



COUNCIL OF
NOVA SCOTIA ARCHIVES

Council of Nova Scotia Archives
Education Program Renewal Working Group
Final Report

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1. Introduction

The Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA) Education Program Renewal Working Group was established by the Executive of the CNSA on January 11, 2019. This report will outline the process conducted during the past year, and provide recommendations to the CNSA Executive for improvements to the education program that will address our members' and other stakeholder's wishes for relevant, valuable, and innovative educational opportunities.

2. Background

In 2015, the CNSA Renewal and Sustainability Committee submitted their final [report](#) with a number of recommendations in the following key areas:

- Governance
- Outreach and Services
- Education and Training
- Funding (Provincial Archival Development Program)
- MemoryNS
- Public Awareness and Marketing

The Education and Training recommendations focused on the following components of the CNSA's programming: core curriculum, individual workshops, annual conference, and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) course "Introduction to Archives" offered in 2012.

In summary, the key observations noted the need to analyze and explore some of the more pressing challenges associated with the CNSA educational programming such as low core curriculum attendance, identification of appropriate workshop topics and delivery schedule, and potential for alternate methods for course delivery such as online and distance options. As well, a mentorship program to reduce members' isolation and to enhance professional networks was also recommended.

Committee formation and Logistics

The Education Program Renewal Working Group was formed as an ad-hoc committee of the CNSA in January 2019 with a completion date of January 2020. Committee membership and development of the Terms of Reference were prepared, with an update provided to members at the CNSA AGM and Conference in May 2019.

The Terms of Reference were developed by the Committee with amendments proposed and adopted by the CNSA Executive. See Appendix A for the Terms of Reference.

During the CNSA Conference in May, the Committee hosted a session to solicit feedback and input from the membership as well as other stakeholders in attendance. See Appendix B for a summary of feedback. As well, the Committee benefitted from concurrent work happening through the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA). The ACA Education Committee is conducting a review of professional development opportunities offered by Canadian archival organizations from 2015-2019. The purpose of the review is to aid in tailoring the ACA's future professional development opportunities to better suit the needs of the archival community. This extensive document has offered insight into current educational trends both in Canada as well as the United States. (Contact Committee Chair for the ACA document)

The following sets of information have been used to inform this report:

- [CNSA Needs Assessment](#) (2007)
- [User Needs Survey Report](#) (2011)
- RASC Committee Report (2014)
- ACA Professional Development Audit (2019)
- Cultural Innovation Fund Application (2017) **Did not go forward
- CNSA Members Feedback/Input Session (2019)
- Education and Training for Heritage and Information Sector in Nova Scotia (2015)
- Nova Scotia Community College Course Development (2009 – 2012)
- Input from past and current CNSA Advisors

3. Recommendations

Vision

The proposed vision for educational programming delivered by the CNSA is to offer sustainable, relevant and innovative instruction and mentorship intended to advance the educational and professional development goals of our members. The educational programming should not only take into consideration our current members, but address external stakeholder needs such as prospective archival and information professionals who, in time, may become valuable CNSA members. Our goal is to offer a suite of educational opportunities to better serve the membership at varying levels of competency while addressing practical challenges such as time, geographic location and financial costs.

Proposed Programming

Introduction

From past and current feedback from various information sources compiled for this report, it appears that there are four significant educational areas needing improvement, new development and/or refinement. As well, we have noted where there is overlap between the sections such as incorporating workshops or workshop style delivery into the conference agendas or increasing networking or mentorship opportunities during the conference. The following are recommendations for the Executive to consider in each of the four categories.

Category 1: Core Curriculum

The core curriculum is an established program designed to provide CNSA members with training in specific archival functions, via 6 two-day workshops; participants who successfully complete all six courses earn a certificate. For reference, a description of the core curriculum is available online: <https://www.councilofnsarchives.ca/workshops-training/>. Graduating and obtaining certification is a key motivator for those enrolling in the core curriculum. Past reports and current feedback indicate the core curriculum is a valued and welcome service offered by the CNSA. However, members find that travel time and aligning their schedules with the delivery dates and locations can be challenging. As well, the generic approach to the curriculum can deter members or potential members who would like a more curated or specialized approach to the training modules. Our proposed recommendations to the core curriculum include the following three approaches:

- Traditional Delivery

Members value the opportunity to attend in-person workshops. The benefits include networking opportunities, as well as having real-time support from the Archives Advisor while completing the workshop exercises. We are recommending that the presentation content be updated as well as presentation format be reviewed during the consulting and development phase. This update would include current standards provided by national bodies such as the Canadian Archival Accession Information Standard. We also recommend evaluation of all six modules to determine if a select few could be offered as an online only option. Dividing the certificate process into a 3 in-person and 3 online delivery option could facilitate greater completion of the certificate in a shorter period of time.

