

**The Society for American Archivist's (SAA) Impact on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in
American Archives.**

Research Proposal Final

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Abstract

The archival field suffers from a persistent lack of diversity in the workforce, despite the ongoing efforts of the Society of American Archivists. This proposal outlines a mixed methods phenomenological study that aims to contribute to the understanding of the efficacy of the SAA's diversity initiatives and provide actionable suggestions to the field on how to make them more effective. This would be a novel study that aims to use the unique strengths of mixed methods research to gain a deep and reliable understanding of the relationship between the SAA and the lack of diversity in the field. The study will consist of three stages: a longitudinal statistical analysis comparing the results of the 2023 Archival Census and Education Needs Survey in the United States (A*CENSUS) and the 2006 A*CENSUS, a survey of SAA members regarding knowledge of SAA initiatives and attitudes towards diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the field, and interviews designed to gain novel insights and expanded understanding of the phenomenon from archival professionals.

Topic Under Investigation

Diversity, defined as “the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different,” in the archival field is paramount to ensuring the integrity and preservation of cultural collections on a national and global scale (ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion & on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, 2016, p. 21). Diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential concepts for archival organizations to integrate into all levels of archives, including collections, because of the potential for archival descriptions and holdings to both empower and cause harm to communities (Tai, 2020). And yet, archives and cultural heritage institutions have been historically and remain a white-dominated field, and discussion and efforts to increase diversity have seen little results (Banks, 2006; Caswell, 2017; Collins, 2018). It is the enrichment of the archival field of practice that we hope our research will contribute to through the increased understanding and evaluation of institutional diversity initiatives, practices, and attitudes. In order to examine diversity in the archives workforce it is important to look at “North America’s oldest and largest national archival professional association,” (National Archives, 2016), the Society of American Archivists.

The Society of American Archivists, or SAA, is currently the largest professional organization servicing and representing archives and archivists in North America. Founded in 1936, it was the first organization of its kind. It currently represents more than 6,200 professional archivists and students interested in archival work (*Who We Are*, 2021). These members come from a variety of different backgrounds and institutions, including state and local governments, universities, museums, and libraries across the nation. The mission statement of the SAA is a declaration of dedication to promoting the “value and diversity of archives and archivists” (*Who We Are*, 2021, para. 4). However, despite notable examples such as Harold Pinkett, the first

African American archivist to work in the National Archives whom dedicated much of his work to “mentoring future archivists of color”(Adkins et al., 2020, p. 168), and Margaret Cross Norton the first female president of the SAA in 1943, the officers and councilors within the organization have been predominantly white and male (Adkins et al., 2020).

The SAA's first real push for diverse representation began in the 1970s. Several committees came into fruition, such as the Archivists for Action group and the Committee on the Status of Women, who encouraged the SAA to adopt official positions on social issues and nondiscrimination. Intersectional discrimination was also a frequently addressed issue, as the SAA was aware of tensions that arose from feminism that solely focused on white women (Poole, 2017b, pp. 325–326). From 1981 to 1987, the SAA developed a task force and Minorities Roundtable that worked “to recruit underrepresented groups into the archival profession” (Poole, 2017b, pp. 325–326). Despite these efforts and the adoption of core values dedicated to diversity and inclusion (Society of American Archivists, 2020), evidence of diverse representation is still not seen within the archivist workforce (Society of American Archivists, 2006). In 2017, The Women Archivists Section conducted a salary survey in which respondents were asked to identify their race. The results showed that 88% of respondents were white, 3% were African American, 3.6% were Latinx, 2% were Asian, and 3% identified as multiracial (Israel & Eyre, 2017, pp. 7–9). However, these respondents only made up 28% of the SAA membership body, which consequently evoked interest and discussion in formulating a new form of census for the organization that would provide more large-scale data on SAA members and pinpoint where inclusion efforts should be redirected (Adkins et al., 2020).

