

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

**Discussion Item: Feedback on SAA's Strategic Priorities  
(Compiled by SAA Staff)**

**BACKGROUND**

At its February and May 2009 meetings, the SAA Council reviewed, discussed, and modified SAA's strategic priorities and developed new "desired outcomes" and activities to address the priorities in fiscal years 2010–2013. Council members agreed to retain the top three strategic priorities – technology, diversity, and public awareness/advocacy – that were originally identified as challenges to the profession in 2005, but chose to revise the issue statement associated with each priority. Their discussions, as well as work done by a subgroup of Council members and staff in March and April, yielded new desired outcomes for each priority and new measurable activities to address them.

Since then, SAA has sought feedback – from members, component groups, allied groups, and others - on the strategic priorities, outcomes, and activities using various media, including the homepage (beginning on June 9), *In the Loop*, the SAA Facebook page and Twitter, and *Archival Outlook*. (See reference materials for this Agenda Item.)

This report is a compilation of member feedback received as of August 1, 2009. It is likely that additional comments will be received during the annual meeting. Discussion of the Strategic Priorities is also on the August 15 Council meeting agenda.

**To: SAA Headquarters / From: SAA Diversity Committee / 6/9/09**

The SAA Diversity Committee would like to thank the SAA Council for making this document available. The committee reviewed the draft priorities and has the following comments. The commentary only discusses areas that have an impact on the Committee's or SAA's activities related to diversity. Please feel free to contact committee members or the committee chair for more information on any item.

Terry Baxter, Chair  
SAA Diversity Committee

**Strategic Priority #1: Technology**

- The draft issue statement and desired outcomes #1 and #2 do not talk much about what kinds of documentation are needed. While documentation strategies approaches are not

necessarily technology related, there might be value in determining what types of information are needed and how best existing and emerging technologies can provide that information. For instance, the desire to document the Twitter flow related to the Iranian protests is not just a technological issue. It also relates to what constitutes adequate documentation.

- Desired outcome #3 proposes the use of technology to improve communications with internal and external audiences. This proposal must include better ways for including the large numbers of SAA members who do not/can not attend the annual conferences in both the activities of and the governance of the society. Items d-g are steps in the right direction and if implemented, will move the society towards greater inclusiveness. The Committee would encourage the Council to continue to seek ways to extend participation opportunities, especially in governance of the society, even more broadly among its members.

## **Strategic Priority #2: Diversity**

- The committee strongly supports the expansion of the Mosaic Scholarships (desired outcome #1) and agrees that the program will benefit both the recipients and the society. Way to go!

- Desired outcome #2 calls for assisting archives and archivists in diversifying the documentary record. A key to this goal is developing relationships with other groups who can assist archivists in identifying, preserving, and making available documentary records. Activity e discusses partnering with communities. This is a smart plan, but this outcome should also explicitly state the need for partnering with associated professionals. The documentary record, especially for traditionally under documented groups, can be fragmentary. As SAA develops tools and strategies to assist archivists, they should insure that they have an interdisciplinary focus that encourages work with librarians, curators, historians, and other groups with related concerns and responsibilities.

- Desired outcome #3 on managing cultural property is a needed extension of the work of this Committee regarding the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials Forum. As the time frame for the two initiatives overlap significantly, this Committee wants to ensure that the work of the two groups remains consistent and will work with the Council in whatever way is necessary to do so.

- Desired outcome #4 seeks to determine ways for SAA to become a more inclusive organization. The Council has not adopted any actions pending further discussion. The following are items this Committee believes the Council should consider as it develops activities under this outcome.

- ♦ SAA should seek to develop more formal relationships with regional archival organizations, with allied professional associations, and with local community organizations that, while not professionally affiliated, maintain archives about their

community. These groups, in addition to having potential members in their ranks, can also assist in implementing diversity initiatives at a local level.

