Report from the Task Force on Diversity & Inclusion

MARAC Steering Committee, January 27, 2017
Submitted by Lindsey Loeper, Chair

1. Overview

1.1 Summary of work completed

Established in Summer 2015 by MARAC Chair Brian Keough, the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion has worked together to complete the charge as outlined by the Steering Committee. During this time we

- completed a review of related professional organization's efforts in supporting diversity and inclusion (see report to Steering, Spring 2016);
- compiled a resource list of publications, reports, and other content related to diversity and inclusion in the archives field and the cultural heritage field in general (now available at marac.info/diversity);
- surveyed the MARAC membership to determine the efforts and goals that are valued by our members (see report to Steering, Spring 2016);
- and drafted and submitted to the Steering Committee a definition of diversity as it relates to our profession, a position statement on diversity, and a code of conduct (see report to Steering, Fall 2016, with updated versions below in sections 3, 4, and 5.1.5).

1.2 Summary of report

This report contains updated versions of the diversity definition, the position statement, and the code of conduct, incorporating suggested revisions by members of the Steering committee and the Task Force. The bulk of the report contains recommended initiatives to support the goals outlined in the position statement. These recommendations are arranged by related committee area: Steering, Communications, Meetings and Education, and Membership. Our intention is that this work will be supported by the D&I coordinator(s) and committee in partnership with the existing committees.

In addition to the specific initiatives outlined, we recommend that all MARAC committees and serving members consider how their work promotes, supports, and/or unintentionally hinders our shared goal of a working within a diverse and inclusive member organization and profession.

1.3 Task Force members

Kirsten Strigel Carter
Ken Cleary, Member-At-Large

E. Evan Echols
Christine George, Member-At-Large
Josue Hurtado
Lindsey Loeper, Member-At-Large, Chair
Megan Miller

2. Task Force Charge

MARAC seeks to encourage, enhance, and facilitate communication, education and relations among persons of various races, physical conditions, religions, national origins, citizenship, genders, ages, socio-economic backgrounds, and sexual orientation within the archival profession in general and within the MARAC region in particular. To accomplish this goal, the MARAC Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion has the following charge:
   ● Review and/or survey the efforts of other related professional organizations efforts to increase diversity
   ● Survey MARAC members to identify the critical issues pertaining to diversity facing the organization
   ● Define and articulate diversity as it applies to the profession, to MARAC and to our members
   ● Draft a position statement on diversity for the Steering Committee to consider and adopt as MARAC policy
   ● Recommend specific goals, objectives, and new initiatives for increasing diversity in MARAC and in the profession as a whole

The Task Force on Diversity reports to the Steering Committee and will works closely with the MARAC Chair. The Task Force is responsible for submitting items for action, discussion and feedback as necessary from the Steering Committee and the Task Force Chair is responsible for submitting a final report to the Steering Committee in an appropriate time period.

3. Diversity definition

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) promotes a diverse and inclusive membership, one that will encourage, enhance, and facilitate communication, education and relations among persons of various races, physical conditions, religions, national origins, citizenship, gender identities or expressions, ages, socio-economic backgrounds, and sexual orientation within the archival profession, the archival repositories and cultural heritage organizations in the MARAC region, the archival collections in our care, and our research and scholarship partners.

4. Diversity statement

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) seeks to be a diverse and inclusive member organization. As stated in the MARAC strategic plan, our members, research

communities, and collections will all "benefit from an organization that is dedicated to diversity, affordability, and collegiality." We will work towards this goal by:

- promoting a respectful and open environment that welcomes members from all backgrounds, levels of expertise, and communities within the archival profession and the mid-Atlantic region;
- providing opportunities for professional discourse and engagement through service to MARAC and participation in meetings, publications, and other programming opportunities;
- identifying current barriers for participation and advocating for corrective action;
- and recognizing the varied strengths, needs, and perspectives present in our membership and valuing the opportunities for dialogue and growth that these differences provide.

Note: the recommended initiatives in section 5 were developed to specifically support the stated goals above.