- Online/Distance Delivery

There are a number of benefits to offering online delivery of the core curriculum. Flexibility regarding schedules, location and the type of content delivered is much higher with online delivery. For example, a suite of online courses based on the traditional core curriculum could be an option as well as more specialized or curated modules. (See below) This would also be a good opportunity to provide a refresher course option for those who have completed the certificate but would like to take the 'new and improved' core curriculum. Online delivery can help boost attendance and completion numbers for the certificate. **This method of delivery would also encourage greater attendance by those in neighbouring provinces such as Prince**

Edward Island and New Brunswick. Membership through their respective councils would count toward membership status for the purpose of enrollment.

The Council of Canadian Archivists (CCA) has offered to allow access to their Zoom license in order to trial live streaming for online delivery and webinars. We recommend following-up on this offer, and once tested, explore using this as our platform or as an option to be presented to the future consultant. It is anticipated that while a few of the core curriculum workshops are better suited for in-person, there are some courses that could be adopted as 'online only'.

An option to try and bridge possible resistance to 'online only' or to promote engagement and collaboration/networking would be the use of designated hub locations where members can gather together to take the workshops at a distance, but together as a group. The CCA model, with one presenter on live webcam and remote participants would support a 'hub' concept as well as accommodate single users.

The CNSA website can host information about the Zoom platform as well as instructions for signing-up and logging in. As well, paying for online courses can be accommodated by the current website but would need to be included in the work plan for the overall development.

- Specialized Delivery / NSCC

In previous years, the CNSA worked with the Nova Scotia Community College to offer an elective Archives course as part of the Library and Information Technician Program. At the time of delivery, the course was in high demand. The Technician program will be offered online in 2020, and also at the Ivany campus in Dartmouth. As much of this course was based and customized from the core curriculum, it does seem pragmatic to explore the option of working with NSCC again in the future.

As well, this option could potentially facilitate a 'fee for service' model advertised and subsidized by special interest groups. There has been a call from members, as well as potential members, to have educational opportunities developed to address specific needs and concerns. Members have also repeatedly indicated a preference for guest lecturers with expertise in a particular area to lead workshops. For example, there could be a series of courses to be delivered in Indigenous communities specifically designed to address concerns outlined in the TRC Report/Call to Action. As well, institutional members may have different concerns than smaller community museums/archives or students in the Master of Information (SIM) program may prefer a suite of courses aimed at supplementing the Archives course offered at Dalhousie. This option may also include a pre-recorded 'refresher' module for the core curriculum certificate.

These courses could be offered through traditional delivery or as an online option with pre-recorded sessions made available.

Category 2: Individual Workshops

Workshops have traditionally been sponsored by the Education Committee to address specific archival topics, such as conservation and partnerships with other professional organizations such as the Canadian Conservation Institute. Feedback from members indicates a high level of interest in continuing to have the CNSA organize and sponsor workshops. They have also found it useful to attach a workshop either within the annual conference schedule or before or after the main conference. They would like the workshops to offer:

- High Quality Instruction (subject matter experts/high level of expertise)
- Focus on Sustainability
- Convenient Delivery

Workshop topic priorities are:

- Governance
- Funding opportunities/ applications
- Records management/privacy
- Preservation (analogue and digital)
- DIY (low cost options for exhibits, preservation, etc.)

As mentioned above, we do have the option to offer the workshops through online delivery as a suite of courses, or they could be sponsored by a special interest group.

Category 3: Annual Conference / Joint Conference

The conferences include a strong educational component, delivered via speakers and workshops sponsored by the Education Committee. The annual conference / AGM is considered a valuable event and is appreciated by members. From the information and feedback to date, the members would like to see the conference include:

- Non-traditional approaches (unconference/ less passive listening - targeting potential member groups such as SIM students)
- Incorporating other Educational Opportunities (workshops/networking)
- Practical Sessions (DIY, digital preservation/management)
- Provide a mentorship or knowledge-sharing component to the conference (see below)
- Encourage participation from outside of Nova Scotia. Again, as with the core curriculum above, target archival professional in PEI and New Brunswick.

