

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
August 10, 2009
Austin, Texas**

**ALA/SAA Joint Statement on Access Review Task Force:
Resolution to Disband Task Force
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BACKGROUND

The members of the ALA/SAA Joint Statement on Access Review Task Force were appointed in October 2007 by SAA President Mark Greene, who provided the following charge:

“Prepare a statement for the Council's consideration that addresses as comprehensively as possible the issues and policies related to researcher access to archives and manuscripts collections (commonly referred to as manuscript collections, special collections, and archives) owned or maintained by a clearly defined set of repository types (it is unclear at this point whether the statement is meant to apply to all repositories, including for example business archives and other private organizational archives such as churches, or instead to only a subset of repositories, e.g. college and university libraries, archives, and special collections, state and local public and private historical societies, independent research libraries, state and local libraries and archives, federal archives, records centers, and presidential libraries).

“SAA task force members should consciously represent the interests, concerns, experience, and practice of the range of repositories to be affected by the statement, even though the members may not directly represent all of those repository types.

“The statement should make clear what material and what repositories are to be governed by it, whether the statement is meant to be guidelines/recommendations versus standards, and the relationship of the statement to other relevant documents (such as ethics statements).

“The statement should explicitly take note of intellectual property issues, privacy and confidentiality issues, freedom of information issues, equality of access issues, and issues raised by the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials, among others; however, the Task Force can elect to consider one or more of these issues outside its purview so long as an explanation to that effect is provided.

“Development and discussion of the statement should follow guidelines for the development of SAA Standards regardless of whether the statement will be formally considered a standard, to ensure a process of wide dissemination and comment before final consideration by governing bodies.

“The statement should be fully cognizant of, but need not directly build on, previous iterations of the statement.”

According to the charge:

“The original ALA-SAA Joint Statement on Access to Original Research Materials in Libraries, Archives, and Manuscript Repositories was developed jointly in 1978 by the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of ACRL and the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Committee on Reference and Access Policies (*C&RL News* 40, April 1979, pp. 111-12).

“In response to a request for periodic review by ACRL, RBMS established a Committee on Access Guidelines, chaired by Robert Blesse, in 1993. This committee prepared an initial revision and then referred the document to the ALA/SAA Joint Committee in 1994. A final compilation was prepared by a working group appointed by the Joint Committee. Members of the working group were Mark Vargas (chair), Cathy Henderson, Timothy Murray, and Elena Danielson.

“In 2006, an RBMS committee, chaired by William Joyce, was created to prepare an initial revision mandated by ALA standards policies. When that draft was brought to the attention of SAA, a new joint task force was formed to complete work on a major revision, to be submitted to both SAA and ALA standards committees/boards for review prior to review by governing boards. The 2007 task force is composed of six members, including two co-chairs, three members each from RBMS and SAA.”

The Task Force’s charge was fulfilled with the Council’s adoption of a revised ALA/SAA Joint Statement on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections Libraries in May 2009.

DISCUSSION

The ALA/SAA Joint Statement on Access was reviewed and approved at the May/June 2009 Council Meeting and subsequently posted to the SAA website.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Council disband with thanks the ALA/ SAA Joint Statement on Access Review Task Force, having fulfilled its charge in May 2009, and adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS the ALA/SAA Access Review Task Force was appointed in October 2007 to prepare a statement for the Council’s consideration, addressing as comprehensively as possible the issues and polices related to researcher access to archives and manuscripts collections owned or maintained by a clearly defined set of repository types; and

WHEREAS the ALA/SAA Task Force members consciously represented the interests, concerns, experience, and practice of the range of repositories to be

affected by the statement, even though the members may not have directly represented all of those repository types; and

WHEREAS the Joint Statement on Access clearly defines which material and which repositories are to be governed by it and is intended to be a set of guidelines or recommendations rather than a set of standards; and

WHEREAS the Joint Statement on Access explicitly takes note of intellectual property issues, privacy and confidentiality issues, freedom of information issues, equality of access issues, and issues raised by the *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials*, among others; and

WHEREAS the development and discussion of the Joint Statement on Access followed guidelines for the development of SAA standards, regardless of whether the Statement was to be formally considered a standard, to ensure a process of wide dissemination and comment before final consideration by governing bodies; and

WHEREAS the Joint Statement on Access represents full cognizance of previous iterations of the original ALA/SAA Joint Statement on Access to Original Research Materials in Libraries, Archives, and Manuscript Repositories developed jointly in 1978 by the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of Association of College and Research Libraries and the Society of American Archivists Committee on Reference and Access Policies; and

WHEREAS the Joint Statement on Access was presented for review and approval to both the SAA Council and the ALA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section and Standards and Accreditation Committee; and

WHEREAS, following broad distribution of comments and drafts to the archives and library communities, the document represents a consensus among archives and library professionals and is consistent with the SAA Code of Ethics for Archivists; and

WHEREAS the ALA/SAA Joint Statement on Access was approved by the SAA Council in May 2009; and

WHEREAS the ALA/SAA Joint Statement on Access Review Task Force fulfilled its charge;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Council of the Society of American Archivists hereby disbands the ALA/SAA Joint Statement on Access Review Task Force with thanks.

Support Statement: The ALA/SAA Joint Statement on Access was approved by the Council, performed shared work supported by both ALA and SAA, and should be disbanded with thanks by the Council.

Fiscal Impact: None.