In addition to diversification efforts, the SAA has fostered discussion on cultural competency, a process-oriented framework for self-evaluating cultural values and biases, within

the organization and the field since at least 2016 (Engseth, 2018). And while it is beneficial that this attitude and framework for advancing social justice is spreading throughout the field, it is still most helpful for the dominant cultural majority, of which the archival workforce remains largely reflective (Banks, 2006; Engseth, 2018). Understanding how, if at all, the SAA has influenced the professional understanding and practice of cultural competency, in addition to diversification will help inform action moving forward.

Outside of archives, Moon & Christensen (2020) found in a study of federal employees that racial diversity has a significant positive relationship with organizational performance. We can extrapolate from this research that archival organizations may also have improved performance with a more diverse workforce. Diversity initiatives should not be driven by workplace productivity or performance, but organizational boards or management with apprehension about shifting workplace dynamics can see that staff with diverse backgrounds and experiences enrich their collections and the workplace environment.

Research Purpose Statement

The disconnect between the efforts of the SAA to advocate for diversity and inclusion and the make-up of the archival workforce warrants a closer examination. The purpose of this study is to examine the diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts of the SAA and determine their effectiveness in expanding the diversity of the archival workforce. While diversity within the archives workforce has been a desired outcome of SAA, little research has been conducted examining the impact of the organization on diversification of the workforce within the field. It is this gap in research that our study aims to fill and encourage further examination. A look into specific initiatives made by the organization and their effects on recruitment and retention of

underrepresented populations within archives will provide valuable insight into how this decades-long issue could be effectively addressed.

Theoretical or Philosophical Perspective

In order to examine diversity in the archival workforce in SAA member organizations, we will be approaching our research using pragmatic and transformative worldviews. Creswell & Creswell (2018) state that the pragmatic worldview understands “that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts” (p.11) and applies mixed methods approaches to best understand the research problem. To fully explore our research questions, we must look at the archival workforce through these broader contexts to better understand how and why there is a lack of diversity and what steps can be taken to create a profession that is more inclusive. The transformative worldview recognizes the need for research to help reform societal issues and has a collaborative and participatory approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This research aims to enact change in the archival institutions of the SAA. To do so, we must implement research that will take action towards creating a more equitable and inclusive workforce so that diversity can thrive. The qualitative aspect of our research seeks collaboration with those in the archival workforce who identify with diverse populations. We must work collaboratively to refrain from further marginalizing or inflicting damage upon these individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This research aims to provide actionable changes within archival institutions to improve workplace cultures that foster and promote diversity equity and inclusion with measurable outcomes.

Here, we will also employ critical theory in our approach. Cannella (2010) describes critical theory as addressing “societal structures and institutions (whether long-standing or newly emerging, ideological, discursive, or material circumstance) that oppress and exclude so that

transformative actions can be generated that reduce the inequitable power condition” (para. 1) and “concerned with issues of power, intersecting oppressions, and inclusion-exclusion” (para. 1). It is impossible to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in archives, without looking with a critical lens upon the structures which have created and upheld inequities within the archival profession for so long.

Literature Review

DEI in Library and Information Science

As cultural heritage and information institutions, it is worth examining literature from the wider Library and Information Science (LIS) community to understand overarching trends in DEI research and how they can be applied to the archival field. The greater LIS community faces similar challenges to those we are seeing in the archival community, where DEI and social justice values are stated explicitly by professional organizations like the American Library Association (ALA) and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), and yet the field has remained predominantly white with little change in the past 15 years (American Library Association, 2006; Department of Professional Employees, AFL-CIO, 2020; International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2019). To address this, most LIS research on the topic has focused on the education of LIS professionals and how to increase diversity through a variety of recruitment methods.