5. Recommended initiatives

The recommendations outlined below are drawn from member feedback, the 2016 member survey, a survey of related member organization's initiatives, and related publications. They are organized in relation to existing MARAC committees. Our hope is that this work will be carried out in partnership with these committees, drawing on their existing expertise and embedding the diversity and inclusion work into several areas of MARAC.

Many survey respondents pointed out the predominantly white membership of MARAC and other archival associations, reflecting the wider profession. Increasing diversity of the profession is a substantial task for MARAC to take on, but we can and should identify ways that we can support building a more inclusive profession. One option would be to support the existing programs established by our colleagues at other member associations or in the profession at large, programs such as the SAA/ACRL Mosaic scholarship, SAA-affiliated graduate student groups, and the annual Conference on Inclusion and Diversity in Library and Information Science (CIDLIS) at the University of Maryland, College Park, to name just a few examples.

5.1 Steering/MARAC infrastructure

5.1.1 Establish Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator(s)

The Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator shall serve as an officer of the Steering Committee, with voting privileges. This would require amending the bylaws and the requirements specified therein. The creation of such a position would signal to our membership our firm commitment to our diversity and inclusion goals, which would be furthered by the fact that an officer has voting rights. The Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator would act as a visible and accessible point of

contact for our members to bring their questions or concerns, as well as serve an instrumental part of the D&I Committee (see below).

The Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator shall hold office for two (2) years, from July 1st to June 30th and until a successor shall have been elected or qualified. The Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator shall attend all meetings of the Steering Committee and the Conference business meetings. The duties of the D&I Coordinator shall include, without limitation, to:

a) serve as ex-officio chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee (in the same way that the Meetings Coordinator serves as the ex-officio chair of the Meetings Coordinating Committee);
b) submit an annual report outlining work done in the past year to achieve diversity and inclusiveness and goals for the coming year;
c) serve as the primary, confidential contact for Code of Conduct complaints, following up as necessary with the support and consultation of the Steering Committee;
d) serve as the primary contact for all questions and concerns related to accessibility and inclusion at MARAC events, following up with appropriate leadership to address the question or concern;
e) perform such other duties as pertain to the office and as may be assigned by the Steering Committee or as prescribed for the office by the adopted parliamentary authority.

Given the amount of work related to this position, as outlined in this report, we would like to propose a secondary option of creating a Diversity Coordinator and an Inclusion Coordinator as two separate positions. We envision the Inclusion Coordinator working, for example, on the code of conduct and the ADA compliance policy, whereas the Diversity Coordinator would focus on the work with Membership and the mentorship training. An alternative to this would be a single D&I coordinator but expanding the committee outlined below.

5.1.2 Establish Diversity and Inclusion Committee

We believe that MARAC's work on diversity and inclusion will be best realized with the support of a standing committee. A standing committee "may be established upon recommendation of the Steering Committee and a majority vote of the membership" (Article 8.1); a special committee can be created with recommendation by Steering alone (Article 8.7). The Committee consists of three members, not including the Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator who serves as Committee Chair. The MARAC Chair-elect appoints all members of the committee, except for the committee chair. All committee members shall serve two-year terms and may be reappointed for a second term. Each Committee member will be assigned to serve as a liaison on one or more related committees - Communications, Education and Meetings Coordinating, or Membership. They will work in partnership to address the recommendations outlined in this report.

The primary purpose of the Committee is to facilitate, sponsor, and promote the diversity within the archival profession in general and the inclusiveness of the meetings and activities of MARAC particularly.

The Committee shall develop, coordinate, and support initiatives that will enhance and support the values and goals expressed in MARAC's diversity and inclusion statement.

The Committee shall identify ways to build and maintain an inclusive organization where differences of opinion, beliefs, and values are sought, listened to, respected, and valued.

The committee shall provides resources, consultation, and feedback to MARAC members as requested in order to support their efforts toward building and maintaining an inclusive, welcoming environment within the organization.

The committee shall serve as on-site coordinator for inclusion and diversity efforts at MARAC meetings.