- ◆ The Council should continue to direct the Membership Committee to continue its efforts to develop recruitment methods that encourage the broadest representation of the profession. The Diversity Committee, though its *ex officio* membership on the Membership Committee, will help in any way.
- ◆ The Council should consider the role of para-professionals in its discussions of inclusivity. Most diversity efforts to date have focused on professional archivists. Para-professionals and other individuals doing archival work, but without archival education, training, or credentials could be made welcome in SAA. The Committee believes that welcoming para-professionals into the organization would both enrich the experience of the para-professional archivist and diversify the SAA community – to the benefit of all involved.
- ◆ The Council should develop ways to highlight diverse collections within member repositories. This could be done on the SAA website, through publications, or through presentations. Promoting collections would actually help meet this desired outcome as well as promoting a more diverse documentary record (desired outcome #2). It could also be done in a way that relates to the activities in desired outcome #4, activities a and b.
- ◆ The Council should hold a summit/forum of some sort involving the SAA Council, the Diversity Committee, and the chairs of SAA subunits (roundtables, committees, sections, working groups, etc). The meeting should be a guided discussion designed to allow the subunits to voice their diversity needs and concerns to the Council and the Diversity Committee.
- ◆ The Diversity Committee would like to develop a survey in between the 2009 and 2010 meetings to assess the membership's attitudes about, needs related to, understanding of, and plans about diversity. The Committee would assess survey data and report that assessment as well as recommendations for action based on that assessment to the Council.

### **Strategic Priority #3: Public Awareness/Advocacy**

- Regarding Desired Outcome #3 about a common values statement: This is probably an outgrowth of past president Mark Greene's address on common values and the need for a values statement. This would be a valuable addition to the archives canon, but the Committee would advise Council to tread carefully and to be as inclusive as possible in the development of this statement. Without broad vetting among all segments of the membership, there is potential for something either watered down and meaningless or precise and divisive.

**To: SAA Headquarters / 7/8/09**

Missing from SAA's strategic agenda are the challenges and opportunities associated with the converging missions of archives, libraries, and museums.

At a data curation institute that I recently attended, library school faculty members argued that library science—not archival science—is the discipline best positioned to assume the responsibilities associated with digital curation. For some years now, academic libraries have been operating institutional repositories and expanding their collection policies to include material that traditionally would have been collected by institutions' repositories (i.e., archives).

Archivists and archives have an opportunity to assume broader roles within their institutions, as unique local collections become increasingly significant, and beyond, as collective solutions are sought for the management of uniform universal collections.

**To: Frank Boles and Peter Gottlieb / 7/13/09**

I am writing to express a few concerns and comments regarding the draft SAA "Strategic Priority Outcomes and Activities, FY 2010 - FY 2013," as posted on the SAA website. I write as a SAA member, not in my official capacity as chair of CEPC, although that perspective may influence my ideas. My prior experience as SAA president, and my more recent research and writing for the book "Archives Power: Memory, Accountability, and Social Justice," also provide background for my concerns.

1. Under priority 2, "Diversity," I think SAA needs to address the "Protocols for Native American Archival Materials." This is implied (very indirectly) in "desired outcome #3" but I think it needs to be acknowledged specifically and addressed directly, even though there is significant disagreement within the profession about how to respond to the Protocols.

2. Under priority #3, "Public Awareness / Advocacy," I think that the issue statement should give more emphasis to citizens' rights, accountability, and access. Promoting archives should be a means to these important societal goals, rather than the central objective. This could be done by putting the latter clauses of the statement before the initial clauses: e.g., "Archivists must protect the accessibility of archival records that serve cultural functions as well as ensure ..., by taking an active role in promoting ... and obtain the necessary resources."

In most other respects I think this statement of strategic priorities reflects important concerns for the profession and for SAA. Keep up the good work!

Please pass my comments along to whoever is compiling such comments on this issue. And feel free to circulate or publicize this as you see fit.

**To: SAA Headquarters / From: Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable (LAGAR) / 7/20/09**

Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable (LAGAR) is pleased to submit the attached comments regarding the draft "Society of American Archivists Strategic Priority Outcomes and Activities, FY 2010 – FY 2013" in anticipation of Council's August 10 meeting. Although we are supportive of all three strategic priorities, all of our comments concern Strategic Priority #2: Diversity.

If you have any questions regarding the attached document, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Yours very truly,  
Bonita Weddle, Co-chair, LAGAR

The Steering Committee of the Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable (LAGAR) appreciates having this opportunity to review SAA's draft "Strategic Priority Outcomes and Activities, FY 2010 – FY 2013." We are glad that SAA will continue to address the challenges of electronic records and the need to advocate for archives and archivists, and we are particularly pleased that SAA remains committed to the goal of ensuring that the archival profession and the archival record accurately reflect the diversity of American society.

