



Association of
Canadian Archivists
Association canadienne
des archivistes

Moving Forward Together

ACA Strategic Plan, 2018-2021



June 2018



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I. INTRODUCTION

ACA contracted The Portage Group (TPG) to support the development of a member-drive strategic plan for the 2018-2021 planning horizon. In preparation for the strategic plan development process, in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with ten (10) internal stakeholders, including members as well as volunteers from across the country. A member survey was also conducted in December 2017, with 194 responses (162 individuals and 24 institutions). This research is summarized in the **ACA Member Survey Report**, under separate cover.

The ACA board and Strategic Plan Task Force met October 20-21, 2017 in Ottawa, and February 12-13, 2018 in Vancouver, to discuss the implications of the research findings and to develop a forward-thinking strategy to guide the association into the future. The workshop was facilitated by TPG senior consultant, Carol-Anne Moutinho.

Two virtual epanel discussions were held from May 23-25, 2018, with individual and institution members of ACA. The purpose of the epanel discussions was to gather additional feedback on the draft plan prior to submission for approval by the broader membership at our Annual General Meeting in June. Participants for the two epanel groups included twelve (12) individual members; and, nine (9) institutional members. The feedback from this consultation is available in the **ACA Strategic Plan Epanel Report**, under separate cover.

The following document summarizes the output from this important process and sets a clear path forward for ACA for the coming three-year planning horizon.

ACA Strategic Plan 2018-2021

ACA Vision: *As a recognized sector leader, ACA is the 'go-to' source for archives and records professionals in Canada, evolving proactively to address the trends and issues impacting the organization and the profession. It fosters diversification through development of an interdisciplinary network to support the living memory that exists across communities and in Canadian society.*

Membership in ACA is a 'must-have' for a diverse and dynamic profession, as it offers continuing professional development for members at all points of their career and promotes archivists as a recognized and understood profession in the eyes of the public, government, business and industry, and other stakeholders.

As a member-driven organization, ACA is accessible, listens to its members and can act as a voice for archivists in the public sphere. Where there is mutual opportunity to benefit and enhance member service, it collaborates with other organizations in allied fields.

| Strategic Priorities | Key Objectives |
|--|---|
| 1. Education and Professional Development | 1.1: Refresh guidelines for graduate-level education. |
| | 1.2: Develop suite of professional training programs. |
| | 1.3: Explore accreditation of educational programs (options white paper). |
| 2. Advocacy | 2.1: Develop robust internal response protocol. |
| | 2.2: Develop procedures to seek consultation from membership about advocacy issues. |
| | 2.3: Establish agreements/MOUs with other organizations to coordinate/add strength to advocacy work |
| | 2.4: Develop materials to promote archives and records professionals to students. |
| 3. Membership Development | 3.1: Explore opportunities to provide additional membership benefits to ACA through relationships with other professional associations. |
| | 3.2: Refresh criteria for ACA Awards. |
| | 3.3: Better understand current and future needs of institutional members. |
| | 3.4: Better understand baseline information about members and lapsed members. |
| | 3.5: Develop diversity framework to broaden and enrich membership demographics. |
| 4. Communication | 4.1: Enable collaborative technologies to facilitate work by ACA volunteers. |
| | 4.2: Deploy and maintain a fully operational website that is interactive, vibrant and regularly updated. |
| | 4.3: Produce and disseminate regular communications to members. |
| 5. Organizational Performance | 5.1: Implement a new members services system that is fully integrated with the ACA website, allowing for members-only content and better information sharing. |
| | 5.2: Refresh the ACA Operational Manual for staff, board and volunteers. |
| Key Performance Indicators | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase member satisfaction benchmark (via member survey) from 58% to 65% by 2021. • Increase member awareness (measured by member survey) by 10% by 2021. • Increase member satisfaction with communication to from 56% to 70% by 2021. • Grow membership by 2% annually. • Increase total association revenues by 10% over 3 years. | |

II. A BOLD NEW VISION FOR ACA

As a recognized sector leader, ACA is the ‘go-to’ source for archives and records professionals in Canada, evolving proactively to address the trends and issues impacting the organization and the profession. It fosters diversification through development of an interdisciplinary network to support the living memory that exists across communities and in Canadian society.

