

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
January 25-27, 2012
Chicago, Illinois**

**Action: Government Records Section Bylaws Revision
(Prepared by: Bonita L. Weddle, Section Chair)**

BACKGROUND

The Government Records Section bylaws, which were last revised in 2005, state that Section officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. Thus the bylaws are out of compliance with SAA's current requirements and procedures for conduct of section elections. Most of the proposed changes to the Section's bylaws are intended to bring the Section into compliance with Section IX of SAA's Governance Manual.

The other changes to the bylaws clearly affirm that tribal archivists and archivists working in government archives outside of the United States may serve as Section officers. These changes reflect longstanding Section interpretations of the bylaws (a Canadian archivist served as a Section officer more than a decade ago, and another Canadian archivist ran for Section office in 2011) and are designed to remove ambiguities that may have discouraged some Section members from seeking leadership positions.

These proposed changes were discussed at and voted upon at the 2011 Annual Meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the SAA Council approve the following changes to the Government Records Section bylaws (underlining indicates additions; ~~strikethrough~~ indicates deletions):

**Government Records Section
Mission and Bylaws
(As amended ~~19 August 2005~~ 25 August 2011)**

The membership of the Government Records Section is made up of individual Society of American Archivists (SAA) members who are concerned with the administration, organization, and care of the records of government.

I. Membership

Membership in the Government Records Section of the Society of American Archivists is open to any member of SAA who has an interest in government records issues.

II. Officers

The officers of the Government Records Section shall be the chair, vice chair, and newsletter editor. Only members of SAA and the Government Records Section may serve as officers of the Section.

a. Chair

The chair shall preside at all meetings of the Section and the Steering Committee; represent the Section in its relations with SAA in general and with the Council and other groups within SAA; serve on SAA committees, tasks forces, etc., as an ex-officio member when required or appoint a representative to do so; appoint Section committees as needed; and submit an annual report of Section activities to the SAA executive office after the conclusion of his or her term. The vice chair shall serve as acting chair in the absence of the chair. The chair shall serve for a period of one year.

b. Vice Chair

The Steering Committee shall choose the vice chair from among the Steering Committee members in office after the annual elections. The vice chair shall serve for one year as vice chair, succeeding automatically to the office of chair for the subsequent year. If for any reason the vice chair is unable to succeed to the office of chair, a new chair shall be chosen following the same procedures as for selection of the vice chair.

c. Newsletter Editor

The newsletter editor shall be appointed by the chair, with the advice of the Steering Committee, for a term of two years, which may be renewed indefinitely. The newsletter editor is responsible for issuing newsletters to the Section membership.

III. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall consist of the officers and four at-large members. The at-large members shall serve two-year terms, three members being elected annually ~~at each annual meeting~~ with additional members elected if for any reason unexpired terms need to be filled. The profile of the Steering Committee (excepting the newsletter editor) shall consist of two representatives of local government, two representatives of state/provincial/tribal government and two representatives of federal/national/tribal government. However, a change in status of a Steering Committee representative shall not require the removal of that member from the Committee, even if that change would lead to an uneven balance of representation. The Steering Committee shall serve in an advisory capacity to the chair and its members may be assigned specific responsibilities by the chair. The Steering Committee shall plan each annual meeting of the Section.

IV. Election of Officers and Steering Committee

The Section shall conduct annual elections via an online ballot system provided by the Society of American Archivists.

There shall be a Nominating and Elections committee consisting of the immediate past chair of the Section (serving as chair of the Committee) and the three Steering Committee members whose terms are not expiring at the conclusion of the next annual meeting. The Committee shall solicit from the Section members the names of volunteers or persons recommended for the positions to be filled in the next election. Formal calls for nominations

shall be collected by June 1.

Basic ballot information (e.g., introductory message to voters, listing of offices, number of vacancies for each, names of candidates, and links to candidate statements) shall be submitted to the SAA staff by June 15.

Supplementary ballot information (e.g., candidate photos, biographies, and statements), if desired, shall be posted to the section website by July 1.

Online ballots containing basic ballot information shall be prepared by SAA staff and made accessible during the first week of July and shall remain open for at least two weeks.

Section members who are in good standing on June 30 shall be eligible to vote. Members who join after this date shall be eligible to vote during the following year.

The Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the number of nominees for membership on the Steering Committee is not less than the number of open positions. ~~The Nominating and Elections Committee shall announce the nominees to the membership of the Section in the last newsletter issued before the Annual Meeting. No additional nominations shall be proposed or accepted thereafter. If, however, the Committee did not recommend a nominee for that vacancy, nominations for that vacancy may be made from the floor at the Meeting.~~

~~Any member of the Section who is unable to attend the Annual Meeting may request an absentee ballot from the chair of the Nominating and Elections Committee; such ballots must be received by the chair of the Committee at least seven days prior to the Annual Meeting. Voting at the Annual Meeting shall be by secret ballot if there are more nominees than can be elected; only members of the Section may vote. The Nominating and Elections Committee shall be responsible for tabulating and announcing the results of the election. In the event of a tie, the Nominating and Elections committee shall do an immediate recount. If that recount verifies the tie, the election will be decided by the flip of a coin, with one of the candidates choosing heads or tails.~~

Elected officers and Steering Committee members shall assume office at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting of the Section.

V. Meetings

The Government Records Section shall meet once a year at the annual SAA meeting at the time and place scheduled by the SAA Program Committee and executive office. Additional meetings of the entire membership of the Steering Committee may be scheduled by the chair if needed to carry out the business of the Section.

VI. Amendments

Any member of the Government Records Section may propose amendments to these bylaws. Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the chair. The chair shall distribute proposed amendments to the membership through the last Section newsletter prior to the

Annual Meeting and voting on the proposed amendments shall be by secret ballot at the Annual Meeting. A two-thirds majority of votes cast shall be required to amend these bylaws. Any member of the Section who is unable to attend the Annual Meeting may request an absentee ballot from the chair, such ballots must be returned to the chair at least seven days prior to the Annual Meeting.

VII. Vacancies in Office

1. Steering Committee At-Large Members

In the event of a vacancy caused by an at-large member of the Section Steering Committee during a term of office, the Steering Committee shall appoint a replacement. The person designated shall hold the position until the conclusion of the unexpired term.

2. Chair

In the case of vacancy in the office of the Chair, the Chair-elect, when in office, shall assume the duties of the Chair. The Chair-elect shall complete the vacancy and thereafter shall assume his or her scheduled one-year term. When no Chair-elect is in office or if the Chair-elect declines to accept the appointment, the Steering Committee shall appoint someone to carry out the duties of the Chair until the next annual meeting of the Section.

3. Chair-elect

In the case of vacancy in the office of the Chair-elect, the Steering Committee shall appoint someone to carry out the duties of the Chair-elect until the next annual meeting of the Section.

4. Editor

In the case of vacancy of the office of the Editor, the Chair will appoint an Editor, with the advice of the Steering Committee.

Support Statement: The proposed revisions to the Section bylaws achieve consistency with SAA requirements for the structure of elected positions.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: None.

Fiscal Impact: None.