Research into why this disconnect between stated values and workforce diversity is so persistent in LIS fields demonstrates that intersecting societal and institutional factors have created barriers. Poole et al. (2021) compiled documentary evidence from four decades of LIS research that shows diversity trends in LIS have not only been lacking, but that what has been done has resulted in few positive results. The authors state that one reason for this may be a long-

standing challenge in defining and operationalizing diversity in regards to LIS, and posit that despite the variety of definitions from various organizations, efforts should focus on equity and inclusion, not just diversity if change is to be enacted (Poole et al., 2021a). Collins (2018) attributes institutionalized language that centers the *need* to challenge existing systems of oppression rather than the *action* required to effect change as a factor in the lack of diversification of the field. They advocate for interrogating language that is used as a tool to conserve power, and by doing so, shift conversations in the field to more directly facilitate action (Collins, 2018). Ndumu (2021) outlines the historical and cultural changes in the US that “have resulted in librarianship being out of reach, at best, or out of sight, at worst, for many Blacks in the United States” (p. 151) and advises that DEI discussions and efforts consider larger demographic perspectives. Williams & Hagood (2019) examined how disability is represented and supported in the workforce and found that disability is not adequately included in DEI conversations, and attitudes toward effective changes in LIS differ depending on personal impairment or disability status. This critical LIS research shows that intersectional factors, along with a distinct trend of discussion rather than action, may be a primary reason why homogeneity of the workforce has persisted in the field (Collins, 2018; Ndumu, 2021; Poole et al., 2021b; Williams & Hagood, 2019).

Pragmatic research in the field that seeks to provide solutions has largely focused on LIS education as a key factor in creating a more diverse workforce. Jaeger et al. (2015) states that diversity and inclusion efforts have been focused mainly on professional recruiting and that the field has had difficulty putting its stated values into action. They suggest that the *Virtuous Circle*, originally described by Jaeger & Franklin (2007), may be one way to begin to effectively represent the DEI values of the profession in the workforce (Jaeger et al., 2015). The Virtuous

Circle describes how diverse LIS doctoral recruiting leads to more LIS program faculty diversity, which leads to more culturally aware LIS Master's graduates, which creates better, more equitable public services and inspires the circle to continue (Jaeger & Franklin, 2007; Poole et al., 2021a). Subramaniam & Jaeger (2010) support this emphasis on LIS education as a means to more impactfully support diversity in the workforce, drawing from findings from other fields that show diverse representation in faculty successfully attracts more diverse candidates. Morales et al. (2014) posits that diversity and education efforts from the ALA like the Spectrum Scholarship Program and various MLIS degree scholarship programs for racial and ethnic minorities are likely to benefit the field, although their impact is hindered by the small number of participants and scholarships actually available. Despite this, the authors concur that increased recruitment, support and retention of underrepresented LIS students will help “create a base of librarians of color to fill openings” in the LIS workforce (Morales et al., 2014, p. 444).

In addition to increased representation of diversity in LIS program faculty and recruitment, Foy (2021) argues that retention and inclusion and belonging practices are essential to creating a truly diverse LIS workforce. They point to examples from other sectors, including science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and corporate fields for examples of how to create retention and inclusion programs that can accommodate and support a more diverse workforce (Foy, 2021). Foy shows that there is evidence that DEI initiatives can be successful in a workforce, and their recommendations for the LIS field can be directly applied to archival institutions as well. The push for increased representation in LIS educational ventures in the literature also impacts degrees with archival focuses and archival degree recruitment. It is also reasonable to assume, as information institutions, that the critical examination of why there has

been little change in diversity statistics in the LIS field can be seen in a similar extent in archives.

DEI in Archives

Engseth (2018) discusses the application of the cultural competency framework in archival practice, stating that its use “reveals archivists thinking and practicing with humility and self-reflection” (Engseth, 2018, p. 476). Archivists are increasingly engaging in cultural competency and humility practices, but this concept is still most frequently discussed in specialized libraries, ethnic or identity affiliate groups, and management (Engseth, 2018). While cultural competency is discussed as a framework for inclusion of diverse voices in the field there is no discoverable research in regard to the effects and outcomes of these practices. While discussion is occurring in the archival profession around these values, little is being done to measure impact and change.

Archives Collections

The previously mentioned concept of the *Virtuous Circle*, where “inclusive libraries will also help to open up young from diverse backgrounds to the idea that they may want to work in a library one day or even become a library educator” (Jaeger & Franklin, 2007, p. 25) provides the reasoning for why we must also look at diversity within archival collections to understand their implications for diversity within the profession. Contemporary work in diversifying the histories represented within archival and cultural heritage institutions may in fact contribute to a more inclusive and diverse future of the profession through increasing interest in the field for those whose identities have often been underrepresented in preserved histories.