Strategic Priority No. 2: Diversity aligns closely with LAGAR's own mission and goals, and in the interest of ensuring that the strategic planning process is a success, the LAGAR Steering Committee is advancing the following suggestions:

1. Council should offer a clear and succinct definition of "diversity." Although we understand that Council may be reluctant to do so, at present it is hard to determine precisely what SAA means when it speaks of "diversity." In the absence of such a definition, it will be difficult for SAA to assess its progress or develop appropriate, measurable outcomes. Moreover, a careful reading of this draft document inevitably leads one to conclude that the eligibility criteria for the Mosaic Scholarship—an initiative that LAGAR supports—constitute SAA's de facto definition of diversity.

In the interest of ensuring that the archival profession and the documentary record fully reflect the diversity of American society, we strongly suggest that Council look to the recently revised and much more inclusive SAA Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy ([http://www.archivists.org/governance/handbook/app\\_b.asp#equal](http://www.archivists.org/governance/handbook/app_b.asp#equal)). If Council opts to do so, it could simply incorporate a hyperlink to this policy statement within the "Strategic Priority Outcomes and Activities, FY 2010 – FY 2013" document.

2. Council should expand its efforts to increase diversity within the archival profession beyond the Mosaic Scholarship program to include other individuals covered by SAA's Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy.

3. The “measurable activities” outlined under Desired Outcomes Nos. 2 and 3 should be expanded to include working with roundtables and sections as appropriate. From its inception, LAGAR has sought to bridge the gaps between the archival profession and self-taught, community-based archivists who care for materials documenting LGBT people and organizations. We have produced an online manual for community-based archivists that provides basic information about identifying, acquiring, preserving, and providing access to LGBT archival materials and an online guide to LGBT collections held in repositories throughout North America. We encourage community-based archivists to attend LAGAR’s annual meetings, subscribe to LAGAR’s listserv, and to join SAA and other archival professional organizations, and when possible we hold our annual meetings at community-based archives.

Other roundtables and sections also have worked to overcome the divisions that sometimes separate the archival profession from records creators, increase the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the historical record, and ensure that cultural property is managed appropriately. Roundtables and sections can and should be encouraged to make distinctive contributions to the effort to increase diversity within SAA.

4. Council should flesh out Desired Outcome No. 4 before this draft document assumes its final form. As noted above, adoption of a brief definition of “diversity” is an important first step in this process and will likely make it much easier for Council to “determine effective ways in which SAA can become a more inclusive organization.”

Thank you once again for allowing LAGAR to comment upon this draft document. We look forward to doing our part to ensure that the historical record and SAA itself reflects the diversity of American society as a whole.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Cartwright and Bonnie Weddle  
Co-chairs, LAGAR

**To: SAA Headquarters / 7/26/09**

## **Strategic Priority #1: Technology**

### **Desired Outcome #1**

I agree with the Council member comments that this should include “emerging standards for imaging and metadata.”

Measurable activities:

Of these, I think (b) is the most important. You might also include news about legislation, products, reports or studies that would be of value to members.

I'm curious why the other activities focus so exclusively on trusted digital repositories. This is not my area of expertise so I can't say whether or not that is the most important area for electronic records, but I suspect it is not. If these activities are not modified before the "final" draft of the plan is issued in the fall, I suggest you include some explanation of why you're focusing so much on the trusted digital repository aspect.

## **Desired Outcome #2**

Measurable activities:

In (e), you might want to re-word this one. It made me wonder how you could test a multi-year coordinated program in the course of one fiscal year.

For (f), I encourage you to tie this one to activity (f) in the next outcome—these educational opportunities should be offered online in some form to maximize their availability.

## **Desired Outcome #3**

I am glad you have updated the plan to include this outcome.

Measurable activities:

(b) I strongly advise you to drop "and the archives profession" from the second part of this group's charge. I think you should keep the scope of this group's work limited to assessing what is needed for SAA, and not broaden it to the whole profession at large. There are other sources of information available about how individual archives are using and can use new technologies. I think you want this group to provide you with new information about what it thinks SAA should be doing. If you intended that the group should also assess the possibilities of new technology for professional networking and information sharing in the profession in general (not necessarily associated with SAA), then I think you just need to re-phrase your statement.

(c) Since SAA already has a presence on two social networking sites (Twitter and Facebook), I think you need to revise this to indicate you will revise and expand on your existing presences and add new ones, as recommended, etc.

