

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

**Group Name: Native American Archive Section Annual Report  
(Prepared by: Vina Begay, NAAS Chair)**

**Year:** 2024-2025

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

Vina Begay	Chair	8/2024-9/2025
Kelley Hummingbird	Vice Chair	9/2024-9/2025
Melissa Stoner	Past Chair	8/2024-9/2025
Jack Schmitt	Secretary/Recorder	9/2024-9/2026
Mattie Lewis	Steering Committee Member	7/2024-9/2026
Mary Katherine Kearns	Steering Committee Member	7/2023-9/2025
Janine Smith	Steering Committee Member	7/2024-9/2026
Jerrid Miller	Steering Committee Member	7/2024-9/2026
Nataani Hanley-Moraga	Steering Committee Member	7/2024-7/2025 Withdrew from committee 7/2025

**Council Liaison:** Jillian Cuellar

## 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:**

#### **Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums, Palm Springs, CA**

In November 2024, the NAAS group hosted a table, in collaboration with the Archival Repatriation Committee, at the ATALM Exhibition Hall highlighting the Society of American Archivists and recruiting many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Archivists to become members of the Society of American Archivists. We promoted the further training for SAA members in physical and digital archives.

#### **Indigenous Community Archive Talking Series**

For the year 2024-2025, the Indigenous Community Archive Talking Circle Series introduced NAAS members several examples of collaborative, respectful, and empowering archival spaces that foreground Indigenous voices, narratives, and stewardship.

*Focus 1: Highlighting Indigenous Archivists*

Uphold and defend Indigenous cultural sovereignty by supporting community-driven archival methods that honor Indigenous protocols, Indigenous research epistemologies, and self-determination.

*Focus 2: Uplift the next generation of Indigenous Archivists*

Create an Indigenous Archive knowledge sharing network to create pathways for Indigenous students to thrive in information sciences while staying rooted in their communities and culture.

Before our monthly meetings, we invited several Indigenous Archivists to share their projects and share tips in Indigenous archives research, archival restorative justice, descriptive metadata and cataloging, culturally embedded library and archive infrastructure, and Indigenous Knowledge sharing through open sources platforms. We had a total of 6 focus Indigenous archive projects:

*September 2024: New Indigenous Archivists.* We invited 3 Tribal Archivist and Indigenous Student Archivists. The session introduced new Tribal Archivists and Indigenous students on how to navigate the challenge in the Archive profession, also, providing career tips in advancing their skills.

*October 2024: Indigenous Archival Research.* We invited an Indigenous researcher from Alaska who specialized in archive research within boarding schools. This session focused on analyzing the structural violence through boarding schools' records to provide justice and healing for Indigenous communities.

*January 2025: The Firekeeper Project from Arizona State University.* The projects were led by an Indigenous Librarian, Indigenous Education Specialist, and Indigenous Intellectual Property Lawyer. The guest speakers highlighted developing legal tools of archive protection for Indigenous Archive Sovereignty through Tribal consultation. They shared the development of a tool kit around Tribal code, Intellectual Property, Reciprocal Governance, Contract Law, resulting in creating a template centering Indigenous ownership over intellectual and cultural property.

*February 2025: Library of Congress Indigenous Subject Heading Project.* This session highlighted the reparative project in revising the LCSH's "Indians of North America." We explored the Tribal community-driven applications of terms toward accurate terminology and descriptions of North America;s Tribal Nations.

*March 2025: Labriola Center within Arizona State University.* The guest speaker focused on how an Indigenous-led library rooted in cultural practices, protocols, and sovereignty created a culturally safe space for academic success for Indigenous students and Tribal communities by implementing PNAAM, culturally relevant library programs, and cultural responsiveness in research services.

*April 2025: Indigenous Knowledge through Open Access at Northern Arizona University.* NAU's Indigenous Assistant Archivist and Head of Collections showcased their Open Education Repository named the Indigenous Knowledges Digital Learning Library (IKDLL). The IKDLL provides respectful and culturally appropriate access to Indigenous knowledge. The Open Access repository is built on Indigenous cultural protocols and sovereignty to ensure sacred knowledge and sensitive traditional knowledge remain protected.

