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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 1, 2014

New England Archivists Launches Innovative Mentoring Program

New England Archivists (NEA) announces the NEA Mentoring Program to encourage and support professional growth at all stages of our members' careers. With interactions occurring in person and online, this innovative approach will create new opportunities for archivists to interact, share ideas, and expand professional networks beyond the Spring and Fall meetings.

The original concept for the Program was first piloted between 2013-14 by NEA's Roundtable for Early Professionals and Students (REPS). Diverging from the more traditional one-to-one mentoring model, the REPS pilot encouraged participants to form communities. "The mentoring circles really embodied that spirit of collaboration that drives REPS. We were encouraging new archivists to learn not only from their seniors, but from each other, and we were encouraging co-mentors to learn from one another as well as their mentees," notes Caitlin Birch, co-founder of REPS and Interim Chair of the Mentoring Task Force. Echoing that sentiment, Darla White, a mentor who participated in the online community, said that "mentoring is a two way street, and those who seek mentors have a great deal to offer a mentoring relationship themselves. I was thrilled to be a part of the pilot year."

Following the success of the pilot, NEA is seizing the opportunity to offer this sustainable, permanent NEA Mentoring Program to all members. "Anyone can benefit and learn from participating in this program" says Jessica Sedgwick, NEA Representative-at-Large and liaison to the Mentoring Task Force, "be they students, mid-career professionals, or veterans of the field." Beginning officially this fall, monthly meetings will occur in person in the greater Boston area as well as virtually, using online platforms like Google Hangouts or Skype. The virtual component increases accessibility to all members, meaning that physical location will not be a barrier to participation.

NEA members interested in participating in this innovative approach are encouraged to apply. More details on the application process will follow in early August. Visit the NEA website for basic information on the program: <http://www.newenglandarchivists.org/mentoring> and contact Caitlin Birch at caitlin.birch@dartmouth.edu with questions.

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About New England Archivists

Founded in 1973, New England Archivists is the premier professional organization in the field of archives and special collections in the New England region. Archivists are professionals who collect, arrange, describe, and provide access to historical documents. With approximately 600 members, the organization connects the archival community through meetings, workshops, and online resources.

NEA is committed to increasing public awareness of archival work and to informing historians, genealogists, students, and journalists, among others, about archival resources that might be of use to them. NEA also works with individuals in related professions, such as records managers, librarians, and town clerks, to promote the sharing of information among the larger community of information professionals.

For more information about NEA, please visit the New England Archivists website at www.newenglandarchivists.org.