



## SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

### COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE CHAIR

### FEBRUARY 2024 REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Due to your Board Liaison on March 19, 2024**, for inclusion in the materials for the Board of Directors Meeting in New Orleans. Your report serves to inform the SAA Board of the committee/task force's accomplishments and as background for the action items.

- The Board asks all committee and task force chairs to use this Word document to report to the Executive Director ([ona\\_schmid@saa.org](mailto:ona_schmid@saa.org)), the SAA Secretary (Barbara.roth@unlv.edu), and your Board Liaison.
- Reports are required for the BOD meeting at the Annual Meeting of each year and optional in the BOD September meeting.
- **Please cc: all committee and task force members are carbon copied on the transmittal email.** If committee members have comments on the report to the Board, please contact the Committee/Task Force board liaison within 3 days.
- **Starting in 2022, Coordinator, Membership and Meetings, posts reports on Committee pages to improve transparency and assist incoming future chairs.** This means that
  - Committee chairs are responsible for making sure the entire committee has reviewed the report prior to submission
  - Reports do not include ad hominem attacks or otherwise defame, insult, or libel another person or group
- If you are able to join us in person, Committee and Task Force chairs are invited to join the Board for **breakfast on Saturday April 19, 2024.**

Report of the	Findings Verification Committee
From Chair	Ben Fitzhugh
Date	3/18/2024

#### 1. Membership and terms for your committee:

*So that the SAA Office's records are as complete as possible, please list your committee members and their terms here. Please also note if there are anticipated changes in a member's status before their term end date.*

Note: all committee members must review the report prior to submission

Name	Term Ends
Beth K. Scaffidi, Ph.D., J.D.	4/16/2024 (Pos1, elect)
Karen Brunso	4/25/2025 (Pos2, elect)
Michelle Christine Gray, M.S.	4/25/2025 (Pos3, appt)
Carol E. Colaninno, Ph.D, RPA	3/30/2026 (Pos4, appt/elect)
Ben Fitzhugh	5/1/2026 (chair, appt)
No changes to member's status	

## 2. Executive summary of Committee's/Task Force's activities over the past year:

*Please note that the activities summary should not exceed 250 words. Should the committee or task force be responding to a Board request for a draft document or report, refer to it in the summary and forwarded with this form as an attachment. If no such document was requested by the Board, the executive summary should be confined to the word limit.*

Note: no report should include ad hominem or denigrating comments about another party or individual. These reports are shared publicly to facilitate transparency among the organization, (such as helping future chairs understand the main policy concerns of the Committee or Task Force.)

The FVC convenes as requested to address cases submitted by individuals who have been harassed/assaulted. These individuals seek to exclude a Subject Individual from attendance at one or more future SAA meetings or events. We are also frequently asked to consult with SAA leadership and partner with other safety-oversight committees to advise on ways of strengthening SAA's meeting safety policy and related issues.

In 2023, the Executive Director asked the FVC to review and make recommendations to the Board on four cases and one appeal, which we did according to standing committee policies and protocols. In addition, we provided advice to SAA leadership on issues emerging through the Joint RPA-SAA Task Force that resulted in the newly established SAA partnership with the Register of Professional Archaeologists. This new partnership enables the FVC to forward cases to the RPA Grievance Committee where preexisting findings (as defined in the Meeting Safety Policy) are available or insufficiently detailed for FVC review. Instead of rejecting cases simply for lack of findings on submission, this new mechanism makes possible for claimants' cases to be investigated (by the RPA Grievance Committee) and findings established where warranted. In so doing, we hope the process will remove the lack of preexisting "findings" from halting case review and thereby improve the SAA's ability to provide a safe and supportive environment for meeting attendees.

## 3. Items for Board Consideration, if applicable. These are recommendations and requests that specifically require Board approval.

