**Curator book (title TBD), Cuellar and Czeblakow**

**Peer reviews compiled by Stacie Williams, Publications Editor**

**April 8, 2022**

**Reviewer #1**

**Criterion: Meets professional need [Excellent: Meets a professional need by addressing a critical, broad ranging challenge]**

**Criterion: Makes unique contribution to professional discourse [Excellent: Brings forth new knowledge or fills an existing gap in the literature in a highly relevant or timely topic]**

The focus of the proposed monograph brings a contemporary approach to curatorial responsibilities. The bibliography and authors' discussion of prior publication related to the curatorial role demonstrate that this proposed monograph fills a gap in the literature.

**Criterion: Author/editor qualifications [Good: Record of peer-reviewed publications and/or very good writing sample; demonstrated expertise in subject area; if compilation, has editing experience]**

The authors appear to have adequate scholarship records.

The research skills of Czeblakow are very evident in their writing sample. Cuellar's writing style is compelling. Their research and writing styles should prove to be complementary,

**Criterion: Proposal completeness [Excellent: Fully developed proposal with all necessary information; fully complies with proposal template; provides clear scope, realistic timeline; all dependencies identified and addressed]**

The proposal is very well researched and thorough. The only question I have is how the contributors fit into the outline. Are they each contributing a chapter/section or pairing up on chapters?

**Criterion: Marketability (primary audience — SAA members; archivists, archives students) [Excellent: Perceived demand very high ; sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/length highly appealing]**

**Criterion: Marketability (secondary audiences — allied professions, general public) [Good: Perceived demand high to medium; sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/ length appealing]**

**Criterion: Contributes to/meets Pubs Board goals/mission (see https://www2.archivists.org/publications/book-publishing/guidelinesforbookproposals) [Excellent: Fully supports goals/mission by: a) is a new or newly translated academic work on an advanced topic; b) establishes best practice(s); d) new work that needs evolving membership need(s) and/or c) is good value for initial outlay at agreed publication time]**

**Criterion: Contributes toward SAA's Strategic Plan and Core Organizational Values (see https://www2.archivists.org/governance/strategic-plan) [Good: Largely support plan and values by integral relationship to SAA objectives; has likely expected return on investment relative to plan and core values.]**

**Overall publication priority**: High

**Summary:** Accept in current form

**Additional comments for the author/suggested revisions**

For the sake of diversity, the authors might consider inviting more male contributors.

**Reviewer #2**

**Criterion: Meets professional need [Good: Meets a professional need by addressing a challenge that is common, but less critical]**

There is a case for a book that could clarify the overlaps and interstices between archives, records, special collections and rare books curation.

**Criterion: Makes unique contribution to professional discourse [Good: Brings forth some new knowledge or fills an existing gap in the literature in a relevant or timely topic]**

The proposed chapters on Curatorial Antecedents and the Evolving Role of a Curator would benefit from inclusion of an overt discussion on the real and perceived differences between records managers/archivists and curators. What makes a curator? Is interpretation of material critical to the later role, or just more visible in it?

The proposers have some limited publications experience; would strongly recommend a Board shepherd for this volume. Also, it is unclear whether the proposer also see themselves as contributing editors - will they contribute section introductions? As both proposers also have rare book curatorial experience, the book would benefit from how they see the intersection of rare books/mss/archives and the related curatorial educational offerings/accessibility in MLIS courses and from orgs like the Rare Book School.

Fair amount of subject expertise from potential author list; would benefit from more museum representation if we want book to appeal to the larger cultural heritage sector; perhaps switch out a few of the universities to those museums or other repositories that have NA/Indigenous special colls/rare books, such as Am Museum of Natural History Library (Tom Boine); Lynley Anne Herbert, Curator of Rare books and Mss, Waters Art Museum; someone from American Philosophical Society's Center for Native American and Indigenous Research; or switch university focus to those that curate NA/indigenous colls, such as UTexas San Antonio; Teresa Salazar, Curator of Bancroft Collection of Western Americana someone from University of New Mexico's Center for SW Research and Special Collections?

