

Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion

Steering Report, Spring 2016 Steering Committee meeting

Web page

The Task Force web page is now available: <http://www.marac.info/diversity-and-inclusion>
Reports and other resources will be shared from this page.

MARAC Spring 2017, Newark, NJ

The Program Committee for the Spring 2017 meeting in Newark, NJ, have been coordinating with the Task Force on related session programming, either as a panel session or an open forum. Ken Cleary is a member of both groups.

Resource list

The resource list will be shared for now on the Task Force web page. We may recommend a change as part of the final recommendations. Resources and reports compiled as part of our research on related member organizations will also be added.

Diversity and inclusion work by related member organizations

Leaders at member organizations in related fields were contacted to learn about their diversity and inclusion initiatives. We also reviewed available documentation online. Our initial list included: Society of American Archivists, American Alliance of Museums, ARMA, ALA, AASLH, ICA, New England Archivists, Midwest Archives Conference, AMIA, Society of Southwest Archives, NCPH, Council of State Archivists, Organization of American Historians. A summary of resources is below.

1. Society of American Archivists
 - a. Meissner, Dennis. "Diversity and Inclusion: Aspirations That We Must Realize." Off the Record. March 09, 2016. Accessed April 11, 2016.
<https://offtherecord.archivists.org/2016/03/09/diversity-and-inclusion-aspirations-that-we-must-realize/>.
 - b. ACRL/SAA Mosaic scholarship
<http://www2.archivists.org/governance/handbook/section12-mosaic#.VwuskHr0-xU>
 - c. Statement on Diversity, 2010:
<http://archivists.org/statements/saa-statement-on-diversity>

- d. Strategic Plan, 2014-2018
<http://www2.archivists.org/governance/strategic-plan/2014-2018>
 - e. Diversity Committee <http://www2.archivists.org/groups/diversity-committee>
 - f. Resolution on Diversity, 2002
<http://archivists.org/statements/saa-resolution-on-diversity>
 - g. Position Statement on Diversity, 1999
<http://archivists.org/statements/saa-position-statement-on-diversity>
2. American Alliance of Museums
- a. AAM was very responsive to my inquiry and has published documentation that examines the creation of their diversity and inclusion statement and policy. Similar to NEA, they recognize that this is a long term effort that requires a strong commitment to be successful and that the key is transitioning from merely being an initiative to becoming standard practice. However, as a national organization, they see themselves as setting the standard for best practices, and promoting and supporting those endeavors through their leadership. From my email conversations with AAM's chief of staff, they seem very engaged with these issues. Between these emails and their published documentation, we have a very good picture of their policies, how they were developed, and their plans moving forward. Their one bit of hindsight was that when they released their updated diversity and inclusion policy, they did not make their action plan public. At first it was considered an internal plan, but they have now made it public and they believe that transparency is an integral part of their strategy. (KC)
 - b. Strategic Plan, 2010-2015
<http://www.aam-us.org/about-us/who-we-are/strategic-plan> (see linked .pdf)
 - c. Diversity and Inclusion Policy, 2014
<http://www.aam-us.org/about-us/who-we-are/strategic-plan/diversity-and-inclusion-policy>
3. American Library Association
- a. Committee on Diversity <http://www.ala.org/groups/committees/ala/ala-minconcul>
 - b. Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion <http://www.ala.org/groups/node/4471>
 - c. ACRL Strategic Plan (2010) <http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/strategicplan>
 - d. ACRL Diversity Committee
<http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/committees/acr-raed>
 - e. ACRL/RBMS Diversity Committee <http://www.ala.org/acrl/rbms/acr-rbmdiv>
4. AASLH

- a. Core values and competencies
<http://about.aaslh.org/aaslhs-core-values-and-competencies/>
5. New England Archivists
 - a. NEA was very responsive to my inquiries and has a well documented history of their diversity and inclusion activities over the past 5-6 years. NEA's 2010 strategic plan called for the formation of a diversity task force, which began its work in June 2011. Meeting minutes for the task force and supplemental material are all accessible from the NEA's Inclusion and Diversity web page:
<http://www.newenglandarchivists.org/diversity>. The task force spent two years researching, discussing, and surveying, and concluded, among other things, that NEA was not yet ready to issue a formal mission statement on diversity and inclusion. Much of this work is similar to the process that MARAC has started, such as looking at similar organizations and polling their membership. NEA found that SAA and ALA took much longer to develop their statements, which was reflective of the long-term, deliberative process necessary for a true commitment to this task. The task force did recommend a variety of initiatives, including the creation of a permanent, standing, body with voting privileges to act as a long-term advocate for diversity and inclusion. In 2014, the NEA board approved the creation of an Inclusion and Diversity Coordinator position. My email conversation was with Anna Clutterbuck-Cook, NEA's first such coordinator. Over the past year, she has been engaged in many formal and informal actions that have been working towards improving diversity and inclusion within NEA. So far, NEA's efforts have been well received, while at the same time it is recognized that there is still much work to be done. (KC)
 - b. Inclusion and Diversity statement <http://www.newenglandarchivists.org/diversity>
 - c. Diversity Task Force mission statement (2010)
<http://www.newenglandarchivists.org/taskforce>
 - d. Inclusion and Diversity Coordinator description
http://www.newenglandarchivists.org/Resources/Documents/Job%20Descriptions/InclusionDiversityCoordinator_Final_09192014.pdf
6. Midwest Archives Conference
 - a. I spoke with both the current MAC president and the chair of the scholarship committee. MAC does not have a diversity and inclusion statement, policy, task force, committee, or other position dedicated to this issue. However, they do have a scholarship program dedicated to assisting minority students that began in 1993. MAC acknowledged that NEA and MARAC are well ahead of MAC on