The needs of Native American and Indigenous communities within archival practice greatly differ from the cataloging, classification, access, and ownership practices used in non-

Native repositories (Karuk Tribe et al., 2017). As the Sípnuuk digital library, archive and museum in California, the Xwi7xwa Library in British Columbia, and the Brian Deer Classification illustrate (Doyle et al., 2015; Karuk Tribe et al., 2017), the proper care of Native American and Indigenous histories require space for more Indigenous voices and practices within the traditionally western archival profession. The SAA does have a Native American Archives Section, which serves to educate archivists working with Native American Collections, (Society of American Archivists, 2021c), but no research exists on the impact of their work on collections or the employment of Native American or Indigenous professionals.

Gay and Lesbian Archives often occur in areas where there are “powerful and sustained social and political action” (Lukenbill, 2002, p. 96) but are usually run by volunteers and face many funding issues. LGBTQ+ professional organizations exist within the SAA (Society of American Archivists, 2021a), demonstrating a force within the archival field that are hoping to make change in collections and archives, but again, there has been no research about the outcomes of these groups on representation in collections or in the field.

Archives Workforce

There has been very little discoverable work done around diversity in the archivist profession. One of the only studies found is the Poole (2017a) study of twenty-one Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award recipients. The SAA gives this award to students of color studying archival management that are selected based on personal statements to encourage involvement in SAA and to further their careers in archives (Society of American Archivists, 2021b). Poole (2017) investigates the educational and professional experiences of these students and their recommendations for archivists of color. Membership in student chapters of SAA was common for the majority of students in the study; however, 10 of the 21 students interviewed did

not retain their professional membership in SAA, with four citing cost and four citing the change in their career trajectory based on their lack of employment in archives despite applying “for probably hundreds of archives jobs around the country” (Poole, 2017a, p. 124). Participation in the SAA Annual Meeting and Archives and Archivists of Color Roundtable granted exposure to other diverse professionals from around the country but provided mixed experiences for students in terms of connections and inclusion. This would imply that despite an interest in archives, students of color may experience increased difficulty in finding a job and making connections with mentors in the field. Among the recommended areas of future research that Poole (2017) proposes is an expansion of studied experiences to include all archivists of color, and not just those who were Pinkett Award winners. The expansion of study is critical, in that it would include the shared experiences of archivists of color and those who have not received the financial assistance and recognition of the Pinkett award. This could help with the understanding of how the SAA can take action to increase the longevity of participation of archivists of color in professional organizations and their inclusion in the profession as a whole. This study also only considers the racial and ethnic identities of these students and does not examine the effects of any areas of intersectionality that these students may identify with on their experiences within the profession.

Society of American Archivists

Upon reviewing diversity and inclusion reports from the Society of American Archivists available on their website, the organization openly recognizes the importance of diverse individuals and groups to the archival profession. In 1997, the Council of the Society of American Archivists established a new Task Force on Diversity, whose purpose was to “investigate issues relating to diversity currently being addressed by the Society” (Society of

American Archivists, 1999, Section I). One of the issues they address is the “poor visibility of archivists in society at large” (Society of American Archivists, 1999, Section III), which causes a lack of awareness of the archival profession among minority groups. Furthermore, low pay in the archival profession puts it at a disadvantage in competition with other jobs that could recruit minority groups (Society of American Archivists, 1999). The SAA also claims that the large institutions in which archivists are often employed are difficult to diversify due to their size (Society of American Archivists, 1999).

This task force has looked inward as well, recognizing problems within the SAA itself that discourage minority members from participating in the organization. They state the costs of joining and attending the annual meeting as deterrents as well as the lack of apparent opportunities for participation to new members and, especially, minority members (Society of American Archivists, 1999). The task force established a list of recommendations to the Society as an attempt to remedy these issues. Developing an organizational position statement, incorporating diversity into strategy planning, and reinforcing/expanding existing diversity activities were among the list (Society of American Archivists, 1999). Furthermore, the task force laid out goals for the SAA's executive offices as well. Actions such as adding multiple languages to the website, holding a diversity fair, increasing scholarship aid, conducting public relations on behalf of the archival profession, and encouraging archival internships for minority populations within high school and college students were suggested as proactive approaches to the diversity problem within the Society (Society of American Archivists, 1999). The work of the task force was to be discussed, documented, and reported at council and leadership meetings.

