Agenda Item V.A.

Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
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Chicago, Illinois

Future of ALA/SAA/AAM Joint Committee on Archives, Libraries and Museums (CALM)

(Prepared by Council Liaison Rachel Vagts and SAA Chair Lynette Stoudt)

BACKGROUND

At their most recent meetings (the SAA Annual Meeting in August 2016 and the ALA Mid-Winter Meeting in January 2017), the members of the ALA/SAA/AAM Joint Committee on Archives, Libraries, and Museums (aka CALM) have been looking at the charge of the committee and determining if it still addresses the original goals of the committee.

Revised in January 2003, the charge of the Joint Committee is to:

- Foster and develop ways and means of effecting closer cooperation among the organizations;
- Encourage the establishment of common standards;
- Undertake such activities as are assigned to the committee by any of its parent bodies;
- Initiate programs of a relevant and timely nature at the annual meetings of one or more parent bodies either through direct combined committee sponsorship or by forwarding particular program plans to the appropriate unit of one or more parent bodies for action; and
- Refer matters of common concern to appropriate committees of ALA, SAA, or AAM.

For the past few years there has been little or no participation from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) representative. At the same time, the American Library Association and SAA have had numerous joint initiatives that had appointed task groups completely separate from the membership of CALM. There has been little or no coordination between CALM and those Council-appointed groups.

DISCUSSION

We have identified several reasons why, overall, CALM is not functioning effectively in its current state:

1. Lack of a museum partner. AAM has faded away and committee members are unable to reestablish contact.

2. The committee seems untethered to SAA.
   - Strategic priorities of parent organizations should be a consideration.
   - Need to improve awareness of CALM as a resource/partner for the SAA Council, committees/sections, task forces, etc.

3. The current organizational structure is unwieldy/difficult to navigate.
   - Hierarchically (based on the reporting structure), co-chairs from each organization report from the middle to organizational committee members and their organization's liaison/governing board.
   - Direction is determined and decision making happens among the co-chairs; there is less opportunity for organizational committee engagement in determining direction, as buy-in is required from each institutional partner as a first step.
   - If co-chairs do not work collaboratively, the organizational structure falls apart, committees work in silos, and the committee's charge cannot be met.
   - The full committee is made up of 15 members and there is never an opportunity to meet all at once (either physically or via conference call as it is too costly).

4. The committee lacks overall direction in terms of long-term planning (smaller, short-term projects such as session planning have become the norm).
   - Charge is very broad with no strategic priorities.
   - Challenging for co-chairs to hit the ground running without a more detailed charge. There is a delay in committee engagement because it takes time to build relationships with co-chairs and determine a collaborative direction (lately a session topic).
   - Easy to fall into the program planning routine because it is already structured and there are stated deadlines; this means the committee activity is tied to annual meeting schedules and ALA generally starts session planning for the next year sooner than does SAA.

5. The committee overlaps with other organizations/committees serving LAM sectors (this is not an exhaustive list).
   - Educopia: The Educopia Institute's mission is to build networks and collaborative communities to help cultural, scientific, and scholarly institutions achieve greater impact.
   - LYRASIS: LYRASIS partners with member libraries, archives, and museums and other cultural heritage organizations to create, access, and manage information with an emphasis on digital content; to support collaboration; to extend operations and technology; and to facilitate joint purchasing.
   - Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums: ATALM is an international non-profit organization that maintains a network of support for indigenous programs; provides culturally relevant programming and services; encourages collaboration among tribal and non-tribal cultural institutions; and

articulates contemporary issues related to developing and sustaining the cultural sovereignty of Native Nations.

- Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries, and Museums: "Works in deliberate coordination across organizational boundaries to devise and strengthen sustainable continuing education and professional development (CE/PD) programs that will transform the archives, library, and museum workforce in ways that lead to measureable impact on our nation's communities."

From the recent Collective Wisdom white paper (http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/2017/collective-wisdom-white-paper.pdf):

> "Despite the longevity of the CALM joint committee, however, cohort members observed that CALM seems to have lost momentum across the major professional organizations, with each supporting the work of CALM to various degrees. This disparity in support has reinforced the challenges inherent in joint and collaborative cross-sector engagement, particularly in regard to the development of shared understandings of professional development and continuing education needs across sectors. Moreover, the diminished influence of CALM has limited the opportunities for substantive presentations and workshops that foster in-depth collaboration and shared practice across sectors. If the joint CALM committee is not reinvigorated, the Coalition may offer a viable alternative forum for collaborative and sustainable approaches to LAM CE/PD. If CALM is reinvigorated (and there is evidence of a resurgence of interest in this regard), the Coalition may be a natural partner to this committee in advancing its mission."

We would like the Council to consider appointing a group to study the charge of the Joint Committee and its impact for a period of 12 months and then determine if CALM should be retired or restructured. We believe that it is to the benefit of SAA and its members to continue to work with partners across LAMS, but it is possible that there is a more efficient vehicle than the current Joint Committee.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Who would be appointed to the group to assess the charge?
- Would we need or want to include AAM?
- What period of time would be necessary for a recommendation to be returned to the Council?
- What impact would this have on membership?