### **Ongoing:**

#### **Indigenous Archive Training**

Last year, we ended our IAT pilot program. After its completion, Mellon saw the high importance of bringing professional archive training to Tribal communities, including helping advocate with Indigenous archive sovereignty profession. This resulted in Mellon inviting a concept note to secure additional support towards the IAT mission and initiative. During 2024-2025, we held weekly meetings to draft and finalize Mellon concept note, and secured a partnership with IAIA. In total, we

- Successfully completed 2024 IAT Program & were invited to submit a new concept note for extended Mellon Foundation funding
  - Program Adjustments:
    - Move to IAIA as fiduciary umbrella
    - Developing online training module via SAA aimed at non-Indigenous repositories (potential certificate program)
    - Extended in-person experiences
      - Learning Communities (5 days)
      - Kinship Projects (during learning communities' week)
      - Field Schools
      - Mentoring
      - Professional Development Support
  - Submitted concept note on June 20th - invited for full proposal for submission September 5, and final submission October 24
  - Initial Feedback:
    - We may have to organize next iteration of the program into phases to allow for planning & sustainability development

#### **Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM)**

Every year, NAAS continues to participate in the ATALM conference. We continue to highlight the Society of American Archivists and recruit many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Archivists to become members of the Society of American Archivists.

#### **Society of American Archivist Annual Meeting**

Every year, NAAS members strive to connect NAAS members and SAA non-Indigenous members during the meeting and provide a space for Indigenous archivists. NAAS continues to do annual welcome meet-ups and activities to highlight Indigenous archives practices. This year's opening reception was hugely well attended, with 125 registered attendees. This year's Chumash Cultural Center field trip was a success—over 25 participants attended, an even number of NAAS members and non-NAAS SAA members attended the field trip. All members were grateful and learned from their engagement with Tribal community members regarding their collections and exhibition; the trip also helped do relationship building for wider NAAS initiatives. These practices help aid in how Tribal communities navigate and embed cultural application towards extractive archive and museum collections. We also organized a Forum panel on Indigenous archival sovereignty with participants from the US, Canada, and Australia,

with 375 attendees, 250 in the room. As part of the panel, the group produced a short film (final public cut forthcoming) and Zine, now online here: <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/native-american-archives-section/protocols-at-20-zine>

### **New:**

#### **Indigenous Archive Sovereignty Case Studies**

For the 2025-2026, we are revising NAAS case studies to reflect Indigenous archive sovereignty. The expansion of Indigenous Archive Sovereignty addresses the current state of developments within the Indigenous Archive community. PNAAM is a small portion of this Indigenous archive sovereignty methodology, which will still be considered for its case studies. As seen in our Indigenous Community Archive talking circle, the case studies will also include community based approaches developed by Indigenous Archivist professionals. We are currently evaluating the best approaches to streamline the submission process with no peer review, along with a more flexible format not requiring a long publication format. These submission and interview based conversations with archivists will assist in enhancing the professional growth of the archives field.

#### **Society of American Archivist Annual Meeting Field Sites**

Due to the success of our field trip, NAAS will continue to add a Tribal Museum and Archive optional visit for SAA annual meeting attendees with the local tribal community.

#### **NAAS and Protocol 20th Anniversary**

For the upcoming year, NAAS will be focusing on several events to celebrate a 20 years milestone of NAAS history and heighten the PNAAM awareness, which began 20 years ago.

#### **Virtual NAAS presence**

NAAS is striving to build a virtual community of Indigenous Archivists and Tribal communities to bring more Indigenous Archivists to join the Society of American Archivist.

## **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**

This year, we have actively advocated for the archive profession particularly with a specialized focus in the importance of Indigenous Archivists vital roles within western institutions. Internally, we have advocated heavily for the Society of American Archivist and recruiting more Indigenous Archivists to SAA. which many have become members and are serving as NAAS committee members. Additionally, we hosted a table at ATALM every year to promote greater collaboration between Tribal archivists and PWIs.

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

Our group has worked collaboratively to promote NAAS by inviting various non-SAA members Indigenous Archivists, including expanding the Indigenous Archival Training for tribal communities. NAAS promotes its resources for non-Indigenous and Indigenous professional archivists, which several past NAAS leadership has made strides to introduce a mentorship program for incoming Indigenous archive students.