the diversity issue, but they were proud of their scholarship program and its history of helping minority students - at least several of which are currently leaders in the profession. As a result of our conversation, MAC recognized that it would be informative for them to formally interview scholarship recipients post-graduation to assess the impact of the scholarship on their careers. (KC)

- b. Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship for Minority Students
 - i. http://www.midwestarchives.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52
7. Association of Moving Image Archivists
- a. Diversity Committee
<http://www.amianet.org/groups/committees/diversity/diversity.php>
 - b. LGBT Committee. “The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Interest Group was formed to provide a safe space to discuss issues and develop projects that are relevant to working in the archival industry, the archiving of moving images of LGBT peoples, and diversity within AMIA. The group organizes at least one meeting and one social gathering at the annual conference, proposes plenary and panel sessions to the Conference Committee, and maintains an e-mail list that allows group members to engage in on-line discussions and information sharing.”
8. Society of Southwest Archivists
- a. Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Outreach
<http://southwestarchivists.org/committees>
 - b. Formed by Executive Council in 2014. Was previously three members “that volunteered to formulate policies and bring them to the full board for action.” Current committee is working on these policies and a mission statement. There has been some success reaching out to Native American archivists, although not as a direct action of the committee. Four Native American archivists spoke on a panel at recent SSA meeting and then 3 of the 4 became members of SSA. The panel had been assembled specifically to have panel for Native American librarians and archivists.
9. National Council on Public History
- a. Diversity task force <http://ncph.org/cms/about/boards-and-committees/>
10. Council of State Archivists
- a. COSA has a very limited membership - 56 state and territory archivists, and approx 25 other meeting attendees. The members are all governed by state agency policies for recruitment and diversity. Otherwise, COSA looks to SAA for

initiatives, such as their participation in Mosiac program. Acknowledges in their Goals and Strategies that they serve “diverse constituents” but sustainability of membership is priority over diversity of membership, given the limited scope of their membership.

11. Organization of American Historians

- a. OAH is a member organization with ~7000 members. Their field has been working to increase diversity over the past 20 years but have seen no substantial changes. OAH has several implemented initiatives, and are working to direct diversity projects towards graduate students and programs. They are seeing that partnering with graduate programs to increase diversity in recruitment and enrollment is necessary to then increasing diversity in their field. They also work a lot to include “organizational diversity” - historians that work in all levels of the profession, at all types of institutions, small and large.
 - i. OAH has applied for a grant to fund a fellowship award; the program would fund a mentoring program for current PhD students to help ensure that they complete their degree and are involved in profession. Sounds similar to SAA Mosiac scholarship. Award includes membership costs. Fellows would meet at the OAH Annual Meeting for a 1.5 day session, and then again at the end of the fellowship. They think that it will be particularly helpful for students that might be the only minority scholar in their program, to help them to feel less isolated.
 - ii. Sessions are required to have a diverse panel of speakers, at least as it reflects diversity of the profession (which, like our own, is very white). This language is included in their call for speakers: “The program will reflect the full diversity of the OAH membership in the United States and abroad. Wherever possible, proposals should include presenters of different genders and different racial and ethnic backgrounds. The program should also represent a variety of public and academic historians and history professionals, wherever they are employed and at varying levels of seniority in the profession. We encourage senior historians to present their own research. We welcome debate on challenging and controversial issues.”
 - iii. OAH Executive Board includes 9 elected positions; informally one spot is reserved for each: ethnic minority member, a member from a small college, and a member that teaches at a high school or community college. Excerpts from OAH’s Guide to Voluntary Leadership:

1. “Many considerations go into these nominations. The practice of American history is accomplished by scholars of different ages and genders throughout the United States and the world pursuing many different intellectual and disciplinary interests. They teach, guide, research, and publish in amazingly diverse settings including public and private universities, four-year colleges, community and junior colleges, secondary and elementary schools, museums and parks, as well as write and research scholarship independently. Their backgrounds reflect many expressions of race and ethnicity, differences in sexual orientation, a wide range of economic backgrounds, marked differences in undergraduate and graduate training and, of course, the richest possible variety of disciplinary and topical approaches to the enormously variegated history of the United States.
 2. “No single set of nominees in one year will likely produce candidates from all of these segments of our profession. But the combined membership of the Executive Board and Nominating Board, as well as the principal officers of the OAH, should reflect the exceptional breadth, diversity, and distinction of the membership at large.
 3. “The Nominating Board also should be concerned about serious over-representation of one or another group on both boards. For example, it would be best if the Executive and Nominating boards never contained more than one person from any single institution at any time, and substantial overrepresentation of individuals from similar backgrounds should be avoided if possible.”
- b. Statement on Diversity, adapted originally in 2000
- i. <http://www.oah.org/about/reports/reports-statements/statement-on-diversity/>

Membership survey preliminary results summary

In accordance with its charge, the MARC Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion created a survey for MARAC membership to identify critical diversity issues facing the organization. The survey was distributed on March 14 and contained six questions. The first question was two parts, asking participants to identify how strongly they agreed or

disagreed with a statement and then to explain their answer. The sixth question was used to identify individuals who would be willing to speak to the Task Force in depth on the issue.

The survey closed on March 31 with 140 responses. Not every participant answered every question. While 140 is a very low percentage of MARAC membership, it is the Task Force's hope that the insights given by this small percentage will be a good starting point for a very large undertaking. This report is meant to be a brief overview of the survey results with a full report coming later.

MARAC prioritizes diversity and inclusion in its programming and member services.

- Strongly Agree: 7
- Agree: 45
- Neutral: 67
- Disagree: 14
- Strongly Disagree: 1
- N/A: 6

Overwhelmingly, those who chose Neutral explained that they didn't know about MARAC's efforts towards diversity and inclusion. Some indicated that while they didn't believe that MARAC hindered it, MARAC also didn't appear to be endorsing it. Even those who chose Agree had the feeling that MARAC could do more.

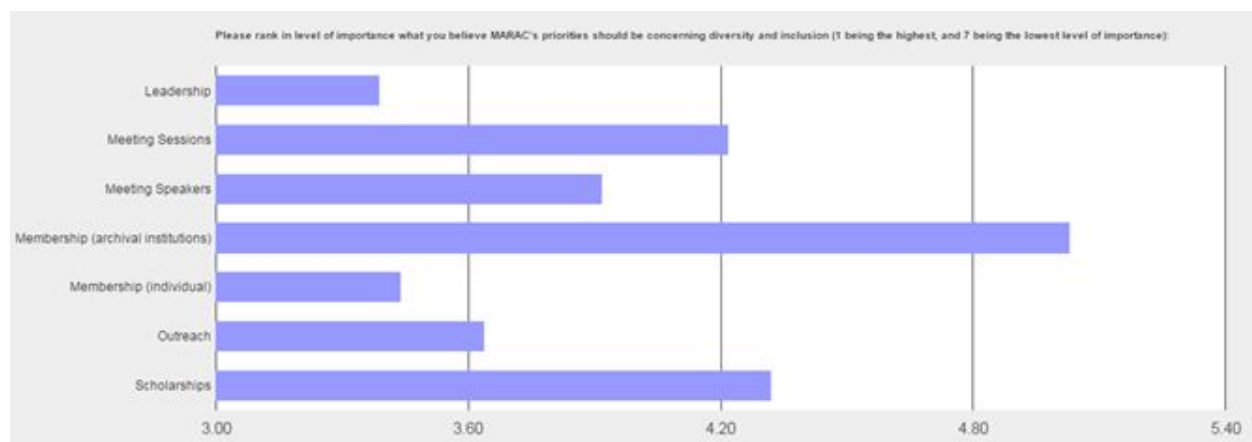
Sample responses

"I believe programming does follow from collection content and academic study. A healthy percentage of sessions concern subjects that could be considered diverse (for gender or race & sometimes religion.) However, "we" can likely improve our scope by soliciting from organizations that are culturally divergent from typical MARAC membership. Small museums, churches, temples, mosques, ethnic & social organizations and "news organizations" that exist or existed to serve an ethnic population act as repositories for information and records of their culture."

"I do not believe MARAC prioritizes diversity and inclusion. I believe the organization practices it, when it is encountered as an issue and has policies that avoid the opposite problem of exclusion. But that is not the same as having an active policy of prioritizing it, or going out of the way to address it in a meaningful way. I recognize that may change with this initiative."

