

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
January 25 - 27, 2012  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Report: Membership Committee  
(Prepared by Rachel Vagts, Chair)**

**BACKGROUND**

Per the Membership Committee's Council-approved guidelines, the chair and vice chair must submit an annual report to the Council by December 31.

**REPORT**

**1. Annual Meeting: Chicago, Illinois**

During the Annual Meeting, the Membership Committee sponsored a breakfast for the Key Contacts, a mentor/mentee coffee break, and the Career Center. In addition, we moved the breakfast for New Members to an evening reception and had a very nice turn-out of new members, Membership Committee members, SAA leaders, and other interested people.

The Membership Committee met August 23, 2011, with eight members attending, in addition to a number of *ex officio* members and other guests being present.

Committee Chair Adriana Cuervo reviewed the committee charge, incoming appointed members, and existing standing subcommittees. The Mentoring Program Subcommittee had a vacancy for co-chair, which had to be filled by a member of the committee. Teresa Mora was appointed co-chair (with Lisa Carter) of the Mentoring Program Subcommittee.

Cuervo also presented the 2010 Membership Committee Report.

Vice Chair Rachel Vagts presented an overview of the Key Contact Program, its history, and functions. A survey of Key Contact District Representatives was conducted in June and July 2011 to poll subcommittee members about the desired objectives of the program and what adjustments to procedures, if any, should be implemented to enhance and sustain program performance. Ideas presented during discussion included:

- Send periodic reports to KCs on *all* members in their state/region so that they know who's in their area.
- Develop a KC information/orientation packet that provides general and comprehensive information about the Society and a "cheat sheet" to answer frequently asked questions.

- Provide financial incentives for recruiting new members?
- Select members in good standing at random and periodically contact those members to ask, “How are things going?”

The revision of the program was passed unanimously.

## **2. Survey of SAA Membership**

The SAA office was directed by the Council to conduct a survey of the membership. In October, SAA staff member Brian Doyle was in communication with the Membership Committee for comment on a draft of the survey. Comments were shared by the committee and incorporated into the final version of the survey instrument. The survey will be conducted in early 2012.

## **3. Changes to Institutional Membership**

The Membership Committee forwarded their recommendation regarding changes to institutional membership benefits. It was the recommendation of the committee that primary contacts not be eligible to hold office, but rather the person should hold an individual membership. This matter was scheduled for a vote at the Annual Membership Meeting in August 2011, but was tabled by the body.

## **4. Mentoring (Teresa Mora and Lisa Carter)**

### ***Administering the Mentoring Program***

As of December 7, 2011, there were a total of 66 protégés and 58 mentor volunteers active in the program. Of these, 5 protégés are waiting to be matched, 4 of whom have indicated they will wait for a geographic match and 1 having applied for the program in December. Of the 58 mentors, 54 are currently matched and 7 mentors currently mentor more than one protégé (a total of 11 of our mentors have indicated an ability to take on more than one protégé). At this time, protégés are matched with mentors generally within two weeks of application. Efforts in this behalf on the part of the Subcommittee in the past year have included:

- Reviewing the lists of protégés and mentors to identify individuals in current active matches or awaiting match.
- Articulating the benefits and expectations of both mentors and protégés on the SAA website.
- Promoting the mentor program and making calls to the membership for mentors
- Collecting biographical and professional information from mentors and protégés that have allowed the 7 member subcommittee to make over 50 effective matches.
- Updating spreadsheets to keep track of matches and manage the mentoring program.

Additionally, on August 25, 2011, the subcommittee hosted the Mentoring Program Meet-and-Greet in the Networking Café at the Annual Meeting of SAA to allow mentors and protégées to meet one another in person.

## *Defining the Program and Other Substantive Tasks*

In the past few months, the subcommittee, led by senior co-chair Lisa Carter, has worked to review its role and how best to increase productivity and meet the needs of membership. In as much, the co-chairs met with Brian Doyle via conference call in October to discuss how the subcommittee might take advantage of the Drupal site. Brian is developing a Web form for prospective mentors and protégées that will automatically populate applicant information in the Drupal database which can then be exported to an Excel spreadsheet. This should make the information management aspect of subcommittee work less cumbersome as members currently do this work by hand.

The subcommittee met via conference call in December to discuss the current workflow; tailoring the application process to cull out lone arrangers and records managers (as requested by their respective roundtables); and how best to use Drupal in managing the program.

### **5. Career Center (Renna Tuten)**

The Career Center was open on Wednesday, August 24, through Saturday, August 27. Twenty-three archivists volunteered their time to “man” the table for 33 shifts. The volunteers recorded 76 interactions, distributed as follows:

Wednesday - 8  
Thursday - 38  
Friday - 19  
Saturday - 11

After the meeting, a poll was created using the free SurveyMonkey online survey tool. The questions duplicated those from previous years and inquired as to what services attendees were looking for, whether the opening times and location were convenient, how helpful the services provided were, and solicited suggestions for improvement. An additional question was added this year to see if knowing who would be staffing the center and their area of archival expertise had an impact on an attendee’s decision to visit.

The summarized answers are below.

Question 1: What services and information were you looking for at the Career Center?