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

NAAS members have advanced the field by introducing and informing archivists through the Community Indigenous Archive Talking Circle. Every month, Indigenous archivists showcased their community driven archive practice at our monthly meeting. Additionally, NAAS members gathered Indigenous leaders for the SAA Annual Meeting 2025 session, "Indigenous Archival Sovereignty: The Protocols at 20 and Global Perspectives" to discuss the Indigenous archive advancement within the field, including how the Indigenous archive practice has evolved before, after, and continue to development through the incorporation of Protocols of Native American Archival Materials. This year, NAAS members are in the process of providing training for non-Indigenous on how to center Indigenous Archival Sovereignty within their institutions. Currently, NAAS is redesigning its current PNAAM case studies to address Indigenous Archival Sovereignty case studies as a supportive resource for our non-Indigenous archivist.

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

NAAS leadership continues to prioritize the needs and concerns of its section members in the advocacy for Indigenous inclusivity and resource building with the Indigenous and SAA Archivist communities. This year, NAAS created an inclusivity that connected Indigenous Archivist and non-Indigenous archivist professionals at the SAA Annual Conference 2025. Day 1 of the conference, NAAS hosted a Welcome Reception for SAA attendees to engage with one another with nearly 75-80 attendees. Day 2, NAAS hosted a field Trip to the Chumash Museum and Cultural Center with 22 attendees. Attendees were from NAAS and regular SAA members, as first timers engaging with NAAS. These opportunities give section members and SAA members to get to know each other, along with engaging with the Chumash Tribal communities and their story.

## **SAA ANNUAL MEETING**

Number of attendees: 26

Summary of meeting activities and highlights:

NAAS hosted a year in review showcasing its annual and recruitment activities of the year. Further, our section showcased the many projects that non-SAA members are doing for the advancement, ethical and cultural responsiveness in addressing Protocols of Native American Archive Materials and Indigenous Data Sovereignty. Many of the section members discussed the latest update and changes within the Indigenous Archival Training and Case studies. The meeting also introduced the newly elected NAAS leadership and steering committee for the upcoming 2025/2026, which highlighted the many planned activities under their term. The meeting ended with the NAAS Chair's call to action in addressing the lack of cultural competency within the western archive field, including the lack of support for PNAAM implementation and lack of the leadership/partnership of Indigenous Archivist in addressing Indigenous Archival Sovereignty.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT**

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

All members in attendance had an even number of NAAS sectional and SAA members in attendance. Many were receptive to the call to action and a question from an SAA member how they can advocate more Indigenous Archive sovereignty. Notably, participation by Native American and Indigenous archivists in the section has more than doubled in recent years and

continues to grow, reflecting a strengthening commitment to centering Indigenous voices and leadership within the profession.

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

The group's leadership faced many challenges from SAA in poor communication regarding scholarships and the annual program selecting process. In addition, short notices to work with NAAS to assist and to develop respectful land acknowledgement statements for the annual meetings. The following call to action addresses the section's members' concerns and recommendation to help bridge these gaps to build a stronger relationship with SAA leadership and NAAS and its members. Concerns are addressed and identified by the metrics listed under strategic goals.

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

### **CALL TO ACTION for SAA Leadership to address SAA NAAS Members and Indigenous Archive Profession**

#### **Goal 1: Advocating for Archives and Archivists**

NAAS Members concern: Lack of support in the advocacy of Indigenous archive practices from SAA leadership.

1.1 This objective is not being met, SAA is being silent during a stressful political time where DEI is being challenged and removed.

1.2 Current SAA resources outside of NAAS are not being communicated regarding the importance of PNAAM "to education and influence" about the importance of PNAAM and why SAA has endorsed it PNAAM.

Recommendations:

- SAA role to communicate through its publications in the advocacy of why SAA endorsed PNAAM and its importance in the care and management of Indigenous archival materials within higher education and cultural institutions. The PNAAM also supports the PINAR, crafted by the Archival Repatriation Committee and recently endorsed by the SAA Council.

