

Navigator Program Report

August 27, 2007

History of the Program

The idea for the Navigator Program came from then-student Andrea Sheehan (now the archivist for QVC Inc.) at the Women's Caucus meeting at the 1996 SAA annual meeting. Tanya Zanish-Belcher coordinated the program from 1997-2000, initially on behalf of the Women's Caucus and then the Women's Professional Archival Issues Roundtable, which eventually became the Women's Archivist Roundtable (WAR) in 2001. The program was coordinated by Toni Jeske and Nancy Taylor from 2001 to 2004 on behalf of WAR. In 2003 the Membership Committee became a cosponsor of the program. The program was coordinated by Kathy Koch in 2005, by Karen Walton Morse in 2006, and by Koch in 2007.

Review of 2006 and 2007

	2006	2007
Requested a Navigator	54	48
Volunteered to Serve as Navigator	13	21

Due to a quirk in the reporting feature of the database that SAA was using for meetings prior to this year, only the numbers from the 2006 annual meeting are available.

As you can see, the demand for Navigators was significantly higher than the number of people who volunteered to serve as a Navigator. In 2007, requests for additional Navigators went to the Chicago Area Archivists listserv (because the SAA meeting was in Chicago), to the WAR membership, and to the Membership Committee and Key Contacts. A number of people who responded to the request said they did not know about the program. Navigators were provided for each person that requested one. However, due to the high demand in the past two years, in 2006, six people were assigned a second "Navigatee," and eight in 2007.

Feedback

Most of the anecdotal comments I have heard are from Navigators. A number have mentioned that the Navigatee took a long time to respond to the Navigator's email or did not respond at all. Another comment was that the Navigator was stood-up by the Navigatee. A number of Navigatees, after being assigned their Navigator, have responded by email to state they were pleased that SAA offered the program. I have not heard from any Navigatees after the meeting. Also, this year three names were not transferred from the registration form to the Navigator list that SAA provides.

Suggestions and Concerns

1. Due to the demand for Navigators exceeding the supply, the program needs to have more people ready to serve as Navigators come registration time. Perhaps an article in *Archival Outlook* could help publicize the program. It may also be useful for the Membership Committee and the Women's Archivist Roundtable to send an email to their

members prior to the annual meeting reminding them of the program and asking them to volunteer if attending the meeting.

2. To my knowledge a survey of the program participants has never been done. Due to the negative feedback from a few Navigators and no real feedback from the Navigatees, a survey could identify the programs successes and shortcomings.