*These items range from statements that you may wish to be disseminated, requests to undertake projects, requests to disseminate results, or any other action for which a committee or task force needs specific Board guidance/approval. Please do not embed such items in your activities summary. These items must be separately listed in this section. These are actions you are asking the Board of Directors to take. Please also include a discussion of fiscal impacts, if any, but note*

*that budget requests occur in advance of the Fall Board meeting (and not as part of this report).*

*Should you have questions about whether any of your Committee's items require Board approval, please consult with your Board Liaison prior to submitting your report. We also recommend that you run a draft of your report by your liaison before you "officially" submit it.*

Note: no report should include ad hominem or denigrating comments about another party or individual. These reports are shared publicly to facilitate transparency among the organization, (such as helping future chairs understand the main policy concerns of the Committee or Task Force.)

In light of recent cases and one appeal, the FVC requests that the SAA Board further amend the SAA Meeting Safety Policy to allow a mechanism for penalized Subject Individuals to demonstrate their readiness to return to SAA meetings and events following an interval of exclusion. Currently, the only process for appeal is within the 10 days following notification of Board action in response to an FVC recommendation. That should remain, but it is only intended to allow Subject Individuals to alert the Board of mitigating circumstances that were not known at the time of FVC review and reporting to the Board. When a penalty is enacted, the only mechanism for the return of the Subject Individual is the expiration of the term of penalty, regardless of whether or not the individual is actually fit to resume participation, and there is no opportunity for the Subject Individual to request a reduced penalty in light of their own actions to make positive changes in their knowledge of sexual misconduct and appropriate behaviors. The existing policy then puts the FVC and the Board in the difficult position of trying to scale penalties relative to perceived future risks, and it does not put the onus on the Subject Individual to demonstrate corrective action. We believe an exclusion should end only when a Subject Individual has taken appropriate steps to understand the consequences of their past behavior and can demonstrate their commitment to avoiding harmful behavior in the future. We strongly favor the addition of a step in the process by which a penalized individual must request review of their case prior to their return to SAA meetings and events. With such a policy change, the duration of the original penalty would become less important than the steps taken by the Subject Individual towards rehabilitation. We propose that, to return to SAA meetings and events, penalized individuals should demonstrate an understanding of ways to engage that are non-harassing, non-threatening, and non-exclusionary of any SAA members/participants. The onus should be on the Subject Individual to demonstrate readiness to rejoin SAA activities, not the FVC and Board to correctly estimate the interval needed for Subject Individuals to "get the message". The Subject Individual should be expected to produce compelling evidence of their work to educate themselves about the impacts of their actions *since imposition of the penalty*. In the next section we propose a motion to implement this policy change.

#### **4. Draft motions, if appropriate. (Optional)**

*Drafting a suggested motion or motions for any requests noted above will help the Board more clearly understand your request and increase the "fit" between the request you make and corresponding Board action. Please keep in mind that suggested motions may be revised or not accepted by the Board, whose responsibility it is to consider the full range of member needs. If you choose to include suggested motion(s) with your report, it is essential that you work with your liaison before you submit your report. They will be able to provide examples of motions that you can use as models for the ones you create.*

The FVC proposes the following motion

- That the SAA Meeting Safety Policy be amended to include a requirement/opportunity that Subject Individuals barred under the Meeting Safety Policy from attending SAA meetings and events submit a declaration of their fitness to return to active SAA meeting/event attendance. Such a declaration must include a description of steps taken to educate themselves about the harms caused by the behaviors for which they were penalized and clear and specific explanation of why and how they will be able to return to attendance without inflicting further trauma on SAA participants. This statement should provide specific evidence of self-awareness and understanding of the personal, professional, and structural costs of their prior behavior. Subject Individual declarations should be submitted to the SAA Executive Director to be conveyed to the Findings Verification Committee ideally with the original Report that established the penalty (if it's still available for transmittal). The FVC will be responsible for evaluating the declaration and submitting a recommendation to the Board who will decide on whether or not the Subject Individual's penalty will be lifted, and under what, if any, additional terms.