**Criterion: Proposal completeness [Good: Adequately developed proposal with most necessary information ; substantially complies with proposal template, but some gaps]**

Would benefit from a detailed timeline (advise it should be expanded to 24 months due to proposed large number of contributing authors as well as the potential for building in a symposium hosted by Tulane)

**Criterion: Marketability (primary audience — SAA members; archivists, archives students) [Good: Perceived demand high to medium ; sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/ length appealing]**

**Criterion: Marketability (secondary audiences — allied professions, general public) [Good: Perceived demand high to medium; sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/ length appealing]**

Good if those markets are included by author representation and in text content

**Criterion: Contributes to/meets Pubs Board goals/mission (see https://www2.archivists.org/publications/book-publishing/guidelinesforbookproposals) [Good: Largely supports goals/mission by: a) being a revised edition or translation of a previous work; and/or b) is an opportunity for co-publication with another publishing outlet; and/or c) has some expected return for timely outlay and/or d) partially meets the requirements found in the Excellent category.]**

**Criterion: Contributes toward SAA's Strategic Plan and Core Organizational Values (see https://www2.archivists.org/governance/strategic-plan) [Excellent: Fully supports plan and values; represents excellent return on investment by speaking directly to current needs and initiatives.]**

**Overall publication priority**: Medium

**Summary:** Accept with minor revisions (specify below if not noted above)

I would move publication priority to high if a proposed author list had some commitments, and the appeal to multiple cultural heritage markets was better articulated via content and contributors (eg more museums/hist societies, fewer universities). The emphasis on new ways of curating and supporting diversity in the field is important and timely.

**Reviewer #3**

**Criterion: Meets professional need [Good: Meets a professional need by addressing a challenge that is common, but less critical]**

Collection development is something all archivists face

**Criterion: Makes unique contribution to professional discourse [Fair: Brings forth new knowledge or partially fills an existing gap in the literature in a somewhat relevant or not particularly timely topic]**

I feel that there is potentially a fair amount of overlap with Yun's book from last year

**Criterion: Author/editor qualifications [Poor: Inadequate writing sample provided and/or has few or no prior publications; difficult to assess expertise in subject area; if compilation, no editing experience or no evidence that they can manage an editing project]**

The authors have no editing experience, and very few scholarly articles between them.

**Criterion: Proposal completeness [Good: Adequately developed proposal with most necessary information ; substantially complies with proposal template, but some gaps]**

**Criterion: Marketability (primary audience — SAA members; archivists, archives students) [Fair: Perceived demand medium; may not be sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/ length does not enhance appeal]**

Here's my primary concern with this proposal--I feel like the idea of a "curator" position is only a reality at a small portion of archival repositories. For most of us, the responsibilities that the proposal speaks to fall under our responsibilities alongside many other things. As someone who does collection development alongside processing, reference, outreach, instruction, etc., I would likely pass on this book as a reader thinking that it was only directed at archivists/librarians with a narrow focus on "curatorship." This proposal has the potential to appeal much more broadly if reframed as a book on collection development, versus specifically curators.

**Criterion: Marketability (secondary audiences — allied professions, general public) [Fair: Perceived demand medium; may not be sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/ length does not enhance appeal]**

Some appeal to RBMS members likely, maybe to museum professionals.

**Criterion: Contributes to/meets Pubs Board goals/mission (see https://www2.archivists.org/publications/book-publishing/guidelinesforbookproposals) [Fair: Tangentially supports mission/goals by potentially meeting the evolving needs of membership ; and/or b) may be of interest to secondary audience(s); c) may generate return for outlay]**

**Criterion: Contributes toward SAA's Strategic Plan and Core Organizational Values (see https://www2.archivists.org/governance/strategic-plan) [Fair: Tangentially supports plan and values or does so only as by product; may generate return on investment but outcome is uncertain]**

**Overall publication priority:** Medium

**Summary**: Revise and Resubmit

Major revisions are needed to make this proposal more broadly appealing to archivists and special collections librarians at repositories of all sizes and working with a broader range of financial resources.

**Reviewer #4**

**Criterion: Meets professional need [Excellent: Meets a professional need by addressing a critical, broad ranging challenge]**

This proposal meets a desperate and immediate need in my opinion. The role of curator within archives/special collections repositories has a long history but is still somewhat loosely defined, as it is often combined with other types of archival roles or is problematically institution specific. This proposal productively combines that tradition with present demands and directions for future growth and supports it with both practical and theoretical evidence. It establishes a best practice for curators writ large. Disabusing the notion of curator as gatekeeper within our profession, and possibly even dismantling the assumed hierarchy of curator as the most important position within the lifecycle of collections, is critical to the evolution of our field (I don’t completely feel the authors do the latter within this proposal and should consider it more – e.g., I don’t agree curators are “the most visible” ambassadors because it does enact that hierarchy). I applaud the inclusion of collection development plan examples because those are hard to find. I would recommend staying away from the term “academic libraries” and use “research libraries” instead – this work would be used at all repositories not just universities/colleges.