(e) This activity should continue in FY 2011-13. I would be extremely disappointed with SAA if this were not done, and expanded on, for every annual meeting. I see no reason why this should not be a regular activity from now on.

(f) I believe that it is critical for the timeline of this activity to be more aggressive. Why can work on this activity not begin in FY2010 (or FY2011, at a minimum)? SAA and its members need this kind of broader participation as soon as possible (particularly in light of related activities such as 1.1.f, above.)

(g) Again, this activity needs to start as soon as possible. I consider it unacceptable that we have to wait to “consider” broadening participation in the Annual Meeting until FY2013. I understand the desire to have this informed by the feedback received from (e) and (f), but there will always be a need for feedback to inform these activities. Strategies for broadening participation can be piloted—in addition to podcasting—at each annual meeting. Although SAA may not be able to host tools like blogs and wikis on its own site until after (d) is completed, there are many other options. Given the shrinking budgets of many SAA members and their institutions, I consider this activity along with (f) as the ones that have the most potential to benefit members, and therefore should be “fast-tracked.”

## **Strategic Priority #2: Diversity**

The activities under this priority do not include any that relate to ensuring the diversity of the users of archives. I will address this concern in my discussion of Priority #3.

### **Desired Outcome #1**

I have no objection to the activities outlined, which focus on the Mosaic Scholarship; however, when I read this I had some concerns. This is not my area of expertise, and I defer to any comments made by those with more experience than I have, but when I read about activities such as “conference attendance, enhanced mentoring, and cohort development,” it made me wonder how I would feel if I were not lucky enough to have won a scholarship and were denied these kinds of opportunities and attention. If part of the point of this priority is to make sure people feel welcome and included in the profession, I wonder whether creating a group that appears to be exclusive is the best way to achieve that. I encourage you to try to ensure that, as much as possible, the benefits you are discussing for mentorship and professional development opportunities are available as widely as possible.

### **Desired Outcome #2**

As stated below, I assume that this RFP will result in a person or group being paid to conduct many of these activities. Where is this money coming from? I think this is a fine idea, but I question whether this is the most critical activity SAA could be funding at this particular time. I will expand on this in my discussion of Priority #3.

Measurable activities:

Activity (a) seems to need a follow-up in which the RFP results in a person or group being given a contract to carry out this project. Right now it just says you’re issuing an RFP. The dates of FY2010-2013 indicate the presumed duration of the project, correct? I would also hope that although the Publications Board would facilitate this project that the Diversity Committee would also be heavily involved.

How many of the following activities outlined below (b-e) will be part of the “project” covered by the contract resulting from the RFP? If this is not part of the plan, who will be responsible for carrying out these activities? Other than (c), I do not see these as being activities that SAA staff would be able to undertake. Please clarify.

I encourage you to include in activity (b) promoting these results more broadly through participating in sessions or information sessions at meetings of regional archives organizations and publishing articles in their newsletters. I think this is an area where SAA can and should demonstrate its value to the profession at large by sharing the information as broadly as possible.

### **Desired Outcomes #3 and #4**

No comments.

### **Strategic Priority #3**

I believe the outcomes and activities in this section should be substantially revised.

### **New Desired Outcome Needed**

SAA should undertake a funded project to learn more about the users of archives—who they are, why they use archives, what they value us for, and how they want to interact with archives in the future. Included with this, or as a separate effort, I think we need a nationwide system for collecting metrics about usage of archives so that we can provide yearly statistics about how many people are benefiting from our institutions services. In my opinion collecting information about the users of archives should be our first priority, above any other kind of study or project (including 2.2 above). Until we have reliable, professional data about our customers (similar to the level of effort we devoted to studying ourselves in A\*CENSUS), I do not think we can have a successful advocacy program. I could go on about this at great length, but I hope you will see the value of what I’m proposing and share my sense of urgency. It would be a major undertaking, but it needs to be done to inform a broad range of the future activities of SAA and the profession as a whole. SAA should not shy away from this because it is too large an undertaking—no one else can or will ever do it, and it needs to be done.

### **Desired Outcome #1**

Measurable activities:

The timeline presented for carrying out the measurable activities appears to me to be unnecessarily long and counterproductive to the goal of carrying out a legislative agenda in FY2010-2013. Specifically, why do we need to wait until FY2011 and FY2012 to develop a timeline and budget? Why can’t this be accomplished in FY2010 along with the rest of the planning? Does this imply that SAA won’t be able to actually support any implementation of the legislative agenda until FY2012? I understand that resources are

limited, but I hope you see my point that if this is a high priority activity for SAA it seems odd that the planning for it is spread across multiple fiscal years.