If we jump ahead to 2005, however, not much progress had been made between the inception of the diversity task force and the 2004 A*CENSUS Diversity Report. Brenda Banks, a

Special Research Consultant for the SAA, published an article to *The American Archivist* voicing their dismay and disappointment over the numbers shown in the 2004 survey. They state that “the numbers of this 2004 survey were not substantially different from those collected in the past” (Banks, 2006, p. 482) and that the survey itself was flawed in the questions it asked. The numbers speak for themselves, with 84% of respondents self-defining as White/Caucasian, 3% as African American, 2% as Native American, 2% as Latino/Hispanic, 1% as Asian, 3% as “other”, and 5% choosing the “I’d rather not say” option (Banks, 2006). Furthermore, 0% of respondents identified as Alaskan Native or Pacific Islander, bringing to light a stark and harrowing absence of these races within the SAA (Banks, 2006).

Banks (2006) also states that the A*CENSUS results indicate that most of the minority respondents were what they call “accidental archivists,” meaning they discovered the job by happenstance (n=18.9%) or were assigned archives-related responsibilities by their employer (n=18.5%). This raises the question of, “What does it say about a profession when the majority of its professionals enter it accidentally rather than purposefully?” (Banks, 2006, p. 485). In the survey, 67.3% of minorities stated that archives was not their first career (compared to 61.9% of white respondents), meaning that these archivists had other plans for their careers and entered the field through other jobs (Banks, 2006). 40.5% of minorities reported that they worked in the public sector (federal and state government), and 34.5% worked at academic institutions (Banks, 2006). These large percentages can be attributed to the size of these organizational entities, the number of available jobs, and the equal opportunity requirements to which these organizations are held.

Banks suggests several outreach initiatives that have either never been considered by the SAA or have been proposed but never implemented. They suggest that the SAA should take

advantage of Archives Week, an annual week-long celebration of archives, by partnering with the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators and state and regional archival organizations to find creative ways to make the event more appealing to a broader audience (Banks, 2006). They also recommend more fervent attempts at reaching students who are at formative stages in their education and future career planning. Creating informational packets about archives careers for distribution amongst secondary school counselors and university departments as well as partnerships with the Historically Black College and Universities Archives Institute and the Native American Archives Institute could yield exponential growth in interest among minority populations (Banks, 2006). They also criticize the traditional exclusion of children under the age of twelve being allowed to visit archival institutions, stating that “it is between the ages of ten and fifteen that children are most influenced” (Banks, 2006, p. 492). Implementing programs that invite this population could create impressions that factor into the shaping of these children’s future careers. Banks expresses that there is no excuse to also take advantage of technological resources that are available to digitize interesting collections and make them available to the public while also creating websites that are not only attractive to researchers but casual users as well (Banks, 2006).

The 2011-2012 Diversity Speaker Bank Survey distributed by the SAA provides frustrating insight into how infrequently archival speakers discuss diversity when invited to speak to student chapter programs. Of the respondents, 64.29% stated that they have never heard a speaker talk about diversity in the profession or in archival collections (Society of American Archivists, 2012). Yet, when asked if they would attend an event featuring a speaker addressing diversity among archivists, 100% of respondents indicated that they would (Society of American Archivists, 2012). It is also of note that 53.57% of respondents stated that they were persons of

color (Society of American Archivists, 2012). This survey exemplifies a very clear interest in diversity among archival students. They want to hear about it and discuss it but are often not given the opportunity. The end of the survey included a collection of comments from the survey respondents. Among these comments were a few statements of note, such as one respondent stating that most of the discussions they have attended “mention this issue [diversity], but the entirety of the lecture is not focused on it” and that they feel “it could be very beneficial to hear these discussions from archivists who represent this diversity” (Society of American Archivists, 2012, p. 3). Another respondent stated they would “like to see the definition of ‘diversity’ be expanded within the profession” and that diversity “goes beyond race and ethnicity” (Society of American Archivists, 2012, p. 3). This is a valid sentiment and another aspect of the diversity problem within archives. We are not only seeing a lack of minority populations in terms of race and ethnicity. Things such as gender expression, disability, and sexual orientation should be considered as well.