**Criterion: Makes unique contribution to professional discourse [Excellent: Brings forth new knowledge or fills an existing gap in the literature in a highly relevant or timely topic]**

Nothing here is especially new information (maybe some of its application is new) but I agree these topics combined and applied to analyze the curatorial role and present best practices for current and future curators is sorely missing from professional discourse. The role of curator is hazy in most of the literature, and this also would define who falls within the category of curator. The authors’ point about the topic especially lacking within extant curricula is important and would positively impact the future of curatorial roles with better-trained/informed curators. This is incredibly timely as many generations of archivists are now working together and (in my personal experience) the differences in their training combined with the future of the field becomes most evident within curatorial practice.

**Criterion: Author/editor qualifications [Good: Record of peer-reviewed publications and/or very good writing sample; demonstrated expertise in subject area; if compilation, has editing experience]**

Authors are involved in the field and have had a range of professional experience with some publication experience. Writing samples are good. New voices especially on this topic would be a good match.

Potential list of contributors looks good overall; strategy for identifying contributors is thoughtful and sound. I would like to see contributors from more museums/cultural repositories and smaller research libraries.

**Criterion: Proposal completeness [Excellent: Fully developed proposal with all necessary information; fully complies with proposal template; provides clear scope, realistic timeline; all dependencies identified and addressed]**

This is one of the most thorough proposals I’ve encountered; I have very few questions about content, approach, and strategy for soliciting contributions. I do think a clearer timeline would be useful and breaking it into what’s accomplished in the first six, next six, etc.

**Criterion: Marketability (primary audience — SAA members; archivists, archives students) [Excellent: Perceived demand very high ; sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/length highly appealing]**

I think archivists and archives instructors would benefit from this and it would be in high demand. Lots of programming and even continuing ed workshops could be built around it.

**Criterion: Marketability (secondary audiences — allied professions, general public) [Good: Perceived demand high to medium; sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/ length appealing]**

I do think some allied professions would benefit but I think some museums have a very different concept of curator so I’m unsure how relevant it would be.

**Criterion: Contributes to/meets Pubs Board goals/mission (see https://www2.archivists.org/publications/book-publishing/guidelinesforbookproposals) [Excellent: Fully supports goals/mission by: a) is a new or newly translated academic work on an advanced topic; b) establishes best practice(s); d) new work that needs evolving membership need(s) and/or c) is good value for initial outlay at agreed publication time]**

Establishes best practice in the field and I do think this would be a new work that meets a great member need.

**Criterion: Contributes toward SAA's Strategic Plan and Core Organizational Values (see https://www2.archivists.org/governance/strategic-plan) [Excellent: Fully supports plan and values;**

This meets many of SAA’s strategic goals by advancing the public standing of archivists (archivists as curators), ensuring the diversity of the archival record, fostering an open and inclusive culture of collaboration when it comes to collecting practices, and transparency, accountability, integrity, and social responsibility.represents excellent return on investment by speaking directly to current needs and initiatives.]

**Publishing Priority**: Very High

**Summary**: Accept with minor revisions

**Reviewer #5**

**Criterion: Meets professional need [Good: Meets a professional need by addressing a challenge that is common, but less critical]**

I agree with the editors that the role of special collections curators is entering a large-scale shift. The relationship between curators and archivists is one that must be collaborative and often overlaps. This publication, I believe, would be both timely and of interest to the archival profession.

**Criterion: Makes unique contribution to professional discourse [Good: Brings forth some new knowledge or fills an existing gap in the literature in a relevant or timely topic]**

**Criterion: Author/editor qualifications [Excellent: Substantial peer-reviewed publication record and/or excellent writing sample. Proposer many have recognized expertise in subject; if compilation, has editing experience]**

Both editors are extremely qualified based on their CVs.

**Criterion: Proposal completeness [Excellent: Fully developed proposal with all necessary information; fully complies with proposal template; provides clear scope, realistic timeline; all dependencies identified and addressed]**

I was very impressed by this thorough proposal. I think the proposed sections are well laid out. This may fall under the "Reimagining Roles" chapter, but I definitely think the prevalent but often under-discussed tension between collection managers and curators should be addressed. This is a reoccurring pattern that I've noticed at several institutions.

**Criterion: Marketability (primary audience — SAA members; archivists, archives students) [Good: Perceived demand high to medium ; sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/ length appealing]**

I believe this will be of interest to a subset of archivists. Many curators come from scholarly fields in the humanities or from the library field, but archivists would still benefit from it.

**Criterion: Marketability (secondary audiences — allied professions, general public) [Good: Perceived demand high to medium; sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/ length appealing]**

I can see this publication being of interest to the humanities scholars, museum professionals, and librarians who work in or want to work in special collections. I think the broader library field (especially academic library field) may find this text to be helpful in better understanding their colleagues.