It would be helpful to see an activity that explicitly shows the activities identified in (b) being carried out.

I think it would also be helpful to include activities for evaluating and revising the legislative agenda on a regular basis—or will that only be done in FY2014, at the beginning of the next 3-year cycle? Council should review it every year, at a minimum, even if it doesn't go out to the membership.

### **Desired Outcomes #2, #3, and #4**

I believe these three outcomes and their activities would be more appropriate as “measurable activities” under one Desired Outcome. I am not sure how to word the new combined outcome, but these all appear to be new nationally coordinated outreach and advocacy activities, most of which would be undertaken under the coordination of the new group identified in 2.a. I think if you review these three outcomes in comparison with the others in this plan, you'll see why this proposal makes sense.

Additionally, I think SAA should consider hiring an additional staff member to support this kind of outreach and public relations activity. I am skeptical about the capability of a volunteer committee to undertake a suite of activities like this, and Nancy does not have unlimited time and energy. Please consider including a proposal to hire an additional staff person, even if that person is only part time or on a limited contract. If these activities are worth doing, they are worth doing well and I think you have a greater chance of that with additional staff support.

### **Measurable activities**

Under Outcome #4, I think that activities (b) and (c) could be re-framed along the lines of the NLB's “I Love My Library” campaign, opening it up as a competition for archives to submit videos about how their resources are used. (I'm not sure we could count on having our users submit videos the way the libraries did.) I think you could also collect written statements (which I assume are intended for something like the “ilovelibraries.org” web site). I think running it as a competition for archives to submit videos—again, focusing on the importance of archives for our users—would be great. (Promote it to students—give a great prize . . . .) As a separate project, you could also run a competition for videos that document why people joined the profession—which I think relates just as much to the Diversity Priority as it does to Technology.

Another new activity that could be under the new Desired Outcome is producing resources and education products that help SAA members develop their own advocacy skills. Larry Hackman mentioned this in his comments on the Advocacy Agenda, and I agree that for many archives the most important advocacy is what they do within their own institutions, building their own base of support. This kind of training requires far

more than just the kinds of things described in Outcome #3. I would like to see this included as a measurable activity.

### **Desired Outcome #5**

This is a great idea. Who is going to do it? This looks like another area where SAA needs to issue an RFP to hire someone to carry out this project. Why would that be done for 2.2 and not here? In my opinion, this should be second in line for funding—after the new user study and before the study in 2.2. This will result in tools SAA members can use to advocate for themselves. It should receive proper support.

Measurable outcomes:

I am bit surprised by how quickly it is predicted this complicated project can be accomplished—deploying a toolkit by FY2012—when compared to the relatively slow timelines in some of the other outcomes. I agree that this should be a priority, but is this schedule realistic with no dedicated resources? Again, I believe this merits a commitment of additional staff resources—whether acquired by RFP or by hiring people with this kind of expertise on a limited basis.

### **Observations about Funding**

I am sure you have noted how often I've said that SAA should be providing additional resources to support new activities. It would be wonderful if these could be funded through grants—as A\*CENSUS was—but I think that's not very likely.

This is a tough time to ask for a dues increase, but I think if you present the membership with a list of concrete activities that will result in products that directly benefit them, you will have a much greater chance of success. Or if SAA can only fund one out of the three projects I've suggested should be run via RFP, let the membership decide which one they want first.

SAA has accomplished a great deal so far using volunteer labor and the wonderful energy and talents of our staff, but if we want to undertake these kinds of new efforts, I think it is time to bring in additional professional resources.

**To: Nancy Beaumont, Frank Boles, Peter Gottlieb / 7/27/09**

First I have to say that it's clear that some good thinking has gone into the latest revisions, and that the Council has identified some sensible priority outcomes and activities. I'm glad to see the top 3 priorities remain unchanged, and that deeper thinking has been applied to each one of them.

