

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
August 6, 2012
San Diego, California**

**Action Item: Criteria for SAA
Representation to External Organizations
(Prepared by: Terry Baxter)**

BACKGROUND

Jackie Dooley presented a discussion item to the Council at its June 8-10 meeting about issues related to SAA representation in external organizations (0612-IV-E). The Council discussed existing relationships, standards for describing how representation currently works, communication problems with representatives, and whether SAA needs representatives to other groups.

The discussion began with a request to determine “which, if any” external groups should be dropped. It evolved into a desire to identify reasons why SAA should have representation in external organizations. The Council asked two members—Baxter and Kate Theimer—to prepare a draft set of criteria for SAA representation in external organizations for discussion at the August 6, 2012, Council meeting.

DISCUSSION

Current Situation

The SAA Constitution and Governance Manual lay out the existing parameters of SAA’s interests in external collaboration. The Constitution states in Section II (Objectives):

The Society of American Archivists is a professional organization established to provide a means for effective cooperation among persons concerned with the documentation of human experience; to stimulate and to publish the results of research in archival administration and records management; to promote the adoption of sound principles and standards by all public and private agencies responsible for the preservation and administration of records; to foster a better public understanding of the nature and value of archival operations and holdings; to develop professional standards, particularly for the training of archivists, records managers, and custodians of private papers, and to improve the facilities and increase the opportunities for such training; to maintain and strengthen relations with historians, librarians, educators, public administrators, and others in allied disciplines; and to cooperate with other professional organizations, cultural and educational institutions, and international organizations having mutual interests in the preservation and use of recorded heritage.

The Governance Manual, [Section XI, Official Representatives and Coalitions](#), describes the current roles and duties of representatives. They can be summarized as:

- Attendance at meetings;
- Reporting to the SAA Council about each meeting;
- Providing an annual report to the SAA Council;
- Consulting with SAA elected leadership about issues that warrant it.

The Manual also contains some broad criteria, under the general rubric of “a wide variety of groups engaged in archival, library, research, and other educational work,” for selecting groups for representation:

- “funding and policy agencies”;
- “professional associations”;
- “groups with a very specific agenda.”

Section XI has not been changed in twenty years. Current representatives are listed in a linked page, with individual descriptions of varying specificity linked to that page. SAA does not currently pay any costs associated with representation on external groups.

Proposed Criteria

Criteria for selecting representatives to external groups reflect the balance between transparency, efficiency, and adaptability. Members should be able to understand why SAA is sending representative(s) to a group; it should be straightforward for staff and the Council (especially the Vice President) to manage representatives; and it should be simple to add or remove representation as needed.

The following criteria are offered as building blocks to be incorporated in the overhaul of the Governance Manual to be conducted by Baxter, Kaplan, and Landis this year.

1. The external group’s mission must relate to SAA’s mission as stated in SAA’s Constitution.
2. The external group must be a government agency or a nonprofit organization.
3. Representation on the group must not require any funding except for staff and member time.
4. A formal request for representation must be made from either the external group or from an SAA body. The request must include the following information:
 - a. Group name
 - b. Group mission
 - c. Number of representatives and length of their terms
 - d. Duties of representatives

- e. Reporting requirements
- f. Group mechanics (number of meetings, locations, etc.)
- g. Relationship to standing SAA bodies
- h. Group contact information
- i. A sunset review date

Requests for representation must be approved by the Council before representation begins.

- 5. The Council will review sunseting groups annually and recommend whether to renew representation.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the following criteria for selecting representatives to external groups be adopted and incorporated into the Governance Manual, Section XI:

1. The external group's mission must relate to SAA's mission as stated in SAA's Constitution.
2. The external group must be a government agency or a nonprofit organization.
3. Representation on the group must not require any funding except for staff and member time.
4. A formal request for representation must be made from either the external group or an SAA body. The request must include the following information:
 - a. Group name
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 - e. Reporting requirements
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Requests for representation must be approved by the Council before representation begins.

- 5. The Council will review sunseting groups annually and recommend whether to renew representation.

Support Statement: Representation to external groups should be transparent, efficient, and adaptable and should promote the mission and objectives of SAA.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: There is no impact on SAA's strategic priorities.

Fiscal Impact: No direct fiscal impact. Requires both startup and ongoing staff time.