

SAA Membership Committee Survey on Professional Development

Reported submitted to SAA Council by the Membership Committee, March 2018

2017-2018 Membership Committee

Matthew Gorzalski, Chair

Michelle Sweetser, Vice Chair

Tommy Brown, Committee Member

Alison Clemens, Committee Member

Jeremy Floyd, Committee Member

Sherry Griffin Grundy, Committee Member

Jennifer Motszko, Committee Member

Gabrielle Spiers, Committee Member

Laura Starr, Committee Member

Jamillah Gabriel, Ex Officio (Diversity Committee Chair)

Steven Booth, Council Liaison

Nancy Beaumont, Staff Liaison

Carlos Salgado, Staff Liaison

Background

The [Barriers to Participation](#) survey conducted by the SAA Membership Committee in early 2017 highlighted lack of financial support for annual meeting and workshop attendance as a significant barrier to continuing education and greater participation in SAA. As a follow-up to that survey and as a continuation of the Committee's efforts to learn more about SAA's membership, the group developed a short survey to explore professional development support among the membership.

The survey was open from October 31 through November 22, 2017 and was announced via SAA's website and social media accounts, *In the Loop* emails, and the SAA Leader email list. The survey gathered 1,006 responses, or 18% of SAA's total individual membership (using November 2017 figures). The survey consisted of 6 total questions:

- Does your employer provide professional development support for conference or workshop attendance?
- How much financial support does your employer currently provide (per year)?
- Have you been in your current position for at least five years?
 - Has your employer's level of support changed during your employment? OR Did your professional development support change between your previous and current position?

- Please identify an archival topic or challenge that you think needs greater emphasis among professional development offerings.
- Comments

Key Findings and Observations

The majority of respondents (66%) receive annual professional development support from their employers. Others (25%) receive support in some years but not annually. The remaining respondents receive no support (8%) or have no access to support because they are self-employed, a student, or retired (3%).

Approximately 44% of respondents receive funding in the \$501-1000 and \$1000-1500 ranges on an annual basis, as showing in Figure 1. It is notable that just over 12% of respondents reported receiving no financial support for professional development from their employer. For 71% of respondents, attendance at the Annual Meeting alone would exhaust their entire annual professional development allocation.¹

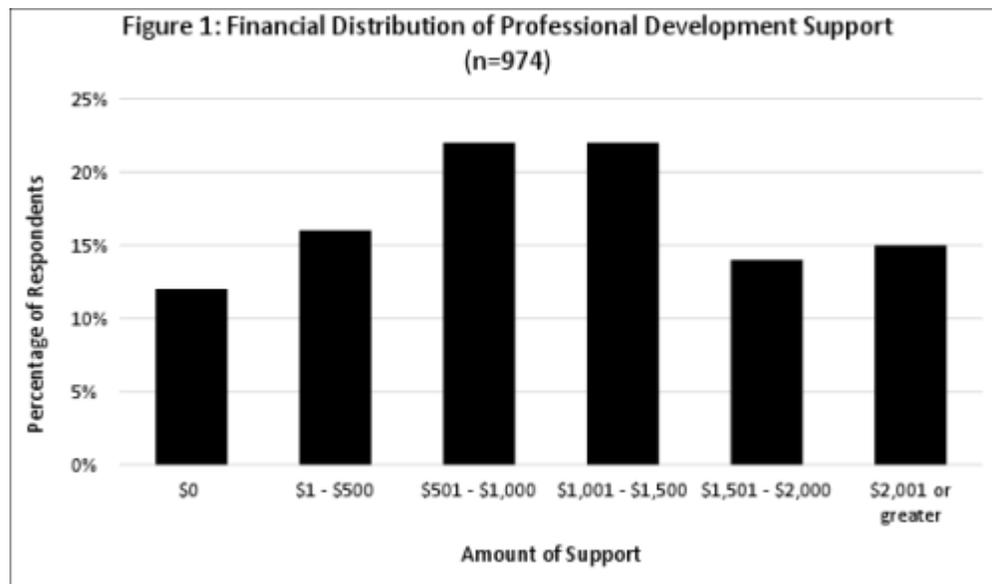
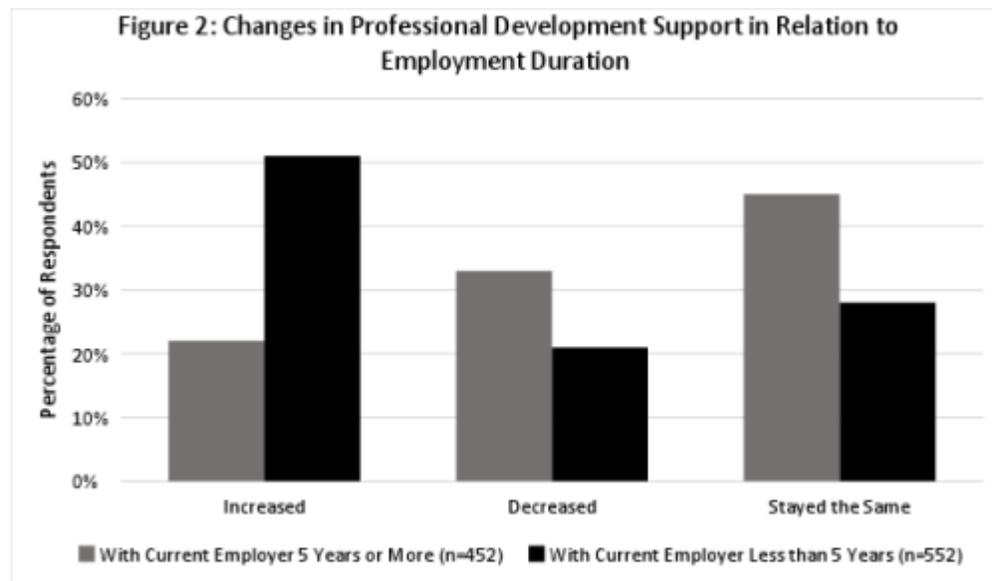


