Society of American Archivists
"Radar Screen" of Strategic Priorities
(As Adopted February 2005 and Revised As Indicated)

Following are the Strategic Issues that the SAA Council originally reviewed and discussed on Sunday, February 6, following a full-day planning session led by facilitator Jim Dalton. At that meeting, the Council identified numbers 1, 2, and 5 as the highest-priority issues. At subsequent meetings, three subgroups of Council expanded on each by identifying 1) key stakeholders in the issue, 2) past and current activities that address the issue, and 3) ideas for future activities to address the issue. Issue 4 was added at the January 2006 Council meeting. The documents stemming from this work are available on the SAA website.

1. Rapidly changing information technologies challenge archival principles and practices, and demand increasingly effective leadership from the archival community to prevent loss of records and improve preservation of and access to modern archival records in all formats. (v.0506)

    [Changing information technology is challenging traditional archival principles, practices, and competencies, resulting in potential irrelevance of archivists to the care of records. (v.0205)]

2. The relevance of archives to society and the completeness of the documentary record hinge in part on the profession's success in ensuring that its members and the holdings that they manage reflect the diversity of society as a whole. (v.0506)

    [Failure of the SAA to diversify its membership and programs undercuts the organization's goal to be the premier archival professional association. (v.0205)]

3. Archivists face a daunting and too often unsuccessful challenge in competing for decision makers' limited funds and support, which endangers the goals of ensuring citizens' rights, enabling organizational accountability, and making history accessible through archival programs. (v.0506)

    [Although the public values history, it does not connect archives with historical knowledge and therefore does not support archival programs. (v.0205)]

4. Natural and man-made disasters offer a strategic opportunity to promote the value of disaster preparedness. (v.0106)

5. If archivists do not adapt descriptive practices to user search methods, archival collections will not be useful. (v.0205)

6. The retirement of experienced archival professionals and leaders in the next decade will lead to a void in the archival profession. (v.0205)

7. Creating a distinct professional identity has resulted in reduced collaboration with allied professions. (v.0205)

8. Variations in credentials, standards, practices, and vocabularies create confusion, inconsistencies, and a lack of awareness of archival issues among employers, educators, and practitioners. (v.0205)

9. The diversity of skills and competencies needed to manage archival records and institutions results in: a) multiple paths of entry into the profession; b) lack of a single entry-level credential; and c) domain overlap with other allied and/or competing "information professionals." (v.0205)