

Society of American Archivists Council Meeting Chicago, IL

Privacy & Confidentiality Section: Annual Report (Prepared by: Elizabeth Russell)

Year: 2024-2025

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

Elizabeth Russell, Chair, Term end date: 2025-09-01 [continuing as past chair to 2026-09-01]
Leslie Schuyler, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Term end date: 2027-09-01
Veronica Denison, Past Chair, Term end date: 2025-09-01
Ashlyn Velte, Committee Member, Term end date: 2025-09-01
Michelle Chiles, Committee Member, Term end date: 2026-09-01
Anu Kasarabada, Committee Member, Term end date: 2026-09-01

Council Liaison: Lydia Tang

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:

November 20, 2024

Panel chat

“Providing Equitable and Ethical access to Restricted Records”

Topics: navigating legacy access restrictions, including the process of undertaking an institutional review of access restrictions and lessons learned, the digital repatriation of records, reimagining the role of record subjects in determining access to culturally sensitive records, and how to enact best practices for future acquisitions

Panelists: Jennifer Grant, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University Libraries; Kate Hujda, Curator of Manuscripts at the Minnesota Historical Society; Ashlyn Velte, University of Colorado Boulder Libraries

May 5, 2025

Webinar panel presentation:

“Protecting the Privacy of Trans People in the Archives”

Topic: How archives can create specific guidelines that address the unique and complex privacy vulnerabilities of trans individuals.

Panelists: TJ Billard, School of Communication, Northwestern University; K.J. Rawson, English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Northeastern University; Lara Wilson, Special Collections, University of Victoria, British Columbia

July 14, 2025

Annual meeting: described below.

Ongoing:

- Monthly steering committee meetings, additional planning meetings as needed.
- News "roundup" posted to our discussion forum each month to alert our members to news, events, and articles/books of interest.
- News "roundup," event advertising, etc. posted to Word Press blog
- Some steering committee members are part of a research team that conducted a survey on the impact of access restrictions. The research team is currently working on a submission to *American Archivist*.

New:

For 2025-2026, we plan to engage with members through more informal events such as coffee chats. Our goal is to make sure that all posts to our discussion forum get some kind of answer, even if it is a referral to another group or resource. We will draw on our members' ideas brought forward during our annual meeting discussion.

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

Our section is focused on making sure that access to archives is promoted while individual rights to privacy and confidentiality are protected.

Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth

Our webinars are tailored to help our members deal with issues they may encounter related to privacy and confidentiality, both through consideration of ethics and legal frameworks, and through more technical topics such as tools and software that may be helpful for dealing with identification of sensitive content, redaction, etc.

Goal 3: Advancing the Field

Webinar topics from this year (assessing access restrictions and trans privacy) are at the leading edge of archival practice.

Goal 4: Meeting Members' Needs

Our specific focus this year is on meeting the needs of our section's members better, whether by making sure they receive answers on our discussion list or scheduling coffee chats tailored to answer questions or explore topics of interest to our membership.

SAA ANNUAL MEETING

Number of attendees: 70

Link to meeting minutes

<https://connect.archivists.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=1639d7b7-2a53-c542-682e-f2ecea3f6904&forceDialog=0>

Summary of meeting activities and highlights:

This year, the SAA Privacy & Confidentiality section focused our business meeting program on efforts to better connect our membership with resources in the coming year. One of our members, Jessica Breiman, Digital Archives Librarian at the University of Utah, shared the case study of her journey to find resources on redaction of sensitive records. The steering committee shared other feedback from members on use of the section's forum and talked about current plans to provide more resources to our membership. Attendees shared suggestions and feedback through chat with the steering committee.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

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

We have a strong group with a well-organized and engaged steering committee. We have excellent attendance at our events.

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

Since the pandemic, there has been a drop in the number of people willing to volunteer for steering committee positions; however, we have managed to keep a strong steering committee through the dedication of existing members willing to serve for more than one term, or to run for chair after serving as a member. This year, we were lucky to add a new member for 2025-2026.

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

People need to see how volunteer service with SAA assists in attaining career goals. Perhaps SAA can make sure people know that this kind of service earns ACA credits, etc.

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

More clarity and notice on required tasks for SAA leaders would be helpful. I'm concerned that we are still required to use WebEx for annual meetings even though every person I've met involved with SAA has difficulty with it.