#### **Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth & Goal 3: Advancing the Field**

NAAS Members Concern: 1) Lack of supportive financial resources for Indigenous archivists members to aid in career development and SAA membership. 2) Lack of non-SAA Indigenous professional organization collaboration/partnership for professional community and resources.

2.2 & 3.1 SAA current content, education and publication does not center on PNAAM or Indigenous archive sovereignty to meet the needs for non-Indigenous SAA members.

2.3 & 3.2 SAA membership and education courses are expensive for Tribal communities to become members and attend courses.

2.4 & 3.3 Professional interactions with other Indigenous organizations are lacking. ATALM tabling is the only visibility that SAA supports for members to represent SAA.

#### Recommendations:

- SAA Program coordinators staying abreast with the Indigenous archive profession and professional Indigenous archivists to provide training. NAAS members are at full capacity to lead or provide training.
  - Program coordinator to work with NAAS Indigenous Archival Training to create SAA educational course for non-Indigenous to learn Indigenous archival practices centering PNAAM and repatriation.
- Provide discounted rates for SAA membership for Tribal communities. This discussion was mentioned during the revision of the membership.
  - NAAS requests a follow up to discuss the membership outcome for Tribal communities and to communicate membership options during NAAS recruitment during meeting and ATALM tabling events.
- SAA Leadership creates partnerships and networks with Indigenous archive and Museum organizations to foster communities for professional interaction. This will assist SAA program coordinators to enhance professional growth of Indigenous archive sovereignty, PNAAM tribal-western collaboration, and PINAR archive repatriation efforts. Lastly, introduce Indigenous libraries and archivist instructors, increase resources for non-Indigenous professionals managing Indigenous archive collections.
  - Suggested organizations:
    - [Association of Tribal Libraries, Archives, and Museum](#): Supports NAAS and the Archive Repatriation Committee work; Areas of focus for Professional Growth and Advancement. Indigenous Archive Sovereignty & PNAAM collaboration
    - [Association of American Indian Affairs](#): Supports the Archival Repatriation Committee with PINAR: Areas of Focus for Professional Growth and Advancement: Archive Repatriation initiative and additional resources for SAA Members doing archive repatriation work.
    - [Native Nations Institute](#): Supports NAAS and Archival Repatriation Committee work: Areas of focus for Professional Growth and Advancement: Indigenous Data Sovereignty centering on research and archive sovereignty.
- These organizations center Indigenous archive sovereignty practices and will help make connections to help SAA members managing Indigenous archive collections. Additionally, these organizations hold annual conferences for SAA to consider for exhibition tabling, also, to send any SAA representatives.

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

NAAS members' concerns: 1) Lack of Indigenous inclusivity and representation across SAA. 2) Lack of collaboration between SAA leadership and NAAS members.

4.1. This objective is not being met. Communication between SAA leadership and NAAS members is not clear.

4.2 Currently SAA does not provide opportunities and inclusivity for Indigenous Archivists to participate fully in SAA or non-Indigenous SAA members to connect with Indigenous archivists outside of NAAS, such as annual meetings and professional Indigenous organizations.

4.4. The objective is lacking from SAA leadership support to bring Indigenous inclusivity. All NAAS leadership and its members are currently doing the heavy lifting financially and labor to help bring Indigenous inclusivity to SAA spaces, especially Annual meetings and connecting non-Indigenous archive professionals with other indigenous organizations and professionals.

Recommendation:

- Clear communication and advance notification within SAA processes and outcomes, such as increased membership rates, rejected Annual proposals, and scholarships awards. Communication was given at the last minute to NAAS leadership.
- Include a NAAS member in the annual planning committee in the beginning stages of planning for the conference, such as to help aid in respectful and proper land acknowledgement for SAA leaderships, incorporate NAAS activities in the agenda, NAAS sessions, and so on.

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

Please note, NAAS is willing to work and facilitate with SAA leadership to address these concerns and recommendations. Depending on the requests, NAAS members ask to be considered at the beginning stages of any requests rather than last minute invitations. Please keep in mind, NAAS has many projects within its section to help meet the needs of NAAS members and Non-Indigenous members in advancing the field. Therefore, NAAS ask that tasks of certain requests be equally distributed between NAAS and SAA representatives, so the heavy lifting is not entirely placed on NAAS members.