

SAA Student Forum
2006 Joint Meeting, Washington DC
Thursday, August 3, 2006
11:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
Washington Hilton (Thoroughbred Room)

On Thursday, August 3, 2006, an annual “student forum” was held at SAA’s Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. Approximately 40-50 students attended. Fynnette Eaton (outgoing SAA Treasurer and Council liaison to student chapters) and Brian Doyle (SAA Director of Member & Technical Services) welcomed attendees and presented brief reports on recent student activities.

The majority of the meeting, however, was dedicated to encouraging peer-to-peer discussions about student needs and students’ own perceptions about strategic issues facing SAA. A number of “seed questions” were suggested:

- Why did you join SAA?
- What is the most important benefit of student membership?
- What new member benefits/services would you like SAA to consider?
- What is the most important/useful information on the SAA Web site?

Four break-out groups discussed these questions and others for approximately 20 minutes. During the final 20 minutes of the meeting, each group presented their findings, which are summarized below.

Where applicable, activities and programs managed by SAA staff and/or member leaders are listed to provide a sense of what SAA is currently doing or planning to do in the near future to respond to student input.

Findings of Student Focus Group Discussions

1. Why did you Join SAA?

Group A

- Importance of networking

Group B

- Discounts, networking, continuing education, access/ national perspective of best practices.

Group C

- Inexpensive membership (but still full benefits and equal treatment)
- Discount on books
- *Archival Outlook*
- *American Archivist*
- Networking

- Keeping current
- Professional opportunities / community

Group D

- Check out the organization at cheaper rate
- Proactively strengthen educational gaps
- Strength of student organizations
- Personal connections

2. What is the most important benefit student membership?

Group A

- Contact with the profession
- Learn more about the profession; opportunities available through student group
- Discount on the books and student discount for conference attendance!
- In library school – wanted to learn more about archives

Group B

- Meet the archival stars and heroes
- Scholarships
- Outreach / service/ experience (national coordinating capabilities); e.g., “Archivists Without Borders”

Group C

- Connections and keeping current

Group D

- Mentoring
- Discounts
- Networking
- Graduated rate/bridge rate

3. What new member benefits/ services would you like SAA to consider?

Group A

- Lack of awareness of the student listserv. What to do?
 - Focus the student listserv: e.g. discuss jargon, etc.
 - Have a student / new archivist oriented site off of SAA (e.g. like the conference website)
- Reach out to schools more
- Some schools do not have full-time faculty
- More opportunities for regional conferences, or have online conferences? Web seminars? Work with schools in the area.

SAA Activities: In the coming year, SAA staff will be doing more pro-active outreach to SAA student chapters in the form of “care packages” sent to student leaders. In addition, students should be aware of Richard Pearce-Moses’ *Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (<http://www.archivists.org/glossary/index.asp>), which is freely available online. Finally, the SAA Continuing Education program has offered Webinars and continues to work on future offerings. For more information on continuing education, see <http://www.archivists.org/prof-education>.

Group B

- International Internships
- Service work opportunities
- Internal advocacy (employers / institutions / repositories)
- Administrative notices to chapters for deadlines, activities, etc.
- “SAA Care Package” – ‘facilitator’
 - Brochures
 - Conducting meetings
 - *maybe* semi-annual newsletter
 - Online communities’ calendars (need to determine scope)

SAA Activities: SAA staff will be more proactive in sending administrative notices to student chapters.

Group C

- *American Archivist* online
- Advertise student listserv
- “Employment Outlook” publication, with more general articles about career trends in archives
- Entry level category / sectors
- NARA positions
- Jobs database
- Volunteer opportunities
- Subject area bibliographies

SAA Activities: In the coming year, SAA will be working to enhance its online Career Center, including a feature by which student members may post resumes. Improvements will also be made to the onsite Career Center that takes place at SAA’s annual meeting. SAA staff is working to get *American Archivist* online.

Group D

- Advocate for student archival programs
- Job site online
- Career center / interviewing at meeting
- Self identify
- Continuing education
- Subsidizing attendance at meeting

SAA Activities: Please see information on the Donald Peterson Student Scholarship Award: <http://www.archivists.org/governance/handbook/section12-peterson.asp>.

4. What is the most important/useful information on the SAA website?

Group A

- List of Publications
- Job listings
- Education Calendar

Group B

- Provide specific procedures for SAA student chapter requirements. (i.e. annual report)

Group C

- Glossary
- Internships
- Mentor-link
- Annual reports (student chapters)

Group D

- Glossary of terms
- What you do
- [Perhaps separate section for public]
- Job listings

5. What is not on the website that you would like?

Group A

- Not easily found education directory
- Main student portal? Link for student to “start here”
- List of courses / skills required especially for schools with a small archives program, continuing education recs.
- Mentor program on the list serve.
- Issue of awareness of services available.
- An RSS feed to make the site more dynamic.

Group C

- Index to AA articles
- Links need to be checked
- Difficulty finding committee member information.

Group D

- Sign in procedure – membership #

- Publications on-line
- White papers
- Too busy
- Modeled on UT Austin job listings
- Pointing to discounts for museums/ archives
- Links to NEA / MARAC

Additional Topics of Interest

Group C

- Future of the profession.
 - Where are the PhD's?
 - Trends toward I-Schools away from adv. Archival Ed. Studies.
- Top Heavy departments
 - Veterans teaching
 - What does this mean for the less experienced scholar?
- Continuing Ed. Workshops and internship promotions.

Group D

- Expensive workshops
- Potential for on-line/ web cast weekend during year.