The following statements were given by the candidates seeking election as officers or council members to the Society of Ohio Archivists in 2023. Voting will take place at the annual meeting being held May 12, 2023.

Candidates were asked to answer all questions in one 350-500-word essay.

What skills and experiences can you offer to SOA?

Tell us about your past experience with professional organizations that would make you a good fit for this position.

What are some of the most important themes/issues the SOA should address in the next 3-5 years?

Candidates’ Statements

Vice President / President-elect
Matt Francis
Archivist, Ohio Northern University

I am honored to have been nominated for the position of Vice-President/President-Elect with the Society of Ohio Archivists and to have the opportunity to continue serving our members through a new role. As an archivist for fifteen years, I have worked at archives in Wyoming, New York, Pennsylvania, and now Ohio. As I toured America during my archival career, I have been a member of multiple state, regional, and national professional organizations, all of which provided me with amazing opportunities to learn from, and collaborate with, brilliant colleagues involved with archival and public history work.

When I returned to Ohio in 2018, I immediately joined SOA, and shortly thereafter I was asked if I would be willing to chair the organization’s membership committee. After a significant amount of consideration, I agreed to take on the role despite being nervous about taking on a leadership role when I was so new to our organization. Luckily, it turned out that I was surrounded by dedicated individuals who helped me transition into the leadership role, and then continued to be amazing colleagues every step of the way. Since then, I have been privileged to additionally serve as co-chair of the recently merged Membership & Awards Committee, and now as co-chair of the Educational Programming Committee.

While serving in these positions I have worked to support goals set forth by SOA Council, while also trying to help push SOA to be an inclusive organization that provides meaningful value to our membership. It is my hope that if elected that I will be able to build on these experiences, along with my past service to other archival and public history organizations as I serve SOA in a new role.

As I reflect back on my time with SOA, I see an organization that has not been afraid to evolve to try to meet the needs of our membership, and the larger society that we serve. More importantly, I see an organization that is not afraid to look at itself critically as it works to continually improve its operations and programming. Now, as we continue to emerge from the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we find ourselves at another natural point of reflection and transition. Thus, if I am provided with the privilege to continue serving SOA as the Vice-President/President-Elect, I would collaborate with our leadership and our broader community to continue building on the work that is currently taking place, while keeping a focus on our organizational sustainability, continued efforts to further democratize our organization, and working to create an inclusive and responsive environment for all members.

To be clear, there will be challenging conversations and potentially difficult decisions to be made as we continue to evolve, but this is a path we must continue to travel as we aspire to meet our stated values as an organization. Thank you for your consideration.

Previous Positions: Processing Archivist, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, 2008-2011; College Archivist, College Libraries, SUNY Potsdam, 2011-2013; Head of Collections Management, Special Collections Library, Penn State University, 2013-2017; Associate Head, Special Collections Library, Penn State University, 2017-2018

Education: M.A. Public History, archival administration

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concentration, Wright State University, 2008; B.A. history, Bluffton University, 2002

**Professional Associations:** Society of Ohio Archivists, 2018-Present: Membership Committee, Chair, 2018-2020; Membership and Awards Committee, Co-Chair, 2020-2022; Educational Programming Committee, Co-Chair, 2022-present; Society of American Archivists, 2008-Present: Theodore Calvin Pease Award Subcommittee, 2021-2022; Mentoring

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**Secretary**

**Shelby Beatty**  
Archivist & Records Manager, Sinclair Community College

I’m incredibly honored to run for the Society of Ohio Archivists Secretary position. I believe my work as a records manager, past experience as Secretary of the Wright State University Public History Professionals (2015-2016) and recording minutes for various committees at the Ohio History Connection (2017-2020) qualify me to run for this important role.

I began my archives career nearly eight years ago while working towards my Master’s in Public History from Wright State University. Since that time, I’ve worked a variety of positions that have enhanced my organization and communication skills. My early experiences include serving as a contract Project Archivist, which required intense attention to detail, organization and time-management skills, and being extremely conscious of member ideas and deadlines for successful project completion.

In my current role as Archivist & Records Manager of Sinclair Community College, I’ve developed and strengthened a variety of skills. My work involves promoting sound record keeping in compliance with the Ohio Public Records Act, collecting and preserving institutional history, and promoting the archives through digitization and community outreach. I enjoy working with others to identify their records management needs and finding solutions to keep digital records effectively. I would love to assist SOA in updating its retention schedule, if needed.

SOA was incredibly instrumental in beginning my career as an archivist. I was thrilled to showcase my work on using primary source materials in local school classrooms at the 2015 Spring Meeting. I was also awarded a student scholarship, which was very encouraging as a young archivist. I’ve made many professional connections through the society and would be delighted to serve in a SOA leadership position.

