Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
October 31- November 1, 2006, Chicago, IL

Summary of Recommendations from the Final Report of the
Task Force on Sections and Roundtables

The following recommendations are contained in the Final Report of the Task Force on Sections and Roundtables, which was presented to Council at its August 1, 2006 meeting. The recommendations are based on the following premises, which are explained in some detail on pages 2-5 of the report:

1. Sections have a pivotal role in sustaining organizational growth, membership identification, and leadership development.
2. Roundtables offer an organizational culture of openness, innovation, and professional growth that binds members in common interest.
3. The Society expects its section and roundtable leaders to model behaviors that demonstrate high standards of professional responsibility.
4. Sections and roundtables are vital communication channels for the Society and should be supported by Council in their strategic information purpose.
5. The management of sections and roundtables involves a creative tension between member participation and centralization of services.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL ACTION

RECOMMENDATION 1
That the specific recommendations of the Task Force on Sections and Roundtables be adopted as amended to take effect at the close of the 2007 annual meeting.

RECOMMENDATION 2
That sections and roundtables be informed of changes in policy and practice and asked to comply with all new requirements as adopted by Council in the Task Force recommendations before the close of the 2007 annual meeting, and that Council show lenience in the first year of implementation with respect to new reporting deadlines.

RECOMMENDATION 3
That Council direct a revision be made, in consultation when appropriate with sections and roundtables officers, to those parts of official documents, including the Council Handbook, affected by the approved Task Force recommendations with particular reference to the following items:
   • **Council Handbook, section X. Roundtables and section IX. Sections;**
   • **Council Handbook Appendix B: Selected List of Current SAA Policies and Procedures: Guidelines for SAA Web sites (June 1997); SAA Policy on Unit**

Directories (August 1996); Guidelines for the Establishment of Listservs by Organizational Units (June 1995); Policies Regarding Function Space and Staff Support for Groups that meet at the SAA Annual Meeting (January 1992); and
- Website documents "Description of Sections" and "Description of Roundtables" and "Frequently Asked Questions About Sections and Roundtables";

and that this revision be completed and submitted to the Executive Committee for review before presentation to the first in-person meeting of Council in 2007.

Specific Recommendations for Sections

1.1 – 1.2
Council requests that Sections review and update their purpose and goals statements annually; and that the Council Handbook reflect their responsibility to respond to the strategic concerns of the Society and the requests of Council.

1.3
SAA Council will not base future decisions in establishing new section on the basis of the distinction between function and institutional affiliation. Instead, sections will be based on a range of member affiliations, including institutional venue, archival functional activities, record formats, or programming activity. Sections will be required to maintain a membership level of at least 300 individual members for two consecutive years or, lacking this number, they will be reconstituted as roundtables with an opportunity to appeal.

1.4
SAA members will continue to be free to join any two sections. Their membership will include a voluntary subscription to the section's electronic lists. The SAA office will centrally host and manage all official electronic discussion lists and announcement lists for each SAA section. The SAA office will also host the section website upon request.

1.5
All sections will follow minimum standards for the selection and rotation of section leaders, as follows:
- Each section shall elect a chair, vice-chair/chair-elect, and a minimum of two steering committee members. They may choose to have additional officers and sub-committees.
- All section officers and steering committee members must be individual SAA members in good standing.
- The chair and vice-chair/chair-elect shall serve consecutively. The vice-chair/chair-elect shall succeed the chair at the conclusion of the annual meeting that coincides with the term of office.
- Details concerning terms of office shall be set in the section's bylaws.
- Section bylaws are subject to review and comment by Council.

1.6
Sections will be given an additional two-hour block of time (at minimum) for open meetings of their leadership to plan and develop section programs and initiatives. The suggested time for this meeting is the afternoon of the day set aside for committee and task force meetings to allow adequate travel time.

1.7
SAA Council and officers will host an annual leadership forum to include section chairs, vice-chairs, and committee representatives for purposes exchanging information on strategic issues. Attendance will be required, and results of the meeting will be posted.
1.8
All sections will be required to compile and annually update a Section Handbook to orient officers and steering committee members. Handbooks will contain basic information on section governance, activities, and goals. They will be posted on the main SAA website.

1.9 – 1.10
Sections will be required to file their annual reports within 60 days of the close of the annual meeting. Failure to file an annual report within 6 months of an annual meeting will result in probationary status and possible loss of section privileges. Failure to file an annual report within one year will result in a notice of dissolution, which the section may appeal.   Sections are asked to submit their leadership list within 14 days of the close of the annual meeting.

1.11
Whenever possible, Council will include section leaders in appointments to Council committees, task forces, and other ad hoc assignments, when such appointments are appropriate to achieve a diversity of knowledge and opinion.

1.12
Sections are encouraged to work with SAA staff to develop websites hosted by SAA servers in order to maintain an archival record of section activities. Those sections that maintain their own websites must follow all SAA website management policies, register the websites with the SAA office, use SAA's current logo, and establish links to SAA's website.

1.13
All section officers will be asked to acknowledge that they understand and will comply with the responsibilities of their positions. The annual notice to section officers shall include a set of guidelines that summarize the required duties and remind them of other leadership responsibilities in areas of reporting, communication with Council liaisons and section members, and support of the Society's objectives and policies.

Specific Recommendations for Roundtables

2.1
In contrast to the governance role of sections, roundtables exist as communities of professional interest and communication for SAA members. Council should recognize in its handbook that roundtables may be established as or evolve into online communities of virtual existence. Existing roundtables are asked to update their current purpose statement on the SAA website and other official publications.