Category 4: Mentorship and Knowledge Sharing

Members have indicated that there is interest in more shared resources and would like to explore the idea of a mentorship program. Newer members or volunteer members could be matched with institutional members or more senior members As well, more promotion and

encouragement around the use of the Professional Development Funding has been mentioned in the gathered feedback.

- Mentorship

With guidance from the Executive, we recommend implementing a formal mentorship opportunity through the CNSA. This could take a few forms from a basic 'meet and greet' where participants grab a coffee and chat or something more involved with project work in mind. An agreement or policy around participation should be developed, taking into consideration that participants are entering into a contract to work together. Members could 'meet' at a distance with an eventual in-person event happening at the annual conference. This could be added to the conference agenda this year, where we could apply the theme of professional development/networking/sustainability as an overarching topic.

- PD Funding

Although the professional development fund is being utilized, there is opportunity for more promotion of the fund. This could take place at all educational opportunities/events, as well as online and through the listserv. We also recommend that those who use the fund are encouraged to present on the funded experience during the annual conference. This has happened before, and is beneficial for the broader CNSA community. This allows for publicity for the fund, and it's always enjoyable and useful to hear about the types of events and opportunities available to members.

- Shared Resources

Members have expressed interested in having access to contact lists of SMEs or subject matter experts (or equivalent). This would assist members when they are looking to schedule their own professional development or events or require consultation related to a specific theme or question.

We are recommending contacting institutional members and other professional organizations such as ANSM to leverage their shared resource libraries and lists. We can then include additional content and updated content on the CNSA website.

Work Plan / Timeline (all preliminary)

December 2019: Submit draft report to CNSA Executive

- January – February 2020: Make edits based on feedback from the Executive and re-circulate
- February – April 2020: Archives Advisor and Education Committee begin work around incorporating some of the recommendations into conference and workshop planning.

- February – April 2020: Finalize report and initiate grant writing to secure funding for curriculum development for online delivery. Use past application as well as current report to inform application. Both CIF and SDI and One-Time Emerging Culture and Heritage Initiatives Program have been noted as possible funding options.
- March 2020: Member of the CNSA Executive to contact NSCC to determine if there is a potential opportunity to re-offer the CNSA developed curriculum as part of the Library and Information Technician Program.
- May 2020: Present finalized plan for new education curriculum at Annual Conference, and vote on anything that requires member feedback at AGM. Also implement workshops based on previous feedback and potentially launch mentorship program or any plans for shared resources, future workshops, etc.
- May – August 2020: Archives Advisor, working with Education Committee, prepare for the content development phase with more details around content. Test various platforms such as Zoom (only offered temporarily by CCA)
- August 2020: Advertise for consultant / developer depending on funding.
- August / September 2020: Hiring process takes place
- October – March 2021: Archives Advisor works with consultant to also update the core curriculum traditional delivery
- January 2021 – Draft online course development and updated traditional core curriculum completed. Includes decision around online platform and delivery style.
- February – March 2021 – Editing and finalizing edits for the content. Potential contract to place the new suite of courses online.
- March – April 2021: Finalizing and testing courses
- May 2021: Launch of new core curriculum and online modules during conference
- June – December 2021: Delivery and Assessment

Assessment Framework

We recommend continuing to gather post-workshop and conference, and post core-curriculum course feedback with directed questions aimed at assessing the impact of changes to the educational programming. We also will be able to assess the impact of the proposed changes through the following:

- Participation numbers and certificate completion
- Sustainability of programming including tracking increased financial revenue
- Increase in Membership numbers
- Professional impact – greater participation in professional development, greater knowledge sharing, and potential for significant collaborations between institutions and members

While we are all survey-weary, we might also want to consider a survey during the May 2022 conference to gauge impact of the changes.

Summary

In summary, we expect that some of these recommendations can be implemented without delay and will be part of the planning by the Archives Advisor and Education Committee. These recommendations are:

1. Identifying contacts of subject experts and/or those with special topics expertise. Updating and promoting this information. (Archives Advisor)
2. Refining workshop topics and delivery methods/scheduling (Education Committee)
3. Updating conference style/approach and aligning topics with those identified in the report under workshops. (Education Committee)
4. Incorporate mentorship and knowledge sharing/networking into annual conference (Education Committee)
5. More promotion of PD funding and incorporating presentations of funded opportunities into annual conference (Archives Advisor and Education Committee)
6. Application for funding to support hiring a consultant

The remaining work around core curriculum revision and online course delivery will be developed and implemented with the assistance of a paid consultant working with the Educational Committee and Archives Advisor during the 2020 – 2021 year.