

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
June 8 – 10, 2012
Chicago, Illinois**

**Discussion Item: SAA Nominating Process
(Prepared by: Deborra Richardson and Tom Frusciano)**

BACKGROUND

The SAA Nominating Committee met several times between June 2011 and February 2012 by phone and also during the 2011 Annual Meeting in Chicago in August. The committee included Adriana Cuervo (Chair), Rebekah Kim and Kelcy Shepherd (elected members), and Council members Tom Frusciano and Deborra Richardson.

Cuervo led a well-organized process for the duration of the nomination proceedings. As stated in the SAA Governance Manual, the committee is tasked with bringing to the SAA membership a balanced slate of candidates “in terms of gender, geographical area, types and size of candidate’s repositories, and professional interests.” In the early stages of the process, it became clear to the committee that it could have benefited from more structure and standard guidelines. There appeared to be no standards used to select the candidates other than personal knowledge of the candidates by those who submitted names or by members of the committee. Also, few candidates had put themselves forward, and often, those who had did not adequately explain their qualifications for the position. And finally, the Committee had different opinions about the level of experience and expertise needed for candidates who could be approached to fill the slate. While it is true that SAA is a membership organization with volunteers who stand for these elections, it is also true the Society needs good leaders to keep moving in a forward direction.

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

While the Committee did come up with a strong slate of candidates, the group had a few recommendations to bring to Council’s attention for consideration:

- Set standard levels of experience for the positions. For example:

Vice president/president-elect candidates should have a certain level of experience within SAA, including a minimum number of years as an SAA member; previous service on the Council; leadership positions within the organization such as Section or Roundtable chairship; membership on SAA committees, boards, task forces, and working groups. The candidates should also demonstrate leadership experience within the archival profession.

Candidates for the Council should also be members of SAA, have served in leadership positions within the organization, and have made contributions to the archival profession.

Candidates for Treasurer should have demonstrated experience with financial policy and planning, budgets, auditing, and investments and endowments.

Prospective Nominating Committee members should have worked with the organization for a number of years, be familiar with the governance structure of SAA, and be familiar with Society members.

- Require potential candidates to submit a brief statement on their archival background and service to SAA (membership on committees, boards, task forces, and working groups; leadership positions held in Sections and Roundtables).
- Suggest that potential candidates submit a photograph along with their biographical statement to help further identify themselves.

Implementation of some level of standards through this process would make nominations more transparent and could save time and angst in bringing forth a more diverse slate of qualified candidates.

Fiscal Impact: There are no financial implications other than the time of the committee members and the potential candidates.¹

¹ *Staff note:* Soft impact includes project management of staff assigned to collect, compile, and communicate candidate information. There is also a potential concern about any perceived staff involvement in a member-driven nomination process.