“I think there are some individual members who feel passionate about diversity and inclusion but don't feel that it's an organizational priority. I'd like to see more conference programs with racial and ethnic diversity in topic and panelists. I'd also like to see more affordable options for people to participate in MARAC. It's outdated that only people present at the business meeting can vote on certain important matters, disenfranchising low-income archivists. I'd also like to see more inclusion from people who may not be trained as archivists (e.g. with a master's degree) but who are in charge of archival collections, whether at their church or a local historical society.”

Please rank in level of importance what you believe MARAC's priorities should be concerning diversity and inclusion (1 being the highest, and 7 being the lowest level of importance)



The section of the survey that asked respondents to rank the importance of certain areas provided mixed results. There was no clear consensus, and it may be that some people switched the priority order - giving 7 the highest importance instead of 1. In the graph above, it is the items with the lowest number that had the higher ranking; Leadership and Membership (Individual) with the lowest average were therefore ranked the most important by the respondents.

Are there actions that you believe need to be taken within the above areas to make MARAC a more diverse and inclusive organization?

Although diversifying membership was identified as the highest priority, most of the responses to this question did not touch upon that. Most responses call for outreach and scholarships. There were also several responses that indicated that diversity is an issue facing the profession as a whole and MARAC's efforts won't have much effect.

Sample responses

“Intentional cultivation of diverse membership, with explicit focus on people of color (ethnic/racial diversity) and other traditionally marginalized groups in LIS professions (LGBTQ). Intentional and explicit solicitation of traditionally marginalized groups for leadership roles and keynote speeches. Solicitation and promotion of meeting sessions that focus on diversity/inclusion in the profession and in our collections (with priority given to those sessions that feature speakers from traditionally marginalized groups). Explicit outreach by the MARAC leadership to emerging professionals from traditionally marginalized groups, including direct communication with and solicitation of students within the MARAC region.”

“The current scholarship award is a set in the right direction, but MARAC could follow through and dedicate more material and financial support for conference participation, research activities, and otherwise professional development - especially to post graduate / early career professionals.”

“A standing diversity committee; establish scholarships for archivists at small institutions and local historical societies; establish a mentoring program.”

“I think MARAC should do outreach to local and community organizations and encourage them to participate in MARAC. Scholarships and registration-waivers may be necessary to make this happen. MARAC also needs to make a strong case to these community caretakers and their supervising bodies that professional service and involvement are worth devoting institutional resources (staff release time, professional development funding, etc.)”

“More active recruiting of students within library programs. Exposure during library school may increase numbers, participation, and future memberships.”

“First, MARAC should identify why it isn't as inclusive and diverse as it could be, and work from there. For example, if the lack of diversity is due to the promotion of MARAC services to places where a more diverse population of archivists and librarians have access, the organization could easily remedy the issue with increased promotional efforts. If the issue is the lack of diversity in archives and librarianship, MARAC could potentially institute recruitment initiatives.”

What do you think is needed to make the archival profession more diverse and inclusive?

Suggestions included:

- Scholarships
- Better salaries
- Outreach to minority groups and students
- Mentoring
- Education
- Awareness
- Transparency and visibility within the profession

Sample responses

“I think it will take systemic social change. MARAC can start by acknowledging how massively unrepresentative of the US its membership - and the archives profession as a whole is. It can sponsor public education about archives and the profession, raise money for non-professionals to attend events, and institute sliding scale attendance fees. MARAC can also (continue to?) have people-of-color spaces at their events and acknowledge that the whiteness of the archives world can make POC attendees feel excluded and unsafe. MARAC can make public statements about the archives profession's persistent bias.”

“Probably a willingness to more directly document underserved communities where diversity will naturally come from.”

“More scholarship opportunities at both the regional and national levels.”

“Working with students at all levels to help them see the value of archives in their lives and communities. There is also a connection here for institutions to work on collecting to serve everyone. If you don't see yourself in archives (you are invisible in terms of collections), you will not be interested in that profession.”

“Outreach to non-white communities. Practice inclusion - be welcoming and enthusiastic of ideas and ways of doing things that are different. Diverse representation is not the same as inclusion.”

Workplan update

April 2016

- MARAC meeting, Pittsburgh, PA, April 14-16
- Prepare survey summary for presentation at Business Meeting
- Review and update work plan, assign roles for phase 2 (all)

- Diversity definition
- Diversity position statement
- Goals, objectives and new initiatives

July 2016

- Steering committee meeting
- Submit first draft of diversity definition and position statement
- Review compiled list of suggested goals, objectives, and new initiatives