Figure 1: Distribution of responses to the question “How much financial support does your employer currently provide (per year)?”

The Committee was also interested in temporal trends in support for professional development. Respondents were asked if they had been with their current employer for at least 5 years, of which 45% (452) stated “yes” and 55% (552) stated “no.” For 77% of archivists who have been with their current employer for at least 5 years, professional development support has remained the same or decreased. A slight majority (51%) who have been with their

¹ Assuming conference registration at the \$329 early-bird member rate; 3 nights in a hotel at \$199/night excluding applicable taxes; a \$250 flight; meals, transportation, and gratuities.

employer for less than 5 years have seen an increase in support. However, the remaining 49% of these individuals have experienced stagnancy or decreases in support. (Figure 2).



Finally, respondents were asked to name archival topics that they feel need greater emphasis among professional development offerings.

Archivists who have been with their current employer for five years or more identified the topics that were categorized into a number of themes. Thematic areas most frequently cited in this demographic were: administration / management; electronic records; general technical skills; and conservation / preservation. Within these top themes, the most frequently cited training needs were those in the areas of advocacy, management, fundraising, project management, general electronic records information, and digital preservation. A full list of topics identified by those with their current employer for more five or more years is attached as Appendix A.

Likewise, archivists who have been with their current employer for less than five years were asked to identify topics for professional development offerings. These were categorized into a number of themes, the most prevalent of which were the areas of electronic records, digital preservation, born digital materials, and digitization. Management training and development, including management of collections, management of people, training for new managers, developing management skills, and how to gain management experience was also cited frequently. Archivists in this category are also interested in developing software skills, with requests for courses in specific archives-based software like ArchivesSpace but also coding and software training from an archival standpoint. Other issues that came up several times were grant-writing, career development and job-hunting, work-life balance and self-care as well as cultural competencies including diversity and inclusivity. The crossover of archives with other

related fields such as records management, especially with regards to born-digital records, museums and libraries was also mentioned by multiple respondents who have hybrid jobs that are not just as archivists. A full list of topics identified by those with their current employer for less than five years is attached as Appendix B.

Recommendations

That SAA staff continue to control costs of hosting and attending the annual meeting. The majority of archivists face the arduous situation of decreasing or stagnant professional development support, coupled with inflation affecting the costs of travel, lodging, meals, registration fees, and other conference-related expenses. SAA staff should continue reviewing and implementing the cost-control recommendations outlined in the Annual Meeting Task Force Report of 2013 and the Membership Committee's 2017 Survey on Barriers to Participation. SAA might offset hosting costs by: establishing and utilizing an endowment to reduce reliance upon registration fees; holding joint-conferences with related organizations to further distribute costs; implementing the convention center model; scheduling all events in the convention center spaces to avoid hotel fees; and holding conferences in second-tier cities. SAA might offset the cost of attending a conference by: expanding access to travel award opportunities beyond students, minorities, and non-US or Canadian citizens; and promoting lodging alternatives such as Airbnb.

That SAA staff consider cost-control strategies for non-annual meeting educational opportunities. While the annual meeting is SAA's most expensive professional development opportunity, the costs of attending other in-person educational opportunities offered throughout the year are not insignificant. An all-day workshop costs a minimum of \$199. Including expenses for travel, lodging, and meals, participation could easily exceed the \$500 threshold reported by 28% of survey respondents. SAA might control costs for non-annual meeting professional development opportunities by: developing a funding source that provides scholarships for attending in-person workshops; exploring how co-hosting workshops with other archival organizations or library consortia may reduce attendance costs; and creating a workshop registration fee model scaled to a member's level of income or professional development support (such as how annual dues are categorized).

