

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

**Strategic Priorities: Proposed Revision of
Diversity Outcome #4**

(Prepared by Rebecca Hankins, Tom Hyry, and Diane Vogt-O'Connor)

BACKGROUND

At the May 31-June 2 Council meeting, the Council reviewed and discussed Strategic Priority Activities for 2010 – 2013. Council members and staff reviewed and revised the work done by a Council subgroup and staff since the February 2009 strategic planning session to 1) refine the desired outcomes and activities associated with each strategic priority, and 2) to develop action plans, including tasks, assignees, timeframes, and resources needed for each activity planned for FY 2010.

DISCUSSION

At its May/June 2009 meeting, the Council decided that there was a need to revisit and reword the activities associated with the Diversity Priority, Outcome 4, which deals with issues of retention and diversifying the profession. Rebecca Hankins, Tom Hyry, and Diane Vogt-O'Connor were charged with better defining activities for this outcome and proposing a revision for the August 10, 2009, Council meeting.

The following is our proposed language for a new Diversity Outcome 4 and activities associated with that outcome. Following Council discussion, we intend to put a recommendation forward.

Proposed Revision of Desired Outcome #2:¹

SAA will develop a toolkit and a range of educational offerings that will provide archivists with models and training to enable them to reach out to diverse communities within their own localities.

¹ Staff Note: Desired Outcome #4 as determined by the Council in May/June and released to the membership for comment in June was stated as follows: "Determine effective ways in which SAA can become a more inclusive organization. [This outcome requires more discussion and consideration from the Council prior to adoption of activities.] This item appears to be directly related to Desired Outcome #2, which is stated as follows: "Identify and promote existing models and develop new methods for assisting archives and archivists to diversify the documentary record within their repositories."

Activities:

- a. Survey and compile existing outreach models and case studies created by archivists and allied professionals. [2010]
- b. Based on the survey, develop a grant proposal to fund the creation of a toolkit that provides archivists with resources they can use in promoting archives and the archival profession to diverse communities. [2010-2011]
- c. Using grant funding, hire a consultant, who will develop the toolkit and other educational offerings. [2011]
- d. Test the toolkit in several archival repositories and fine tune as necessary. [2012]
- e. Using the revised toolkit as a basis, develop and begin offering a workshop that instructs archivists in best practices for promoting archives and the archival profession to diverse communities and for identifying specific projects that may be of interest to the communities. [2012/2013]
- f. After offering the workshop, obtain feedback and fine tune the workshop as necessary. [2014]
- g. As members who have taken the training undertake diversity projects, publicize the results and use them to develop case studies. [2014-2016].

Proposed Revision of Desired Outcome #4

SAA will define diversity, develop new programs, and enhance existing programs that promote diversity as a value while fostering an organizational environment of inclusiveness.

Activities:

- a. Ensure that SAA's Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy (EONDP) remains up to date and widely available to SAA members and the profession at large:
 - Review SAA's EONDP at least every three years. [Next review in 2012.]
 - Disseminate SAA's EONDP to membership once a year and make it available on the SAA web site at all times. [Ongoing.]
 - Develop a policy for dealing with discrimination issues within the Society.
 - Allow the policy to be reviewed by membership and leaders. Fine tune the policy for dealing with discrimination issues within the Society as necessary. [Ongoing, preferably on the same schedule as the EONDP review.]
 - Develop an EONDP statement for employers of archivists that can be used by archives nationwide.

- Allow the policy to be reviewed by membership and leaders. Fine tune the policy as necessary. [Ongoing, preferably on the same schedule as the EONDP review.]
- b. Establish and give an annual Diversity Award to both an individual and a repository:
- Charge the Awards Committee to develop a name and selection criteria for two new awards recognizing diversity efforts by an individual and a repository. [2010]
 - Publicize the new awards and solicit nominations. [2010]
 - Appoint an Awards Committee Diversity subcommittee that represents appropriate groups throughout SAA. [2010]
 - Make the first of the annual awards at Chicago in 2011. [2011]
 - Provide significant publicity for the Diversity Award, with a goal of increasing the number of nominations each year. [2011 and ongoing]
 - Ask the award recipients to write case studies, publish, and teach for SAA on diversity, if possible.
 - Enroll the award recipients in a Diversity Committee Think Tank Subcommittee, charged with coming up with new solutions on the issue of improving diversity.
- c. Develop a cultural competencies framework as it relates to archivists and the archives profession.
- Consult with allied organizations (e.g., Society of American Anthropologists, Oral History Association, American Library Association, Rare Books and Manuscripts Section) and diversity experts to analyze the concept of cultural competencies to determine how best it might be applied to the archival profession. [2010]
 - Develop a grant proposal or action proposal to draft a cultural competencies framework to apply to archivists and the archival profession. [2010]
 - Create cultural competencies framework and disseminate widely to SAA leaders, members, and subgroups. [2011]
 - Develop an online self-test to help archivists rate their cultural competencies.
 - Develop specific online training courses and workshops focused on building specific cultural competencies (i.e., how to conduct consultations, how to identify cultural groups within your community, how to set up basic cultural outreach work via National History Day, etc.), as well as on diversity as it relates to archives and archivists. [2012]
- d. Establish a mentoring program for Mosaic scholars.²
- Designate Mosaic scholarship cohort groups. [2010]
 - Establish a mentoring program for Mosaic participants. [2010]
- e. Develop a leadership workshop targeting diverse archivists and other SAA Members using Mosaic scholars and Diversity Award winners as potential teachers.
- Develop the curricula and find the instructors. [2010]

² Staff Note: Diversity Outcome #1 focuses on the Mosaic Scholarship, and thus this activity may more appropriately be placed under that desired outcome.

- Find funding for the workshop. [2011]
- Offer the Leadership workshop. [2012]
- Conduct a lessons-learned program on the workshop. [2012]
- Redesign the workshop as necessary after feedback is received. [2012]
- Consider whether part of the workshop may be offered online, as a Web-based training tool. If so, begin planning. [2013].

Support Statement: Diversifying the archives profession has been a long-term, but elusive, goal for many decades. The goal remains both challenging and essential, as the cultural makeup of our nation increasingly shifts to a rich array of cultural backgrounds. Our profession has remained locked in an outdated limbo, unrepresentative of society as a whole. The 2004 A*CENSUS survey results show that SAA continues to lag behind the American population. More worrisome yet, our profession lags behind our colleagues in the library and curatorial professions in terms of diversity. This recommendation attempts to provide a series of concrete tools, training, and practical steps that would help SAA and the profession become more hospitable to archivists from a variety of backgrounds. Diversity Outcome #4 addresses SAA membership retention issues by providing action items with measurable outcomes and linked activities that will make a difference for current and future members.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown. The strategy is to seek grant funding where needed and review budget priorities to allocate some initial funds. The Council has also discussed using interns and volunteers for some of the activities, including fundraising.