Membership in ACA is a ‘must-have’ for a diverse and dynamic profession, as it offers continuing professional development for members at all points of their career and promotes archivists as a recognized and understood profession in the eyes of the public, government, business and industry, and other stakeholders.

As a member-driven organization, ACA is accessible, listens to its members and can act as a voice for archivists in the public sphere. Where there is mutual opportunity to benefit and enhance member service, it collaborates with other organizations in allied fields.

Who ACA Serves

The work of ACA benefits many stakeholders; however, ACA’s primary stakeholders include:

- Archivists and records-management professionals
- Archives and records management students
- Archival educators
- Institutions¹
- *Broader member focus (e.g. French-language archivists, practitioners, community professionals)²*

¹ The workshop participants engaged in discussion about whether ACA should continue to focus on institutions as members of the association and agreed that further discussion is needed. Exploring the value ACA provides to this member group was a focus of the epanel discussions in May 2018 and may be found in the ACA Strategic Plan Epanel Report, under separate cover.

² Workshop participants discussed whether ACA should broaden membership beyond its existing member groups to include others in the information management environment and agreed further discussion and consideration is needed.

III. ACA VALUE

The ACA benefits its members because it:

- ✓ Gives members a 'voice' in developing effective advocacy within and outside of institutions, and amongst administrators and decision-makers
- ✓ Tracks record of success with public-intersecting advocacy efforts
- ✓ Provides a strong brand recognition for the archives and records profession
- ✓ Engages a diverse range of professionals and breaks down silos between the archival and related or allied professions.
- ✓ Preserves professional memory while providing front-line, bleeding-edge thinking
- ✓ Is a key source of information for the public
- ✓ Is a 'Connector' in providing access to and a network for the archival community
- ✓ Enables interaction with industry
- ✓ Offers opportunities to learn and grow professionally
- ✓ Gives strength and support to members
- ✓ Provides diverse value delivery mechanisms (e.g. technology)

IV. STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

The stakeholder research conducted by the SPTF led to the following conclusions that were used to inform the strategic discussion:

- The archival profession and the sector landscape are changing. The research pointed to the changing role and scope of the archival profession and identified funding constraints as the most important trend and the core of the issues facing members. There are other public and private sector organizations that offer information, services and other support to archival organizations and professionals.
- The foundation of ACA appears to be largely in place: ACA is performing well across its core services (with some exceptions as noted in the survey report). Members are also proud to belong to the association and want to see it succeed; however, they have clearly articulated a need for improvement across several areas of the organization.
- The members consulted indicated that ACA is not a member-driven organization. ACA would not exist without its members and it is critical that their input play a key role in driving the strategic direction and priorities of the organization.
- Members were clear about where they want ACA to focus its time, effort and resources:
 1. **Education and Professional Development:** The annual conference, dissemination and/or production of research and publications, information and resources to keep members up-to-date, as well as other Professional Development/education opportunities were identified as the areas to which members want ACA to dedicate the bulk of its time, efforts and resources. Qualitative feedback and input from the initial planning session suggest that ACA needs to ‘up its game’ in this area in terms of quality and quantity of opportunities provided.
 2. **Advocacy:** Advocacy was also identified as a priority for members and is an area where ACA is considered to be under-performing. Members don’t feel ACA is effective or having an impact, particularly as it pertains to government, media and the public.
 3. **Working Collaboratively with Others in the Archival and Related Professions:** This was identified as a secondary area of focus for members.
- Effective communication is considered to be a significant gap by ACA members. Members are in the dark when it comes to understanding what the ACA is doing and want more information in

areas such as strategy, governance and finance to be able to hold the association leadership accountable. Also, the membership believes that the ACA should be conducting regular outreach, acting on member feedback and communicating back to members that they have been heard.