Note: some parts of this document are based in whole or in part on NEA's language regarding their Inclusion and Diversity Coordinator position. https://newenglandarchivists.org/diversity

5.1.3 Diversity & Inclusion priorities in strategic planning
The current strategic plan is now 5 years old and will be under review in 2017. The language should be reviewed and clear objectives should be included.

5.1.4 ADA compliance policy
This may be a separate policy or could be included as part of the Meetings Manual. Emphasize MARAC's commitment to hosting meetings, workshops, and related events in ADA compliant venues. See example from the Association of Recorded Sound Collections: http://www.arsc-audio.org/pdf/ARSC_ADA_Accessibility_Policy_and_Practices.pdf.

5.1.5 Code of conduct policy
The submitted policy incorporates changes requested by Steering in November 2016. Please note that additional work will need to be completed by the D&I coordinator in partnership with the Meetings and Education committees to outline how the policy will be enforced. We recommend that the policy be distributed annually to the membership e-mail list and then distributed to all attendees at future conferences or workshops.

MARAC Code of Conduct
The values delineated herein describe conduct based on a belief in the importance of civil discourse and the free exploration of ideas and concepts – with a fundamental respect for the rights, dignity and value of all persons.

MARAC does not tolerate harassment in any form. MARAC is committed to providing a harassment-free environment for its members and others who participate in its conferences, events, meetings, formal mentoring relationships, and online spaces, regardless of age, color, creed, disability, family relationship, gender identity and expression, individual lifestyle, marital status, national origin, physical appearance, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Harassment may include abusive verbal comments and/or discriminatory images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention,

All participants are expected to observe these rules and behaviors in all conference venues, including online venues, and conference social events. Participants asked to stop a hostile or harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately. If an attendee continues to engage in harassing behavior, MARAC conference coordinators will take action in any form they deem appropriate, up to and including expulsion from the conference with no refund and/or notification of law enforcement authorities

If you feel that you are in immediate danger at any time during the MARAC meeting or related event, contact law enforcement (by dialing 911) or the facility front desk without delay. If you are not in immediate danger but feel that you are being harassed or that someone else is being harassed, or if you have other concerns, please immediately contact the MARAC Chair or the Local Arrangements co-chairs. All MARAC officers can be contacted with assistance from the volunteer staff at the Registration Desk.

Conference participants seek to learn, network and have fun. Please do so responsibly and with respect for the right of others to do likewise.

This policy is based on the SAA Code of Conduct which in turn is based on the US OpenGLAM Friendly Space Policy, which in turn is based on the Geek Feminism Wiki sample policy.

5.1.6 Establish preference for online voting whenever possible
The only matter that requires an in-person vote at a MARAC business meeting is a dues change (see Article 9.2 http://www.marac.info/marac-bylaws). Steering should default to recommending an online vote sent to the full membership whenever the method of the vote is not explicitly stated in the by-laws.

Notes provided by Jim Gerencser, December 7, 2016: "...the ONLY vote that is specifically outlined in the bylaws that it must take place at the business meeting is a change to dues. [article 9.2]

    --During a business meeting, those members assembled can, by a majority vote, also force an action on the Steering Committee or overturn an action by the Steering Committee. [article 3.2]

    --Votes to amend any proposed changes to the bylaws brought forward by the Steering Committee would take place at a business meeting [article 11.2], BUT, votes to actually approve to changes to the bylaws are voted on by the entire membership through referendum no later than 30 days after a business meeting. [article 11.3]

    --The creation of new standing committees is to be voted upon "by the membership" (which I interpret as full membership by referendum), rather than only membership assembled at a business meeting. [article 8.1]

    --So it seems to me that there is nothing to preclude voting via full member referendum -- in the same manner that we do for elections and bylaws amendments -- for many MARAC activities (excepting dues changes). The manner of voting for measures that are not specifically prescribed in the bylaws could be by whatever manner Steering chose."