I would like to see SOA continue to support students in joining the profession. I work largely with community college students that have a long way to go in their educational journey to becoming archivists. I want to ensure these students are aware of the benefits of SOA, like the Annual Meeting and scholarship opportunities, as well as encourage new ways of bringing students into the field. This may include mentorship opportunities for students early in their education and providing information about resources, like publications and practical training sessions, to support entering the field professionally.

I also want to see SOA continue digital initiatives and assist members in finding solutions for retaining digital archival content. It can be a financial burden to acquire appropriate software, and in my experience, may also be difficult to get stakeholders on board. SOA may consider working with members to advocate for proper solutions through resources, like tip sheets and information sessions, that will help them strengthen their case.


**Education:** M.A., Public History, concentration in Archival Administration, Wright State University, 2016; B.A., Social Science Education, Wright State University, 2014

**Professional Associations:** Ohio Digitization Interest Group (OhioDIG), 2023-Present; Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA), 2022-Present; National Association of Government Archives & Records Administrators (NAGARA), 2022-Present; ARMA International 2020-Present; Dayton Chapter Board Director, 2022-Present; Society of Ohio Archivists, 2015-Present; Wright State University Public History Professionals, 2014-2016; Secretary, 2015-2016; Miami Valley Archives Roundtable (MVAR), 2014-present

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My journey to working in Ohio libraries and archives is relatively unconventional. Like all of us, I loved history, but modern history never connected with me as a student. My heart was in the ancient past, which led to a history and classics double major with a focus on the Greco-Roman world. This course provided general historical context and knowledge, and the language skills to read ancient authors in their own words. Shifting my focus to ancient art and material culture in graduate school added a new piece to the puzzle. Upon graduation, the conclusion of a grant-funded position, and the lack of job prospects (shocking, I know), I found myself back in Columbus, deep in state and local history. I quickly discovered that the only reason I never enjoyed modern history is because it was never presented to me in a way that centered the human experience and inspired inward reflection. We, as an organization and GLAM professionals, are in a unique position to use our collections to foster empathy-building by elevating underrepresented voices; using the past as a lens to better understand ourselves; and sharing the stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Encouraging members to engage the communities we serve with the past in a way that sheds light on contemporary issues that are important to them is one area I think SOA should prioritize in the coming years. This endeavor exemplifies the field’s relevance and continued importance. Another worthwhile focus area is increasing awareness of the field to younger audiences—making GLAM related fields more accessible and welcoming to underrepresented groups, developing opportunities for us to meet young people where they are, and bring to life the aspects of history that are meaningful to them. This work might take the shape of more targeted outreach developed with youth input, new or revitalized social media activity, or creative digital projects.

Although I’ve only been a member of SOA since 2020, I’ve been attending the annual meeting and other associated programming since 2016. I’ve seen the organization evolve over the last seven years and I’m excited to help lead the organization as a Council member as it continues to grow and adapt. As one of the original members of the Social Justice & Black Lives Matter Task Force, I helped develop the goals and mission of the group which will guide SOA’s DEAI efforts across the organization. As a member of the OhioDIG planning committee, I have built relationships with cultural heritage organizations across the state and have a solid understanding of the successes and limitations of different types and sizes of institutions. If elected to Council, I look forward to continuing to build relationships with all of you, and to learn and listen to the wisdom and experiences you share. Thank you for your consideration!


**Education:** M.A. History of Art and Archaeology, New York University, 2014; B.A., History (major) and Classics (major), The Ohio State University, 2012

**Professional Associations:** Ohio Digitization Interest Group, member since 2016, planning committee 2019-present; Society of Ohio Archivists, member since 2016, planning committee 2019-present; Ohio History Connection, member since 2016. I’ve seen the organization evolve over the last seven years and I’m excited to help lead the organization as a Council member as it continues to grow and adapt. As one of the original members of the Social Justice & Black Lives Matter Task Force, I helped develop the goals and mission of the group which will guide SOA’s DEAI efforts across the organization. As a member of the OhioDIG planning committee, I have built relationships with cultural heritage organizations across the state and have a solid understanding of the successes and limitations of different types and sizes of institutions. If elected to Council, I look forward to continuing to build relationships with all of you, and to learn and listen to the wisdom and experiences you share. Thank you for your consideration!

**Professional Associations:** Ohio Digitization Interest Group, member since 2016, planning committee 2019-present; Society of Ohio Archivists, member since 2020, Social Justice and Black Lives Matter Task Force 2020-2022; Library Leadership Ohio, 2021 cohort; Digital Public Library of America, Community Liaison, 2017-2018