Research Questions

This study will seek to analyze the effectiveness of the Society of American Archivists in addressing the diversity problem within the archival workforce. It is clear from reviewing the literature that the current demographics within the workforce remain predominantly White/Caucasian. However, there are still questions regarding whether the SAA has been completely ineffective in their diversity initiatives or if some impact has been made in other, perhaps smaller, ways. Pinpointing where progress *has* been made can encourage further effort in these areas. Aspects that are still lacking will need investigation to be addressed.

The research questions this study seeks to address are as follows:

1. How effective is the SAA in addressing the diversity problem in the archival workforce?

2. What efforts, if any, have been effective? How were they effective?
3. What can be done to increase the effectiveness of the SAA's diversity initiatives?

In order to address these questions, the definitions of both “diversity” and “effectiveness” need to be clarified. For the purposes of this study, “diversity” refers to the inclusion of underrepresented groups in terms of race, ethnicity, disability, gender expression, and sexual orientation. The “effectiveness” of the SAA will be measured by their ability to encourage diverse hires in archival institutions as well as help these institutions retain diverse teams and provide an environment of safety for minority groups. Other things such as the frequency of diversity being discussed at council meetings and student chapter visits should also be noted. The results of both the survey and subsequent interviews conducted for this study should provide insight into how far the SAA's diversity initiatives actually reach and if they work at all. Do they go beyond simply placing a diversity statement on their website and running censuses? Do minority archivists feel as though they are valued and encouraged in the field? Are their voices heard? Do they feel as though the SAA puts forth enough effort on their behalf? It is the hope of this study that answers to these questions can be brought to light.

Design and Methods of Data Collection

This study will be utilizing an explanatory sequential mixed method design to best understand the phenomenon of how the SAA has impacted diversity in the American Archives workforce and what can be done to increase the effectiveness of diversity initiatives. By collecting both quantitative and qualitative information, the authors aim to find trends, shifts, and novel insights across the field that address our research questions. From this information, we aim to make relevant and specific suggestions for action in the field. Using a “following a thread” data analysis process, statistical analysis of A*CENSUS data will form a groundwork for

identifying themes and topics that we will then explore further with a quantitative survey and qualitative interviewing methods.

Our methodology will consist of a preliminary longitudinal statistical analysis of the SAA's 2023 Archival Census and Education Needs Survey in the United States (A*CENSUS) data in comparison with the results published in the 2006 iteration of the A*CENSUS. The analysis will focus on overall demographic changes and diversity shifts in credentials, job functions and specializations, salaries, and management. Diversification of LIS and Archival education was identified as a major trend of discussion in LIS literature, so we will also evaluate any changes in the diversity represented in students in graduate programs. This analysis will illuminate changes in the field over the 20 years since the data collection of the first A*CENSUS and provide themes that will be investigated in further elements of this study.

Following the statistical analysis of the A*CENSUS, the authors will develop a survey to be distributed electronically to all SAA members and employees of SAA affiliated organizations. Electronic distribution in the form of an email with a hyperlink to the survey is the most cost-effective method to reach the over 6,200 professional archivists represented by the SAA, and create the least barriers to receiving responses and most anonymity for participants (Best & Krueger, 2008; Society of American Archivists, 2021d). The survey will be utilized at this stage of research to obtain data about values, thoughts, and feelings regarding the SAA and their diversity initiatives directly from respondents in a structured and measurable way that we can then use to identify themes for even further exploration. The 2006 A*CENSUS received an overall response rate of 47.18%, and 82.7% of the total individual members of the SAA completed the survey (Society of American Archivists, 2006), indicating that a survey distributed directly to SAA members would be returned with a response rate adequate to complete an

inferential analysis. The survey will consist of closed-ended, single response questions (e.g. “on a scale of 1-5 how familiar are you with the Mosaic Scholarship?”) that focus on evaluating SAA member’s experience with and awareness of the SAA and their initiatives impacts on diversity and changing demographics in the workplace, hiring and interviewing experience, internship experience and opportunities, and diverse collection management. While survey results will be anonymous, we will ask participants to optionally self-identify their SAA membership status, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, and disability status to allow for further population and sampling analysis. Participants will also be asked if they are willing to complete a phone interview following the results of the survey.