5.1.7 Review language in Nominating and Elections Committee mission and CFN wording

Current wording on the NEC webpage states, "In soliciting nominations and preparing a slate of candidates, the Committee shall strive for balanced representation of race, gender and gender identity, geographical distribution, and professional experience to insure that MARAC elections reflect the diverse constituency of its membership." This language should be reviewed for consistency with the D&I definition and statement adopted by MARAC. We also recommend that this statement be included in the call for nominations sent out to the membership each year.

5.2 Communications

The first question on the member survey asked respondents to if they agreed with the following statement: "MARAC prioritizes diversity and inclusion in its programming and member services." Of 140 responses, 67 chose "Neutral"; open-ended responses in the survey support our interpretation that this is due in large part to members simply not knowing what is being done in this area."I know that is formally a priority, but I have not been aware of how this priority manifests itself in the programming and services. This is not necessarily a failure on MARAC's part, but more a statement of my own lack of awareness."

Increased, targeted promotion of the D&I work by MARAC committees and members will not only help our members to learn more about this area but will also help to connect the services and resources available with the people that may benefit from them.

5.2.1 Promotion of MARAC service

Our primary recommendation is promotion of existing MARAC initiatives to the MARAC membership through the MARAC mailing lists, blog, *Mid-Atlantic Archivist*, and other platforms. This outreach work should demonstrate the variety and the impact of work done by all MARAC groups; we want to highlight that this work is integrated throughout the work of MARAC and not as isolated initiatives. Examples of promotion Include highlights from meeting sessions, content

written by MARAC speakers (either expanded for *MAA* or as a summary for a blog or Facebook post), summaries of workshops with bibliographies of related resources, and summaries by committees on related projects.

5.2.2 Secondary: Promotion of MARAC members
In addition to promoting the work done as part of MARAC service, we can also promote the work done by our members at their repositories or as part of service through other organizations. We recognize that this is already done through the *MAA* and in selection of speakers by the Program Committee, and simply wish to reiterate the importance of this work. Several examples of potential articles or sessions that we wish to highlight include:
- Mentor/mentee pairs roundtable to familiarize others with the SAA program
- Notification of related conferences, publications, or events in the MARAC region (for example, the annual Conference on Diversity and Inclusion in Library and Information Science at the University of Maryland, College Park)
- Examples of programming or collection development initiatives included in the Caucus News section of the *Mid-Atlantic Archivst*

5.2.3 Secondary: History Day service
In addition to expanded outreach to graduate students, several survey respondents stressed the importance of advocating the importance of archives to a younger audience. Many of our colleagues have robust partnerships with K-12 audiences, not only school librarians and archivists, but also those serving in public libraries and museums. Archivists not working in these organizations may not feel prepared to work with younger researchers or be able to anticipate their research and instruction needs. A simple way to begin service to the K-12 community is by volunteering to work with the county or state History Day programs. There are several levels of involvement available, and serving as a History Day judge would be a low commitment option for our members. Service with History Day would make archivists a visible and active park of the event, and would increase our visibility within the local cultural heritage and K-12 education fields. It is also an opportunity to work with the State humanities councils. State caucuses could even plan this as a service day for MARAC members.

5.3 Education and Meetings Coordinating

5.3.1 Workshop for entry level archival skills
We recommend a workshop that is directly targeted at people working with archival collections, either as part of their profession or in a volunteer capacity, that have not had formal training either in the workplace or as part of an advanced degree. One survey respondent referred to "accidental archivists" - people that have found themselves working with archival collections in some capacity, typically as part of a larger project or community initiative. The workshop would focus on basic skills and techniques such as preservation best practices, hierarchical description, and access to materials. We recommend soliciting a CFP from interested instructors or groups of instructors to determine the syllabus and structure of the workshop; the New York State Documentary Heritage program's basic workshops may serve as an example

(http://www.archives.nysed.gov/workshops/catalog). If combined with effective outreach and recruiting, this could be a good way to attract new membership and connect to communities in need of professional support.