One challenge that I think we face is that all three priorities require a level of focus and investment that is very difficult to facilitate with the current staffing structure at SAA. Each one of them could use a dedicated staff member to move us along, but in particular

we could use staff help with Diversity and Public Awareness. At least Technology is an area where we have considerable expertise within SAA member ranks, but Diversity and Public Awareness are both programmatic areas where SAA members do not have a lot of experience or expertise. For example, I see that there is a mention in the Diversity section of charging the SAA Foundation Fundraising Committee to develop a funding stream to support scholarships. I agree that this is an important priority, and it's an effort I should be leading as chair of the committee. But until we get a consultant on board to help us develop our plans, I am not feeling up to the task of leading the thinking on this. As for staff support, there is really no one on Nancy's staff who is fully trained to help us with this effort, and Nancy does not have the bandwidth to take it on herself.

The same goes for Public Awareness. We can try to use volunteers to lead our efforts in Public Awareness, but we really need some expertise to help us move it along. Back in the late 1980s/early 1990s Bruce Bruemmer and I were co-chairs of the now-defunct Public Information Committee, which was the group that tried to tackle these issues on behalf of SAA. We realized as time went on that we weren't a very effective committee, and we took the unusual move of suggesting that our own committee be disbanded.

Perhaps now you might have more success with a volunteer approach, but we felt at the time that we really needed a paid professional to get us anywhere in this area, and we recognized that with all the other budget pressures at SAA, that was not going to happen.

I realize that it's not prudent to suggest that two or three new staff members join the SAA staff to help with these priorities. But perhaps the answer is to plan on consultants to assist with Diversity and with Public Awareness. I know that money has been set aside in the SAA budget to facilitate progress on the top three priorities, but my guess is that the amount of consulting help we can obtain through this funding is very limited. I think that unless we swallow hard and put aside fairly substantial money for each of these priorities, it will be difficult to make progress on them.

Until then, I'm sure we can make some incremental progress toward the bigger vision, but I suspect that it will be difficult to execute on the activities outlined in the plan.

**To: SAA Headquarters/ 7/30/09**

**Priority 1, Outcome 1:** I have a strong reservation about d and e for two reasons. First, we have never seriously considered certifying repositories under the paper regime, why is the digital regime different? (And for that matter, regardless of ISO acceptance, how well accepted by the archival community is the standard?) Second, by certifying digital repositories is there not a serious threat to either a) drawing collections to otherwise inappropriate repositories based solely on the prestige of their "certification" b) splitting collections between paper material going to one repository and digital to another? Third, how do we educate donors about the nuances of certification? That is, how will they know that repository A missed certification by a small and perhaps relatively unimportant degree, while repository B is a trusted digital repository but a poor paper (or mixed media) repository? Overall I would suggest that Outcome 1 is putting the cart before the horse (the horse being Outcomes 2 and 3) and is probably premature.

**Priority 2, Outcome 1.** The measurable activities here do not support the Outcome “including conference attendance, enhanced mentoring, and cohort development.”

**Priority 2, Outcome 2.** There are many “successful existing models,” making measurable activities 1 rather overkill. The problem is commissioning someone to identify and study these successful models (many of which have not been presented in print except perhaps in grant reports), gather related tools, and present them in an article and/or workshop.

**Priority 3, Outcome 1.** Measurable activities d and e assume that advocacy priorities will have a 3-year turn-around, while in fact the pace of many issues will be faster than that. Or perhaps the problem is that the GAWG agenda requires both long-term and short-term priorities. SAA must be more nimble in its advocacy than a 3-year turn-around suggests.

**Priority 3, Outcome 2.** Is the Council aware of the history of the Public Information Committee? Its history and demise should be studied before proposing what sounds like a very similar enterprise. (The last two co-chairs, I believe, were Kathy Marquis and Bruce Bruemmer, both still active in SAA.) Measurable activities b and c could be accomplished by a Council subcommittee.

**Priority 3, Outcome 3.** As much as I applaud the attempt to make direct use of the statement of values, I don’t believe the outcome envisioned here is realistic, simply because of the diversity of archival settings. Who we are, what we do, and value of archives varies quite dramatically between a business archivist and a university manuscripts curator.

**Priority 3, Outcome 5.** This again puts the cart before the horse for many archivists who do not yet understand the importance of return on investment or how to effectively employ it within their institutions. I believe there must be a campaign of some sort, perhaps supported by AO articles, conference sessions, and website sections, to lay the groundwork for the outcome and activities envisioned here.