**Criterion: Contributes to/meets Pubs Board goals/mission (see https://www2.archivists.org/publications/book-publishing/guidelinesforbookproposals) [Excellent: Fully supports goals/mission by: a) is a new or newly translated academic work on an advanced topic; b) establishes best practice(s); d) new work that needs evolving membership need(s) and/or c) is good value for initial outlay at agreed publication time]**

I believe that this proposed book supports the Publications Board mission because it provides a contemporary reflection on an important subset of the archival field, and it also deals heavily with the diversification of the field.

**Criterion: Contributes toward SAA's Strategic Plan and Core Organizational Values (see https://www2.archivists.org/governance/strategic-plan) [Good: Largely support plan and values by integral relationship to SAA objectives; has likely expected return on investment relative to plan and core values.]**

Overall publication priority: Medium

Summary: Accept in current form

**Reviewer #6**

**Criterion: Meets professional need [Excellent: Meets a professional need by addressing a critical, broad ranging challenge]**

I think this is an important topic to cover. The decisions curators/collection development staff make affect archivists and library staff and therefore this is an applicable work.

**Criterion: Makes unique contribution to professional discourse [Good: Brings forth some new knowledge or fills an existing gap in the literature in a relevant or timely topic]**

The proposal addresses the fact that there have been at least two SAA published books focused on appraisal and that there have been book chapters on collection development and appraisal. There are a few books mentioned that touch on the topic but this would be the first book to focus on curatorial activities.

**Criterion:\*if applicable, meets stated aims of series for which book is proposed (i.e. https://www2.archivists.org/publications/archival-futures/submission-guidelines or https://www2.archivists.org/publications/book-publishing/module-guidelines-trends-in-archives-practice [Fair: Meets stated aims partially or in an insufficient fashion]**

The proposal does not explicitly say that it is intended for either of those series.

**Criterion: Author/editor qualifications [Excellent: Substantial peer-reviewed publication record and/or excellent writing sample. Proposer many have recognized expertise in subject; if compilation, has editing experience]**

The authors are very qualified to write this volume as evidenced by their CVs and writing samples.

**Contributor Qualifications (may be shared with proposer). Please assess the suitability and qualifications of the contributors who are suggested for the work, in the case of edited volumes, commenting on subject expertise and the ability to articulate fresh perspectives, as well as writing background and experience.**

This is a fantastic line up of contributors involved in from the curatorial perspective, the archivist perspective, instruction, and collection development. The proposal states its aim for a diversity among responsibilities, years in the field, diversity among staff, and I think that they achieve with this list of contributors.

**Criterion: Proposal completeness [Good: Adequately developed proposal with most necessary information ; substantially complies with proposal template, but some gaps]**

The proposal could have a little more information about the timeline but other than that, the proposal is very in depth and complete.

**Criterion: Marketability (primary audience — SAA members; archivists, archives students) [Excellent: Perceived demand very high ; sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/length highly appealing]**

I think archivists as well as students, curators, and other library staff workers will be interested in this book. I also think many library schools do not introduce curatorial work as an option for someone with a MLIS but instead curators usually come from PhD programs in history or another related discipline.

**Criterion: Marketability (secondary audiences — allied professions, general public) [Good: Perceived demand high to medium; sellable at standard SAA price points; proposed format/design/ length appealing]**

As stated before, maybe someone who is in academia especially in history could be interested in either pursing curatorship as a profession or wants to understand collection development, could be interested in this book.

**Criterion: Contributes to/meets Pubs Board goals/mission (see https://www2.archivists.org/publications/book-publishing/guidelinesforbookproposals) [Excellent: Fully supports goals/mission by: a) is a new or newly translated academic work on an advanced topic; b) establishes best practice(s); d) new work that needs evolving membership need(s) and/or c) is good value for initial outlay at agreed publication time]**

I think this book will explore a gap in the professional literature. I also think the diversity of the contributors is important. The chapter list looks interesting.

**Criterion: Contributes toward SAA's Strategic Plan and Core Organizational Values (see https://www2.archivists.org/governance/strategic-plan) [Excellent: Fully supports plan and values; represents excellent return on investment by speaking directly to current needs and initiatives.]**

Appraisal is an ongoing conversation in the archival field and I think also book can allow for further engagement beyond appraisal to explore topics such as donor relations, collection development (especially who collects what and if that is the right place for a collection), and explore community relationships.

As stated before, maybe someone who is in academia especially in history could be interested in either pursing curatorship as a profession or wants to understand collection development, could be interested in this book.

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**Overall publication priority:** High

**Summary**: Accept with minor revisions

Additional comments for the author/suggested revisions

I would suggest a little bit more information about the timeline but other than that, the proposal looks great.