

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 17, 2021
Virtual Meeting**

SAA Foundation Board Report

(Prepared by President Margery Sly and Executive Director Nancy Beaumont)

As reported in the [January/February issue of *Archival Outlook*](#), contributions to the Foundation in Calendar Year 2020 totaled a whopping \$180,289 (compared with \$75,651 in CY 2019, \$96,441 in CY 2018, \$76,300 in CY 2017, and \$72,648 in CY 2016) from a record-setting 1,145 donors (compared with 400 in CY 2019, 450 donors in CY 2018, 548 in CY 2017, and 413 in CY 2016). In 2020, the Foundation:

- Awarded more than \$23,000 in Strategic Growth grants to support five important and inspiring projects. Read about the projects [here](#).
- Created the Archival Workers Emergency Fund to provide financial assistance for archival workers experiencing acute, unanticipated financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since establishment of the fund on April 15, 2020, SAAF has collected \$132,000 (in addition to \$21,000 in SAAF seed money) and awarded AWEF grants to 176 individuals.
- Provided financial support (“travel awards”) to 81 individuals to cover the \$49 registration fee for the 2020 SAA Annual Meeting.
- Continued to fund the Ham and Mosaic scholarships (at \$5,000 each); the Banks, Holmes, Peterson, and Pinkett travel awards; and SAA’s awards program.

Of special note is the status of the Mosaic Scholarship Fund. The Fund was completely drawn down as of 2016. Since then, a concerted effort has been made to replenish and grow it, with a focus on this Fund in several fundraising initiatives conducted in September (“Back to School”). In addition, we have just received an anonymous \$10,000 donation to the Mosaic Scholarship Fund, bringing the current balance to \$86,000.

2021 Strategic Growth Grants

With staff assistance in providing an automated review and ranking process, the Foundation Grant Review Committee evaluated 24 letters of inquiry and invited nine grant proposals in the 2021 cycle (compared with eleven proposals in 2020, twelve in 2019, nine in 2018, and three in 2017). At our April 20 meeting, the Foundation Board approved expenditure of \$24,325 from the Strategic Growth Fund for six grant awards.

Annual Meeting Award

The Board has renamed the Annual Meeting Travel Award, deleting the word “Travel” to reflect the likelihood of at least hybrid—if not fully virtual—SAA Annual Meetings going forward. At our April meeting we agreed to provide \$6,000 to support up to 122 conference attendees’ registration fees at the \$49 rate. We will implement a streamlined application and review process for the 2021 conference.

Archival Workers Emergency Fund

The Board decided at our April 2021 meeting to extend the Archival Workers Emergency Fund until December 31, 2021, while we continue to examine the legal implications of making it permanent or retooling it in some way. Sly will appoint a small task force comprising Board members and representatives of the Organizing Committee to work with staff and legal counsel on options. In the meantime, applications to the Fund have slowed considerably while donations remain strong. Because the AWEF grant includes a one-year complimentary membership in SAA, we will be monitoring the extent to which grant recipients renew their memberships.

Nominating Committee

To broaden participation in the Foundation Board, the Nominating Committee initiated a call for self-nominations this year. Seven individuals applied for five slots (four rotational vacancies plus the mid-term vacancy of Sharmila Bhatia, who will become SAA and SAAF Treasurer in August). The Nominating Committee will forward its recommended slate to the Board for review and the Board will forward its recommendations to the Council for election. Foundation Board transitions take place in August, per SAA’s typical schedule.

Selection of a Development Consultant

At its November 11, 2020, meeting, the SAAF Board of Directors approved a request for proposals (RFP) to be issued to prospective development consultants. The RFP specified the following components of a consulting engagement:

1. Conduct an audit of current SAA Foundation development efforts, including a review of previous fundraising approaches and results. (No more than 20% of total effort.)
2. Explore the extent to which archivists and archival organizations are likely to give to the SAA Foundation, taking into account the needs and perspectives of multiple generations of archivists. (Approximately 30% of total effort.)
3. Propose short- and mid-term plans to increase and enhance the Foundation’s development efforts, including via periodic generation-specific appeals, a planned giving program, a monthly giving program, and solicitation of funding from external agencies/organizations. (Approximately 50% of total effort.)
4. Recommend an appropriate staffing plan.

After gathering the names of consulting firms from Board members, the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and other sources, the SAA Foundation office issued the RFP to 11

development consultants on December 2, 2020, with a response deadline of December 31. Seven consulting firms responded to the RFP.

The Development Consultant Review Team (Sharmila Bhatia, Michele Hagen, Dennis Meissner, and Margery Sly, with staff support from Nancy Beaumont) completed individual rankings, met to discuss the proposals, conducted interviews with three firms, completed reference checks, and recommended unanimously that the Foundation work with Schultz & Williams, a Philadelphia-based, women-founded firm. The Board approved that recommendation. We hope to begin work with S&W in mid-May.

As always, we are happy to respond to any questions or comments.