**To: SAA Headquarters**  
**8/2/09**

## **Strategic Priority #1: Technology**

### **Desired Outcome #1**

**Measurable Activity a:** I am confused by the reference to ISO’s “Trusted Digital Repositories” standard. I was not able to identify any ISO standard by that name. Is this a standard currently under consideration but not yet an official ISO standard? Or, is this actually not an ISO standard but instead a reference to the RLG/NARA partnership that resulted in “Trustworthy Repositories Audit and Certification: Criteria and Checklist.”

**Measurable Activity c:** This activity would be better placed under Desired Outcome #2.  
**New Measurable Activity:** I would relocate Measurable Activity g. from under Desired Outcome #2 up to this section. Soliciting development of additional literature seems to fall under the area of “promulgating standards.” And further, I would suggest publicizing existing literature in addition to soliciting the development of new literature.

### **Desired Outcome #2**

**New Measurable Activity:** I would suggest gathering information and assessing other existing electronic records programs, in addition to evaluating SAA’s own Summer Camp, in order to get a broader perspective on how the Summer Camp and similar programs can be improved and updated to meet the constantly changing needs of attendees.

**New Measurable Activity:** I would suggest exploring partnerships with existing electronic records programs (e.g. University of Arizona’s Digital Information Management Certificate program). Particularly in an age where more content is being delivered online rather than onsite, it may behoove SAA to partner with institutions that already possess a robust infrastructure to accommodate such digital programs.

### **Desired Outcome #3**

**New Measurable Activity:** I would suggest addressing the issue of sustainability of SAA’s ongoing use of current and emerging technologies. There seems to be consideration of policies for use of such technologies by SAA and its members, but no mention of the practical considerations for ensuring continued viability, assessment and continuous improvement, and archiving of appropriate information.

## **Strategic Priority #2: Diversity**

**Desired Outcome #1:** It appears that this outcome is the only one specifically designed to increase the number of archivists from diverse backgrounds. The problem I see with this is that the Mosaic Scholarships, to my mind, won’t actually help to achieve this goal. People are not likely to pursue archives as a profession *because* of these scholarships, though they may be encouraged to remain in the profession once they have completed their degree since there is a mentoring component. The Mosaic program, however, is really all about retention, not recruiting. I think SAA needs to develop programs that will recruit – that will serve to make diverse audiences aware of the archival profession so that they may consider it as a career option. One thing SAA might consider is establishing awards for secondary school and/or college undergraduates. For example, SAA could create an award associated with History Day, given to students who make the best use of archival collections reflecting diverse populations. Or SAA might fund scholarships that support internships for students of diverse backgrounds. What encourages people to enter the archival profession is spending time researching with archival materials and working in archives. SAA needs to develop activities and programs that support and encourage young people of diverse backgrounds to explore archives so that they may then consider an archival career path. Education about archives needs to take place at an earlier age, and SAA must address this need in order to be successful, over the long term, at increasing the number of archivists of diverse

backgrounds. Developing programs that encourage and reward younger people through archival awards and internships should be an additional desired outcome under Strategic Priority #2.

### **Strategic Priority #3: Public Awareness / Advocacy**

**Desired Outcome #2:** Among the opportunities for SAA to increase public awareness of archives and archivists, I think SAA needs to include a more active media relations profile. In order for SAA to gain attention for the profession, SAA's leadership needs to speak out in the media, frequently and regularly, on issues involving archivists and archival records. In the current economic crisis, where are the op ed pieces and letters to the editor expressing concern about budget cuts that will affect the public's ability to gain access to federal, state, and local records? Why is the PAHR effort still just a quiet effort for each archivist to pursue with their local congressional representative? Why, when there are obvious issues of archival concern in the press, is SAA not contacted by major media outlets for comment? SAA is a non-entity, as far as the American public is concerned. A far more aggressive media relations program is necessary, in addition to grassroots and other efforts, in order for archivists to move from the shadows to public awareness. Grassroots efforts alone will not achieve the kind of results SAA seeks, nor will the hiring of one lobbyist dedicated to archival issues. The American public needs to be made aware of and care about archives and the work that archivists do to ensure proper access to records, thus supporting the very basis of our democratic society, in order to exercise the kind of influence over policy-makers that SAA desires. Until SAA is willing to take serious steps to comment and inform on records issues for the general public on a national scale on a regular basis, little can be expected in the way of greater public awareness and advocacy.