2.2
The minimum number needed to form a new roundtable will be increased from 20 to 25. Roundtables that do not maintain an official membership of at least 25 individual SAA members and meet annual reporting requirements will be dissolved.

2.3
SAA will support roundtables with electronic lists, websites, and other communication tools in lieu of guaranteed meeting space. Individual SAA members may join up to 2 roundtables in order to measure interest and establish an official membership list, which the SAA office will maintain. SAA members may subscribe, however, to an unlimited number of roundtable electronic discussion lists. Non-members may subscribe to one roundtable list annually with the consent of the roundtable convener. Conveners must be SAA members and may not serve more than three successive annual terms.

2.4
Roundtables are eligible to obtain meeting space at the annual meeting under certain conditions. While all meeting space will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis, the SAA office will no longer guarantee dedicated space at the annual meeting for every roundtable. Instead, the SAA staff will support roundtables with electronic list tools, websites, and other communication tools.

The following guidelines should be used to accommodate roundtable meeting requests at the SAA annual meeting:

- **New roundtables are eligible for a dedicated meeting room for their first organizational meeting after approval by Council.**
- **Roundtables that request a meeting room may be allocated shared meeting space using the following criteria.**
    - **The roundtable has a minimum official membership of 150 SAA individual members or submits a compelling statement of need.**
    - **SAA offices receive the request for space by the deadline established by the executive director.**
    - **All reporting requirements for the previous year have been met.**
- **Roundtable requests for a dedicated meeting room and/or equipment rental at an SAA annual meeting will be evaluated using some or all of the following criteria.**

- **A timely request is received before published deadlines and is accompanied by a compelling statement of need.**
- **The roundtable has organized a special presentation or program.**
- **The roundtable has an official membership of no less than 150.**
- **The roundtable is engaged in a collaborative exercise with another roundtable or section.**
- **Roundtable membership and expected attendance is large enough to warrant dedicated space to accommodate members.**
- **All reporting requirements for the previous year have been met.**

2.5
Roundtable conveners are required to report the name(s) of their convener(s) for the coming year to the SAA office within 14 days of the annual meeting. Conveners must acknowledge receipt of the annual notice of leadership responsibilities. Conveners are required to complete and file SAA's standard annual report form within 60 days of the annual meeting. Failure to submit an annual report for any one year by the close of the next annual meeting will result in automatic dissolution of the roundtable. Roundtables may re-apply for recognition.

2.6
The Society's main website will contain broad information on the goals, leadership, and activities of SAA roundtables. Conveners are responsible for updating information maintained on the main SAA website. The SAA office will also host roundtable websites, the content and design of which shall be the responsibility of the roundtable and convener. Roundtables may create separate websites and additional electronic lists on outside servers, provided, that they follow all SAA policies, register these publications with the SAA office, use the current SAA logo, and establish links to the SAA website.

2.7 – 2.8
Roundtable conveners will be asked each year to acknowledge that they read, understood, and will comply with the Council Handbook with respect to their duties and responsibilities. Conveners may request attendance at the annual leadership forum.

Specific Recommendations for Council

3.1
SAA Council and officers will take the following measures taken to cultivate leadership and raise the standard of professional behavior throughout the organization:
- **Circulate the annual notice of leadership responsibilities.**
- **Attend the annual leadership forum and involve leaders in building the agenda.**
- **Consult regularly with S/R leaders and recruit these leaders to committees and task forces when appropriate (IV.V.1)**
- **Give a brief annual orientation for section officers at the annual forum**

- **Develop a full program session at the 2007 forum on professional leadership**
- **Show greater recognition of S/R leaders in publications and gatherings**

3.2 – 3.3
Council will strengthen the liaison relationship with sections, but will no longer formally appoint liaisons to roundtables. Instead, roundtables may bring issues of concern directly to Council through the officers or executive director. Council may opt to assign liaisons to selected roundtables as needed with the following responsibilities:
- **Monitor electronic list for key discussions and pending issues.**
- **Convey requests from Council or advice or input on an issue.**
- **Alert conveners of Council schedules and annual deadlines.**
- **Represent Council at meetings when strategic issues may be discussed.**

3.4
Representatives of the Program Committee will visit sections and roundtables to explain the selection process and to advise on submitting successful program proposals.

3.5
Council and the membership committee might consider creating a fee-based service to non-members who wish to access the virtual roundtables as they emerge.

3.6
Council should make regular decisions on the continuing status of roundtables based on the executive director's review of membership numbers, electronic list subscribers and activity, and annual reporting compliance.

3.7
Council will conduct a review of policy regarding sections and roundtables on a triennial basis.

Specific Recommendations for SAA Executive Offices

4.1
The SAA office will provide support for multiple lists and discussion forums for sections and roundtables, and report annually on the number of electronic list subscribers, including those subscribers of roundtables lists who are not members of SAA.

4.2 – 4.3
The SAA office will redesign the SAA website pages pertaining to sections and roundtables to increase S/R visibility on SAA's home pages and enhance navigation. SAA staff should collaborate with section and roundtable web coordinators to demonstrate the advantages of migrating their websites to SAA servers for purposes of continuity and archival retention.

4.4
Recommendations contained in this report will have an additional workload impact on the SAA staff principally in the following areas.

- **Tracking and reporting roundtable membership and list subscription counts**
- **Distributing and reporting on annual leadership compliance notices**
- **Publishing a summary of the annual leadership forum**
- **Organizing the annual meeting calendar and resources to accommodate two extra meeting blocks for section leadership meetings and the annual leadership forum**
- **Publishing key data on sections and roundtables to the web and working collaborative with S/R leadership to manage their websites and electronic lists**

10/15/06