



## SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

### **Board Actions October through December 2021**

**From:** Kelley Hays-Gilpin, SAA Secretary

**Re:** SAA Board of Directors updates on recent actions

The SAA Board of Directors convened our fall board meeting October 22–23 in Boston, followed by Zoom meetings in November and December. A more detailed description will appear in the March issue of the *SAA Archaeological Record*. For now, here are a few highlights.

- We end the year with a projected \$200,000 deficit. We are not experiencing an existential crisis but need to be careful about expenses. Most of our invested funds are restricted funds (for example, awards and scholarships) that cannot be used for operating expenses.
- Membership numbers are linked to meeting attendance and participation, and currently numbers are down. Other professional organizations are experiencing the same downturn as COVID disrupts annual meetings, and we are all struggling to balance income and expenses.
- We tackled member concerns about affordability of the annual meeting by creating the Meeting Access Fund as a board-restricted fund to support participation of members in the annual meeting who might not otherwise be able to attend.
- We considered the Society of Black Archaeologists' proposal to begin a collective focused on repatriation of African American ancestors and agreed to support this effort. We support the American Association of Anatomists' and the American Association of Biological Anthropologists' task forces.
- The Student Affairs Committee has proposed a new speaker series, and the board enthusiastically embraced their idea. We allocated initial funding for the inaugural "Student Affairs Lecture Series in Archaeology" (SALSA). Watch for announcements about how to apply as a speaker and how to register for events.
- A new Lithic Technology and Analysis Interest Group is convening! We encourage interested members to contact the organizers (Jeanne Binning, Philip Carr, and Nora Franco) and to attend the meeting of the new interest group at the upcoming annual meeting.
- The Committee for Media Outreach is updating the SAA Wikipedia entry to reflect the mission, history, depth, and breadth of the SAA's activities and publications as a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization with an elected board, headquarters in DC, numerous committees including Government Affairs, and other relevant details.
- We extended deep appreciation to the Committee on Native American Relations and the Committee on Repatriation for statements produced collaboratively throughout the year. The "Statement Concerning the Treatment of Human Remains" was the product of a long process of collaboration that involved hundreds of members and has been well received. A proposed "Acknowledgment of Harm" is currently undergoing a similar process of member comment and carefully considered revisions.

- The board congratulated all those who have made *Advances in Archaeological Practice* successful. Happy 10th anniversary to our newest journal!
- We thanked Julie Hendon and Calogero Santoro for their hard work as editors of *Latin American Antiquity*. The board appointed Chris Pool to chair a task force to search for the next LAQ editors.
- Sadly, the SAA Press is not financially sustainable. The existing model needs to come to a close, after fulfilling existing commitments with authors. Several volumes have been withdrawn due to COVID, but two volumes are in the works with current editor Jennifer Birch, to whom many thanks are due. Existing books will continue to be available. Future volumes would still be possible as needed, but the board will not appoint an editor to solicit new volumes.
- The SAA's long-standing practice is that only the president and executive director can speak on behalf of the Society, and this is necessary in many contexts. Many outgoing communications are in fact authored or coauthored by staff and volunteers with expertise, and they deserve to have credit for their work. By sharing bylines, members can learn more about the expertise and activities of staff and volunteers.
- If public health conditions allow, we will hold our 2022 annual meeting in person in Chicago. We thanked the Meeting Safety Committee for organizing training and the meeting safety volunteer program. Bystander intervention training will take place online in advance of the 2022 annual meeting. We considered the recommendations of the Virtual Components Task Force and approved putting posters online and experimenting by investing in one hybrid session.
- We approved funding for the Native American Mentoring Breakfast at the 2022 annual meeting and thanked the Committee on Native American Relations for their proposal to replace the Native American Welcome Reception with this proposal for deeper engagement. The event is not limited to students; mentoring at all levels is encouraged.

Full meeting minutes will be available on the SAA website. I thank my fellow directors, officers, SAA staff, and members for lively conversations and for editorial advice that helps me toward our goal of clear and transparent communication about the work of the Society.