That SAA staff continue to make educational content available in formats that do not require in-person participation. Because the costs of travel, lodging, and meals can prevent attending professional development programs, these opportunities in online venues are more likely to fit the budget profile of members. SAA might: create recorded webinars of existing workshops if feasible; allow for virtual attendance by livestreaming workshops; and livestream select annual meeting sessions or events such as plenary or presidential addresses. Free services such as Google's Hangouts on Air livestream events and automatically uploads them to a linked YouTube account. SAA might provide access to resources that do not necessitate a registration fee in this way.

That SAA staff compare professional development topics desired by survey respondents with existing course offerings. The Director of Education should review the degree to which the professional development topics identified by respondents to this survey are covered by existing workshops in the Course Catalog. Of particular concern among survey respondents are management, leadership, fundraising, and advocacy to both resource allocators and the public.

Appendix A: Categorized responses of individuals with their current employer for 5 years or more to the question “Please identify an archival topic or challenge that you think needs greater emphasis among professional development offerings.”

Administration / Management	
Advocacy (making case to higher-ups; demonstrating relevance)	14
Management / management skills	12
Fundraising (donor relations, grants, working with fundraisers)	11
Planning / project management	11
Leadership	6
Budgeting / finance	4
Supervisory skills	4
Working with limited resources / budget cuts	4
Collection planning / collection development / collection management	3
Cultural competencies	2
Soft skills	2
Burnout	1
Certification (why / why not)	1
Collaborative skills	1
Equity in hiring	1
Event planning	1
Managing change	1
Marketing self and skills (titles may not be "archivist" but skills relevant)	1
Navigating larger organizations when fighting for resources	1
Negotiating contracts (with vendors)	1
Planning for a move	1
Security	1
Space consolidation	1
Standardization in essential work processes	1
Working with volunteers and students	1
Total: Administration	87
Electronic Records	
General	22
Preservation	16
Access	7

For small / underresourced archives	4
AV materials	3
Data conversion, transformation, migration	2
Hands on / interactive learning	2
Advocacy within ER realm	1
Appraisal	1
Building and maintaining skills	1
Collaborating with IT departments	1
DAS training and testing	1
Digital asset management (not open source)	1
How to archive email and attachments	1
Integrating digital content into finding aids	1
Obsolete / deteriorating formats	1
Planning	1
Strategies for identifying and managing PII within ER	1
Tools	1
Total: Electronic Records	68
Technical skills	
General	3
Maintaining currency; opportunity for mid-career archivists to learn new skills	3
Scripting	1
Digitization basics	5
XML/XSLT	1
EAD	1
Web development	2
Programming	1
How to work with IT staff	1
How to create a video biography	1
Of patron base	1
Total: Technical skills	20
Conservation / Preservation	
Basics	5
Disaster planning and preparedness	1
Housing solutions (for objects, printed ephemera)	1
Objects	1
Pest control	1
Photo preservation	1
Procedures for lone arrangers	1

Total: Conservation / Preservation	11
Processing	
General	7
MPLP	2
Extensible	1
Large collections	1
Total: Processing	11
Special formats or collecting areas	
Lone arrangers / small shops	2
Oral history	2
Visual materials / photographic archives	2
Architectural drawings	1
Archives in public libraries	1
Church preservation	1
Corporate archives management	1
Manuscript and collecting archives	1
Subtotal: Special formats / collecting areas	11
Teaching / Archival Instruction	
General	5
Primary sources	3
instructional design	1
Primary source literacy	1
Total: Teaching / Archival Instruction	10
Collaboration	
Community archives	2
In support of digital preservation	1
Institutional cooperation in collecting	1
Local government archives and materials in local history repositories	1
With external partners	1
With internal partners	1
With IT experts	1
With librarians	1
Subtotal: Collaboration	9
Arrangement / Description	
General	3
Finding aid creation (including quality and accuracy)	2

Adequate before digitization	1
Finding aid reconceptualization for the public	1
Writing useful scope and content notes for bulk processed collections	1
Total: Arrangement / Description	8
Legal Issues	
Copyright	4
Privacy laws	2
FOIA	1
Related to digitization	1
Total: Legal Issues	8
Outreach	
General	6
Increasing awareness of the archives' holdings	1
Strategies when social media is not an option	1
Subtotal: Outreach	8
Records Management	
General	2
Retention schedules	2
Disposition practices	2
How RM and archives relate	1
Subtotal: Records Management	7
Access / Accessibility	
For those with disabilities	1
For underserved populations	1
New modes of	1
To archival literature	1
To big data	1
To government records (declassification, e.g.)	1
Subtotal: Access / Accessibility	6
Diversity	
General	2
Diversity of repository offerings; get outside C&U archives	1
Importance of diversity in archives, staffing, and collecting	1
Inclusion	1
Women's equity/standing in profession	1