Steering should consider how they might further support the workshop attendees through a reduced workshop fee or meeting registration. This would require a funding allocation by Steering to cover venue costs and the payment to the instructor(s). We do not wish to further strain the tight budgets of the Education and Local Arrangements committees, but a reduction in the registration fee would help certain communities of archivists working with no professional development budgets or working as volunteers. We may consider how this workshop, once in place, could further support the Karen A. Stuart Local History Collection Workshop & Conference Attendance.

5.3.2 Training workshop for mentors presented by SAA Mentoring group

A successful mentor-mentee relationship can have a positive impact on new archival professionals. Instead of establishing a MARAC-specific mentorship program, we suggest working within the program available through the Society of American Archivists (http://archivists.org/membership/mentoring). Both potential mentors and mentees would benefit from increased promotion of this program. We also recommend a workshop for mentors offered in-person or as a free webinar for MARAC members. The workshop would provide an overview of the SAA program and prepare mentors for their role in the mentoring relationship.

5.3.3 Secondary: Best practices in MCC Meetings Manual

Feedback about D&I related content at the MARAC meetings was generally quite positive. At this time, we do not want to put additional pressure on the Programming and Local Arrangements committees by implementing requirements or quotas on sessions relating to these topics. We should consider how we can better support the PC and LAC for each meeting, and one option would be to provide examples of previous session topics or best practices. This information could be incorporated into the existing Meetings Manual.

5.4 Membership

5.4.1 Targeted outreach to graduate programs

One group that is frequently mentioned for targeted outreach are graduate students in the MARAC region. We do not have funding to establish an academic scholarship but there are other ways that we can support this community. There has been inconsistent, though potentially expanding, outreach by state caucus representatives to Library/Information Science graduate programs. We recommend an expansion of this outreach to include related programs such as digital humanities, museum studies, public history, human-computer interaction, and traditional historical and cultural studies programs. Working with the state caucus representatives, committee members will compile a list of related graduate programs in the MARAC region and online based programs that service the MARAC region, including their point of contact, the best place to send related MARAC announcements such as a poster presentation CFP, if there is an

SAA chapter in place, if they have an archival studies scholarship in place, etc. The state caucus representative can use this information to plan outreach or networking events, to circulate information from MARAC, and to promote scholarship/fellowship programs that may be offered by other associations or institutions like the SAA Mosaic scholarship. MARAC members in different geographical regions may be recruited to assist the Membership and state caucus representative.

5.4.2 Explanation of nomination and appointment process

One barrier to serving in MARAC may be a widespread misunderstanding of the nomination and committee appointment process. We have heard from several members that they believe the main path to serving in MARAC is through the annual election cycle. Aside from the calls for service sent out by Program and Local Arrangements committees, it is unclear how members would volunteer to serve on the standing committees. We recommend a series of blog posts or *MAA* articles on how to participate in MARAC, including explicit instructions on how to join committees, how to work with the *MAA* editor to submit an article/case study, and how to prepare and submit a session proposal to the Program Committee. This content can be repurposed for the New Member meeting and/or sent out to all new members as part of the welcome message from their state caucus rep.

5.4.3 Long-term: Membership drive

A membership drive and outreach campaign should be part of the long term planning of the Membership committee. Looking beyond our traditional recruiting points (graduate schools and new hires), we can expand our membership base and better serve the archival profession in the MARAC region by reaching out to, as one survey respondent put it, "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." People that are serving the archival profession through their work with collections, communities, and researchers, but who may feel they are outsiders or not "real" archivists. We are doing ourselves a disservice by allowing this attitude to continue.

Another way to expand our scope would be to partner with related member associations and interest groups. There are other organizations in our region, such as the Small Museum Association and state library associations, that serve shared constituencies. MARAC has had some success seeking opportunities for joint meetings in the past, and we can explore further opportunities for partnership or promotion.

6. Next steps

After reviewing and incorporating feedback from Steering, the task force will send a revised report out to the membership for feedback. We will allow a minimum of 30 days for feedback. The final report of the task force will be submitted at the Spring 2017 Steering Committee meeting in Newark, NJ, and the Task Force will recommend disbanding at that time.