only **two** were issued.

We understand that SAA may be seeking to avoid drawing attention to itself so as to “protect” its individual, student, and institutional members, but this runs the risk of alienating members from historically marginalized groups and/or in any level of government. This will most negatively impact the health and mission of our groups,]as current members begin to disengage and leave and potential members do not see themselves reflected in SAA membership. Our members are already looking elsewhere, such as allied national organizations with a more robust advocacy culture or more nimble and affordable state or regional organizations.

We are in agreement that SAA has strayed from its Core Values, Code of Ethics, Statement on DEI, Strategic Plan, and DEIA Work Plan in an effort to appease the current Presidential administration, with some of our sections particularly impacted by this abandonment after

having been glorified in the past when it was more convenient and advantageous. We call on SAA to either reaffirm its commitment to these documents or update them to reflect the organization's lack of commitment in a time of crisis.

If SAA chooses to reaffirm its commitment, as part of that, there also needs to be a commitment to providing additional advocacy support. The virtual event "Raising Your Voice for Archives" on 21 April was a good start, but it must be part of an increased, sustained effort. SAA might need to increase its capacity or shift its priorities to be able to do so.

The threat to our profession is real, as is the threat to this organization. If our most vulnerable members do not feel SAA is acting in their best interest, SAA will be left with its most comfortable members. It is becoming increasingly possible that we will be forced to either watch our component groups slowly die off or find a new home for them.

Teresa Mora, Chair, Zachary Tumlin, Vice Chair, and Gayle O'Hara, Diversity Committee
Jordi Padilla-Delgado, Co-chair, Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section
Jennie Rankin, Co-chair, Women Archivists Section
Vina Begay, Chair, and Diana Marsh, Native American Archives Section