Subtotal: Diversity		6
Basic archival courses		
General		2
Starting an archive		2
Standards		1
Subtotal: Basic archival courses		5
Professional Ethics		
Appraisal		
General		2
AV materials		1
Subtotal: Appraisal		3
Reference		
Theory of profession		
General		2
Theory combined with applied experience		1
Subtotal: Theory of profession		3
Writing / publishing / research		
Cataloging		
Social justice and archival activism		
Documenting current events		1
General		1
Subtotal: Social justice and archival activism		2
Accessioning		
Data management		
Digital scholarship		
History of profession		1
Meeting user needs and expectations		
		1

Appendix B: Categorized responses of individuals with their current employer for less than 5 years to the question “Please identify an archival topic or challenge that you think needs greater emphasis among professional development offerings.”

Administration / Management	
Management	17
Personnel management	9
Leadership	7
Project management	5
Support for lone arrangers and independent archivists	5
Management training	4
Training students and volunteers	4
Hiring and staffing	3
Transitioning into management	2
Managing up	2
Change management	1
Managing archives in public libraries	1
Time management for lone arrangers including use of intern and volunteer labor	1
Online offerings in project management	1
Mixed-use facility management	1
Management and leadership from an organizational development standpoint	1
Business management	1
Total: Administration	65
Electronic Records	
Digital archives	12
Born-digital experience	11
Digital preservation	10
Electronic records	9

Digitization	6
Digital preservation for small archives – practical how tos with small budgets	5
Processing digital records	3
Quality metadata and standards/embedded metadata	3
Access to digital materials	2
Transition from paper to online and upkeep	1
Electronic records for smaller institutions	1
Advanced digitization techniques and workflows	1
Stop gap digital preservation	1
Workflow development for electronic records	1
Electronic records management	1
Hands on digital archiving classes	1
Total: Electronic Records	68
Technical skills	
Coding and technical skills	9
Archiving new technologies	5
ArchivesSpace	4
Working with technology	4
Managing software	3
DAM – digital asset management	3
EAD	3
Software for small archives	2
Practical email management	2
Data migration	2
Discovery systems	1
DACS	1
Total: Technical skills	34
Conservation / Preservation	
Preservation	7
Hands on preservation workshops	3
Conservation	2

Analog media preservation	1
Total: Conservation / Preservation	13
Processing	
Cataloging and processing visual objects	1
Dealing with backlogs	1
MPLP	1
Total: Processing	3
Special formats or collecting areas	
Photographs	2
Film/Beta preservation	1
Women's History – Women in leadership roles	1
Standards for conducting, transcribing and preserving oral histories	1
Digital audio visual material	1
Subtotal: Special formats / collecting areas	6
Professional Development	
Job searching	8
Career development	3
Emotional labor/non-monetary obstacles	2
More options for CE/ certification/credentials	2
Salary negotiations	2
Salaries versus cost of living nationally	2
Study support for ACA	1
Dealing with overwork	1
Total: Professional Development	21
Collaboration	
Donor relations/ fundraising	3
Collaboration across the archives/library/museums	2
Navigating institutional politics and working with stakeholders	1
How to communicate with departments that don't speak our language	1
Integration of archival collections with special collections & museums	1
Subtotal: Collaboration	8
Arrangement / Description	
Arrangement and description	2
Surveying collections	1

MARC for description	1
Total: Arrangement / Description	4
Legal Issues	
Copyright	4
Total: Legal Issues	4
Advocacy	
For the value of archives	7
For archival work	1
Internal advocacy	1
Subtotal: Outreach	9
Records Management	
Records management	2
Records management at the front end of archival work	2
Overlap between archives and records management	2
Digital records management	2
Subtotal: Records Management	8
Outreach	
Outreach	5
Primary source instruction	4
Working with and supporting community archives	1
Public Services	1
Subtotal: Outreach	11
Cultural Competency	
Diversity	5
Ethics	3
Real meaning of diversity and inclusion	2
Social justice in the archives	2
Cultural competence - whiteness	2
Inclusion	1
Subtotal: Cultural Competency	15
Basic archival courses	
Grant writing	6
Basics of Being an Archivist	3
Cataloging	2

Subtotal: Basic archival courses	11
Reference	5
Archives and the environment	
Environmental impact of archives	2
Sustainability	1
Subtotal: Archives and the environment	3
Writing / publishing / research	1
Government archives	2
Unionization	1
Accessioning and Deaccessioning	3
Business Archives	4
Appraisal	4
Collection development	1