- Members do not view the ACA as an organization that is nimble or proactive. Because they have not in the past felt engaged in the decision-making process, members also lack confidence in the board and feel decisions are made by a small group of individuals behind closed doors. Working toward the development – and communication – of a member-driven strategy, and reviewing ACA’s governance to ensure it is transparent, democratic and structured, in alignment with the strategic direction and priorities of the organization, are both suggestions to consider.

V. ACA STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

ACA’s strategic priority areas reflect member views that the focus of the organization should be on providing excellence in the areas of education, professional development and training, as well as advocacy to external groups, such as government, related professions and the public. It also reflects a more active membership focus, as well as emphasis on effective communications and organizational effectiveness. The final two priorities were identified as *enabling* priorities for the organization, because success in these areas would enable organization-wide success.

| ACA Strategic Priorities 2018 - 2021 | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Education and Professional Development |
| 2. | Advocacy |
| 3. | Membership |
| Enabling Strategic Priorities | |
| 4. | Communications |
| 5. | Organizational Performance |

VI. ACA OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

The following pages outline each of ACA's strategic priority areas, including broad objectives and supporting strategies for the 2018-2021 planning horizon.

Strategic Priority #1: Education and Professional Development

Education and Professional Development are a top priority area for members. Members were clear that they want time, effort and resources allocated towards: the conference; education; professional development and training; providing/disseminating research and publications; and, keeping members informed of trends and issues. Professional certification and programs accreditation were also identified during recent leadership discussions as areas of focus for ACA.

| ACA Strategic Priority 1: Professional Development | | |
|---|--|--|
| Objective 1.1: Refresh guidelines for graduate-level education. | | |
| <i>Strategies</i> | <i>Accountability</i> | <i>Timeline</i> |
| 1.1.1 Foundational program. | Education Committee. | In progress, to be completed by August 2018. |
| Objective 1.2: Develop suite of professional training programs. | | |
| <i>Strategies</i> | <i>Accountability</i> | <i>Timeline</i> |
| 1.2.1 Develop a PD (professional development) Matrix based on education guidelines. To include focus on entry, early, mid-career. To also include technical, core knowledge, admin/management. This will be used to track PD offerings. | Education Committee to develop balanced program. ACA staff to maintain evidence base and member feedback. | Early 2019. |
| 1.2.2 Develop conference stream based on PD matrix. | Education committee to ensure balance. Conference program committee to ensure delivery. | In place for ACA 2019. |
| 1.2.3 Develop regional offerings where ACA is welcome and in collaboration with provincial | Education committee. | Late 2019. |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------|
| associations, to be informed by matrix. | | |
| 1.2.4 Partner with other associations to offer professional development opportunities, e.g., CCA, ARMA, SAA. | Education committee. | Late 2019. |
| Objective 1.3: Explore accreditation of education programs (options white paper). | | |
| <i>Strategies</i> | <i>Accountability</i> | <i>Timeline</i> |
| 1.3.1 Look at overseas models (e.g. UK) and other (non-archival) accreditation models. Also consider the sustainability dimension. | Education committee. | Late 2019. |

Strategic Priority #2: Advocacy

Advocacy is a high priority area on which members want ACA to focus time, effort and resources through lobbying and promotion.

| ACA Strategic Priority 2: Advocacy | | |
|---|---|---------------------|
| Objective 2.1: Develop robust internal response protocol. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 2.1.1 Develop a protocol for responding to advocacy issue and issuing response. | Advocacy committee. Governance committee. Coordinate with the Strategies developed by the SCCA Task Force on Awareness. | 2018-2019. |
| 2.1.2 Publish regular briefs or updates from Committee on advocacy issues | Advocacy committee. | Early 2019. |
| Objective 2.2: Develop procedures to seek consultation from membership about advocacy issues. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 2.2.1 Refresh Advocacy page on website and add 'raise an issue' submission form. | Advocacy committee. | Late 2018. |
| 2.2.2 Publish regular briefs or updates from Committee on advocacy issues, invite and track feedback. | Advocacy committee. | Early 2019. |
| Objective 2.3: Establish agreements/MOUs with other organizations to coordinate/add strength to advocacy work. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 2.3.1 Investigate existing/past advocacy agreements. | Advocacy committee & Board. | 2018-2021, ongoing. |
| 2.3.2 Create a database of experts that includes members and non-member information professionals | | |
| 2.3.3 Communicate partnership benefits to members. | | |

| Objective 2.4: Develop materials to promote archives and records professionals to students. | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 2.4.1 Develop promotional material for undergraduate and graduate students. | Outreach committee. | Late-2020. |