Resume Advice: 12  
Cover Letter Advice: 4  
Job Openings: 3  
Career Advice: 7  
Location for employers and potential employees to meet: 2  
Place to look at resumes/post employment opportunities: 1

Question 2: Were the Career Center and Networking Cafe open at hours convenient for you?

Was the location convenient and easy to find?

Hours Convenient?

Yes: 100.0% (19)

No: 0.0% (0)

Location Convenient?

Yes: 100.0% (19)

No: 0.0% (0)

Question 3: Did you speak to the archivist staffing the career center?

Yes: 73.7% (14)

No: 26.3% (5)

Question 4: How satisfied were you with the answers you received?

Not Satisfied: 0.0%

Somewhat Satisfied: 6.7% (1)

Satisfied: 33.3% (5)

Very Satisfied: 60.0% (9)

Answered question: 15

Skipped question: 4

Question 5: Did knowing who would be staffing the Career Center and their area of expertise help you when planning when to stop in?

Yes: 31.3% (5)

No: 68.8% (11)

Answered question: 16

Skipped question: 3

Question 6: What suggestions do you have for improving this service next year?

- a) Make it easier to find out who is staffing the career center at what times. I knew a list had been made, and I looked on the SAA conference website, but I couldn't find the list. Also, I'd like to know what qualifications an archivist must have in order to help at the career center. Can anyone who wants to do it sign up, or does it have to be someone with actual hiring experience?
- b) I loved knowing who would be there and what they specialized in, and went to Arlene (recommended by a friend) who was great! Last year, I went and didn't get much good advice. But this year I feel I got a lot of useful tips and information.
- c) Practice interviews?

- d) Have more people staffing the desk. As an out of work archivist, this service was the highlight of the conference for me.
- e) I had to wait about an hour to talk to the archivist. It was worth the wait, but I wish there had been a polite way to let the archivist know I was waiting to talk to her. I would also recommend including information about the experience level of the archivist staffing the Career Center (maybe New/Mid-Career/Experienced?).
- f) As an employer it would have been very helpful to have been able to set up "office hours" at the career center in order to meet people interested in our open positions. Something like a notice that said "meet this employer here from 3-4 to learn more about this position."
- g) There was quite a bit of wait-time when I went. Perhaps next year there could be a time slot sign-up, particularly when it is expected to be a busy time, like around lunchtime.
- h) None.
- i) Might be good to have an orientation early in the conference for people who "might" have opportunities or jobs. I didn't see this kind of meeting in the program, and I was busy at other points in the conference so couldn't really easily check in.
- j) It would be nice for there to be a printer available so that we can print out copies of our resumes once we have received feedback.

Recommendations of the SAA Career Center Coordinator:

- 1) From the numbers and comments, I recommend that the days and hours of operation remain the same. The drop in numbers from Wednesday in 2010 to Wednesday in 2011 is something to keep any eye on in 2012 and might merit action at the 2013 meeting.
- 2) The response from volunteers was immediate and enthusiastic and all slots were filled within a matter of weeks. The volunteer pool was solicited from previous volunteers and the SAA Leaders List rather than the membership at large. The work experience was not as diverse as we hoped as the vast majority of volunteers were from the academic sector. Heavier recruitment needs to take place in the future in the areas of corporate archivists, NARA archivists, and records managers.
- 3) Advertising the areas of expertise from the volunteers was something participants had asked for in past post-meeting surveys. In the current survey, roughly one third stated that this information did help them in planning their conference experience. I think it is a good thing to continue doing, especially if archivists in work areas other than academia participate.
- 4) The survey responses using an online survey tool (SurveyMonkey) numbered much higher than just sending questions out to the listservs in the past. While we have received around 7 responses in 2010 and 2009, 2011 alone received 19 responses. An online survey mechanism should be continued if at all possible in the future.

Larissa Woo will be taking over the coordination of the Career Center in 2012.

Respectfully submitted  
Renna Tuten  
6 October 2011

The Committee accepted the Career Center report and will take into consideration the three recommendations made by out-going chair Renna Tuten. We thank her for her diligent service to SAA and the Membership Committee and particularly her careful stewardship of the Career Center project.

## **6. Key Contact Program (Elizabeth Scott)**

The Key Contact Program consists of 12 geographic districts, with each district represented by a District Representative. The Representatives work with appointed Key Contacts to reach out to SAA's membership, mainly greet new members, and welcome them to the organization. Since the Annual Meeting, 58 Key Contacts have reached out to over 300 new members, welcoming them into SAA and offering a personalized and regional contact for support and questions. This is an important component of the continued strength of SAA, as we strive to provide connections that turn new members into long-term members of the organization. According to November 2011 year-to-date financials, membership dues are 2.3% higher than last year, due in some part to the work of the Key Contacts.

## **Conclusion**

The Membership Committee continues to strive to maintain a strong connection between the organization and its members. We continue to improve both the mentoring program and the services provided by the Career Center at the Annual Meeting. In addition, we believe that the changes to the Key Contact program will make it sustainable for the coming years and to remain an effective way to reach out to our new members as well as to identify others who may want to become members of the Society. We remain interested in how members feel about the Society and are eagerly awaiting the results of the Membership Survey. In addition, Chair Rachel Vagts is serving on the Annual Meeting Task Force as the Social Responsibility Subgroup chair.