The restricted, single response nature of the survey will allow for statistical analysis of responses and allow the researchers to draw themes for further interview questions. Interviews will use descriptive and exploratory methods to ask open ended questions that will allow participants to further explain thoughts relating to the survey and allow the researchers to gather complex information from professionals in the field regarding our research questions. Interviews will be structured so that all participants will be asked the same set of questions, while informal enough to allow for follow up questions, deeper explanations, and novel or individual experiences and thoughts of participants to arise. Interviews will be held over the phone to mitigate some of the potential power, researcher/participant dynamic, and bias effects of in-person interviews. While this method does limit anonymity between participants and researchers, it creates a safer environment for discussion than focus groups because our population is made up of professional colleagues. Participants will be given an informed consent for disclosing the research goals, and the information that interviews will be recorded and transcribed for analysis. Transcriptions will be codified, themed, and horizontalized to best allow the researchers to draw

conclusions from participants experiences and thoughts on the phenomenon of SAA's impact on diversity in the field.

Population, Sampling, and Participants

With the intent of studying the efforts of the SAA, we will approach all SAA members and employees of SAA member organizations. The SAA offers four types of memberships; Individual, Student, Associate (for those interested in archives but not working as an archivist, or those living outside the United States), and Institutional. To get the largest number of respondents for the initial survey, we would utilize the SAA's email discussion list for announcements that are sent out to all members. Individuals with a personal membership and an institutional membership through their employer will be asked to identify as such in the survey. We will clarify in our initial recruitment for participants that the study is not run by the SAA itself and that identifying data for respondents would not be made available to the SAA organization or to employers.

We will use convenience sampling for participants in the survey distribution. This nonprobability method will allow the questionnaire in the first phase of the study to include all willing participants from within SAA members. While this may be a weaker method for ensuring the participation of those with diverse identities in the survey, we do not want to target them directly and require just them to participate in evaluating the impact of the SAA. The opinions of all SAA members who are willing to participate will provide valuable insight into the perceptions of workplace environments and the impact of SAA equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives.

For the qualitative portion of the study, we will employ nested sampling to recruit a subset of participants who have completed the survey and indicated that they would be willing to

participate in further discussion. From those that respond to the survey stating that they would be willing to participate, we will use stratified purposeful sampling to select interview participants. Stratified sampling will ensure that we have an equal representation of respondent demographics involved in the interview stage of the study. We will stratify our survey respondents into those that identify as one of the defined diverse groups, those that identify with more than one, and those that identify with none.

Ethics Statement

The researchers recognize that personal biases are an inherent part of research and seek to understand and mitigate these biases when possible. In order to pursue this research, we will attain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to ensure that our study adequately considers the ethical implications of our work, and that data, and survey and interview questions are presented and cared for in a way that will mitigate any potential for harm to participants and researchers. At each stage of the research process, participants will be given informed consent forms that explicitly outline the aim and purpose of this research, as well as their rights as participants to remain anonymous and withdraw from participation at any time.

The A*CENSUS statistical analysis will be made open source and externally reviewed to ensure accuracy and quality. The survey will allow for anonymous participation, and data collected will not be shared or used in any way outside of the study that can be linked back to any respondents, unless participants elect to provide contact information for the third stage of the study. Data provided by those who opt-in to providing identifying information will be handled in a way that ensures that their participation and answers are kept confidential. Participation and responses in the interview process will be kept confidential, and data will be deidentified following initial collection. If there is a potential for danger that we are made aware of during the

interview process, confidentiality will not be maintained, and participants will be made aware of this as part of their informed consent.

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