Strategic Priority #3: Membership Development

For the ACA to be more representative of member needs and priorities was articulated as an important need in the member survey, and as a theme during recent ACA leadership discussions. An enhanced focus on becoming a member-driven and engagement-oriented association is reflected in the strategic priority below.

| ACA Strategic Priority 3: Membership Development | | |
|--|---|--|
| Objective 3.1: Explore opportunities to provide additional membership benefits to ACA members through relationships with other associations. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 3.1.1 Strategic Alliance Task Force to recommend opportunities for alliances with sector associations. | Board. Membership committee. Strategic Alliance Task Force. | Mid-2018. |
| Objective 3.2: Refresh criteria for ACA Awards. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 3.2.1 Review and refresh criteria for ACA Awards to better acknowledge contributions from early, mid, and late-career professionals and volunteer contributions. | Awards committee. | Late 2018; New criteria implemented for 2019 Conference. |
| Objective 3.3: Better understand present and future needs of institutional members. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 3.3.1 Membership Committee to plan for stakeholder engagement(s) with institutional members and produce report on current needs. | Membership committee. | 2018-2021, ongoing. |
| Objective 3.4: Better understand baseline information about members and lapsed members. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 3.4.1 Extract and analyze data from membership services system, report on current state. | Membership committee with support from ACA staff. | 2019 AGM. |
| 3.4.2 Ask for aggregated data from archival university programs. | | |

| Objective 3.5: Develop diversity framework to broaden and enrich membership. | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 3.5.1 After June 2018 AGM, issue call for membership to participate in Diversity Framework Task Force (DFTF). | DFTF and Board, with staff support. | Report completed by AGM 2019. |
| 3.5.2 Task Force to develop Terms of Reference. | | |
| 3.5.3 DFTF to undertake: (1) review of existing diversity frameworks for sector and key non-sector associations, e.g., SAA, CHA, etc.; (2) review baseline information about ACA membership; (3) develop survey to gather more information about membership; and, (4) identify priority areas of diversification that are important to ACA members and for membership development. | | |
| 3.5.4 Task Force propose a diversity framework that will: (1) identify priorities for outreach to broaden and enrich membership; (2) identify programming that can better reflect archives as a diverse profession; and, (3) recommendations for improving ACA governance to better meet the needs of a diverse archives profession. | | |
| 3.5.5 Refresh membership criteria to support diversity framework. | Membership committee. | Late 2019. |
| 3.5.6 Review committee Terms of Reference and governance structures to align with diversity framework. | Governance committee. | Late 2019. |
| 3.5.7 Launch diversity framework as a critical commitment of ACA. | Board. | Early 2020. |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 3.5.8 Develop assessment criteria to use in regular reviews of membership development against diversity framework. | Membership committee. | Early 2020, ongoing. |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|

Enabling Strategic Priority #4: Communication

Communication and engagement with the members was highlighted as an area to improve both by members and the board. In addition to information about programs, services and resources, members want more information on ACA activities so that they can understand what is going on and keep the association leadership accountable. Better communication on how ACA initiatives are driven by member priorities is also a requirement.

