



**Society of California Archivists
Candidate's Statement for 2022 Election**

Name: Azatuhi Babayan
Institution: University of Southern California; June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives
Candidate for: Nominating Committee
Years: 2022-2024 (2-year term)

Professional Background (begin with current position and areas of responsibility, and briefly summarize duties):

I currently work as an archivist at the USC Digital Library, creating metadata for a project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to digitize and provide access to the "Dick" Whittington Photography Collection, 1924-1987. Most days are spent wrangling with a new content management system, converting spreadsheets to CSVs, and transcribing envelopes. At the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, I work as a consulting archivist processing the Curve Magazine collection and, more recently, overseeing the digitization of their Subject Files, funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Educational Background (degrees and other applicable training):

- MLIS (UCLA, 2017)
- BA in English (UC Berkeley, 2013)

Professional Affiliations (list organizations, dates and extent of your involvement, e.g., SCA activities, memberships, committee work):

- Society of California Archivists (present)

- Los Angeles Archivists Collective (2019-2021, Programming subcommittee)

Taking into account differing levels of monetary and institutional support, how can the Nominating Committee ensure that candidates are chosen from all facets of the archival profession: lone arrangers, large institutions, government archives, academic archives, corporate archives, library, museum, and other settings?

In order to ensure candidates are chosen from many different facets of the archival profession, the Nominating Committee can provide need-based monetary support for potential Board members and continue to offer an ongoing virtual platform for all meetings and events. Duties and responsibilities of open positions should be flexible and accommodating to promising candidates who would impact the organization, ensuring their contributions are valued even if they come from a different, “non-traditional” practice. This also includes accommodating capacity and accessibility needs a candidate may have. By understanding that all facets of the archival profession can symbiotically inform one another, the effort to be more inclusive can be viewed as an invitation to broaden the scope of service and involvement in the organization.

Please detail your efforts to integrate equity and inclusion practices into your work and any plans you may have for this as a member of the Nominating Committee.

Before continuing on at USC as a project archivist, I was one of three L.A. as Subject Resident Archivists in the Digital Residency Program--also grant-funded and greatly impacted by the ongoing pandemic due to the interactive and collaborative nature of the work. Working with community-based archives and organizations while employed at a large, private institution has been meaningful, but in general is neither groundbreaking nor effective in changing the power dynamics between institutional and non-institutionally affiliated archives. Providing equal access to collections does not guarantee equity when it comes to securing resources for future collecting endeavors, sustaining operations, and maintaining collections at often smaller, volunteer-run community-based archives. As a result of these experiences, I approach archival work with an ethics of community that places people first rather than the institution. In order for this field to be impactful, it must continue to--begin to, in most cases--center Black, Indigenous, non-white, queer, disabled, community-based, anti-institutional, and radical workers and collectors as well as processes that fall outside the scope of “traditional” practice. I hope that my service to the Society of California Archivists will welcome more curiosity and creativity in shaping future leadership of the organization.