| ACA Enabling Strategic Priority 4: Communication | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Objective 4.1: Enable collaborative technologies to facilitate work by ACA volunteers. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 4.1.1 Roll out MS Office 365 and deploy OneDrive share drive for volunteer, committee and Board use. | Staff. | Mid-2018. |
| 4.1.2 Roll out Zoom for enabling video conferencing for volunteers, committees and Board. | | |
| Objective 4.2: Deploy and maintain a fully operational website that is interactive, vibrant and regularly updated. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 4.2.1 Establish a Task Force to coordinate the implementation of a new integrated website and membership management system. Task Force will oversee contract with Wild Apricot (membership services system) and any third-party support necessary to implement system. | Board. | New website to launch Fall 2018. |
| 4.2.2 Committees to publish monthly minutes and/or regular updates to the website. | All committees, with staff support. | Early 2019. |
| 4.2.3 All committees and SISs to refresh Terms of Reference and update text for publishing on website. | All volunteers with staff support. | Early 2019. |

| | | |
|--|---|---------------------|
| | Board to approve any changes to Terms of Reference. | |
| Objective 4.3: Produce and disseminate regular communications to members. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 4.3.1 Refresh Bulletin template and produce regular updates to members. | Outreach committee. | Early 2019. |
| 4.3.2 Use live video broadcasting at conference and to communicate with members. | Outreach committee. | By 2019 Conference. |

Enabling Strategic Priority #5: Organizational Performance

Maintaining and continually updating an effective organizational structure and clarifying ACA's place in the archival system were identified as top priorities by the association leadership. The member survey results further indicated some potential challenges with the ACA's governance model, decision-making structure and outdated bylaws which should also be addressed under this priority area.

| ACA Enabling Strategic Priority 5: Operational Performance | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Objective 5.1: Implement a new member services system that is fully integrated with the ACA website, allowing for members-only content and better information sharing. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 5.1.1 Implement new membership management system hosted by Wild Apricot (see strategy 4.2.1). | Task Force and Staff. | Late 2018. |
| 5.1.2 Establish new web-mediated process for membership applications and renewals. | Task Force and Staff. | Late 2018. |
| 5.1.3 Refresh members directory in accordance with applicable privacy legislations. | Staff. | Early 2019. |
| Objective 5.2: Refresh the ACA Operations Manual for Staff, Board and Volunteers. | | |
| Strategies | Accountability | Timeline |
| 5.2.1 Review refreshed committee and SIS Terms of Reference for consistency and comparison against the ACA by-law. | Governance committee. | Early 2019. |
| 5.2.2 Bring together all operational materials and guidance and make accessible on the ACA website. | Governance committee and Staff. | Mid-2019. |

VII. HOW WILL ACA MEASURE SUCCESS?

Specific targets will be set to measure success of this ACA plan as it moves from strategy development to implementation. The following were identified as the broad key performance indicators to be measured through surveys and office data:

- Increase member satisfaction benchmark from 58% to 65% by 2021.
- Increase member awareness by 10% by 2021.
- Increase member satisfaction with communication to from 56% to 70% (the average across other professional associations benchmarked) by 2021.
- Grow membership by 2% annually.
- Increase total association revenues by 10% over 3 years.³

Additional measures to be discussed further by the association leadership include the following:

- Improve member retention rate (target TBD once baseline has been established).
- Relationships with partner organizations (metric TBD – further discussion needed).
- A reserves or operating ratio metric, TBD.

³ Note this measure was included to monitor member engagement in addition to financial performance, therefore increases would also be expected in areas such as events revenues, etc.

VIII. NEXT STEPS

Following the approval by the Board, the strategic plan will be posted to the ACA website for review. The Strategic Planning Task Force will present a high-level overview of the plan to members at the Conference Members Input Session on June 7, 2018. Afterwards, members will have until the end of the month of June to continue reviewing the plan and providing feedback. All feedback will be tracked and addressed as necessary.

Members will vote on the implementation of the plan by electronic vote.

ACA staff and volunteers will take the next steps necessary to implement the plan and to turn the new vision for ACA into a reality.

The Board and Committees will incorporate associated key priorities and strategies into their work plans and report regularly on progress. Staff will provide regular updates on success measurements.

A full review of progress will be made prior to the AGM in 2019, 2020 and 2021, at which time the ACA may course-correct and/or address any alterations to key priorities and strategies.

Much work is ahead; however, there has never been a more exciting time to be a part of ACA!