Introduction: Students and Faculty in the Archives 2012 Performance Narrative

This report covers the development from June 2011 through June 2012 of the FIPSE-funded Students and Faculty in the Archives (SAFA) project (grant #P116B100331) at Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS). It outlines the progress and changes made by project staff, the systems developed to support the project, and the initial findings made over the past year. This report also addresses concerns about sustaining and expanding a SAFA-like program after the grant period ends in December 2013. The accompanying evaluation report demonstrates the measurable progress made towards reaching the project's goals.

1. SAFA Teaching Philosophy

Over the past year, SAFA staff have developed a teaching philosophy that differentiates the SAFA program from traditional tour-based museum education programs; one-off, show-and-tell archival instruction sessions; and library instruction focused on independent research questions and/or searching techniques. SAFA teaches students to analyze primary source documents in order to improve critical thinking, archival literacy, and communication skills. SAFA staff especially want students to develop observation and summarization skills. SAFA does not teach first-year college students to pose research questions; to use search tools; or to find, compare, or evaluate sources on their own because these first-year students need to hone more fundamental skills.

SAFA students do not visit BHS for show-and-tell, or for a field trip, but to gain knowledge and/or skills fundamental to success in the course they are taking. SAFA professors are able to explain how visits to the archives help achieve course learning objectives. By the end of the semester, students should be able to articulate how their SAFA visits have improved their learning experience.

As a result, SAFA faculty select discrete items (sometimes folders) ahead of time. Participating faculty have learned that SAFA research is fundamentally different than comprehensive, scholarly research. Professors are looking for items which illustrate concepts well or which will be usable by their students. SAFA participants have learned that less is more. First-year students become overwhelmed when faced with a pile of documents and insufficient time to read and analyze them. SAFA's most successful collaborations have employed a small number of carefully curated documents and have offered students ample time to read, discuss, and process each source.

2. Summer 2011-Summer 2012: Timeline and Overview

As the first year actually teaching SAFA courses, the 2011-2012 academic year has been enormously productive for the SAFA project. During the first SAFA Summer Institute (explained in detail in last year's report), the 18 participating

faculty conducted a significant amount of archival research at Brooklyn Historical Society with the help of project staff. Even so, most faculty returned to the archive over the summer to conduct follow-up research. At the last Summer Institute and over last summer, faculty also adapted syllabi to incorporate archival research into their courses; crafted assignments based on BHS materials, and planned course websites.

In August 2011, SAFA staff held individual meetings with each faculty member to schedule in-archives visits for the fall 2011 semester; set preliminary plans for each visit; and discuss document selection. At the end of the summer, BHS also hired a SAFA Archives Assistant (see **section 2** for more information on this position).

BHS hosted its first SAFA class visit on September 8, 2011. In the fall semester, 15 courses taught by SAFA faculty visited BHS on 41 separate class visits. Courses came to the library as few as one time, and as many as seven. Visits ranged from 55 minutes to three hours. Faculty requested and used 409 documents. BHS welcomed 287 unique students to BHS with a "door count" of 696 students that term, and 62 students returned to BHS on their own. In the fall 2011 semester, SAFA provided an unprecedented number of students with access to archival collections and the skills and services provided by faculty members and by SAFA staff.

Yet the magnitude of the first SAFA semester revealed some weaknesses of the preliminary procedures and pedagogical approaches employed by SAFA faculty and staff. At a productive and reflective project-wide meeting in January 2012, faculty and SAFA staff discussed the need for streamlined procedures, the value of a "less is more" approach, and the need to move from course sites towards blogs. All of these adopted changes vastly improved the efficiency and quality of SAFA visits and teaching during spring 2012.

At first, SAFA staff did not build consequences into the deadlines set for faculty. The resulting last-minute scrambles were hard on SAFA staff and on BHS collections and the sheer number of visits made project management especially difficult in the first term. So before the spring 2012, SAFA staff revised project procedures in order to provide more efficient and useful service for faculty, to set hard deadlines for faculty in advance of their visits, and to improve student experience.

SAFA staff and faculty also determined that the website model first used did not meet the needs of SAFA courses. By spring 2012, the SAFA websites showcasing final projects transitioned to blogs which chronicle student experience over time. The platform remained a networked group of WordPress sites; what changed was the level of permission granted to students and the way students publish their work online. The blogs have been much easier to facilitate, and they provide an observable space for student reflection and sharing over time.

Additionally, most faculty pulled too many items for their fall visits, overwhelming or confusing students. By spring 2012, SAFA staff pushed faculty to limit the number of documents used in each visit and to schedule between 1 and 4 visits. This was remarkably successful in the spring, and most faculty have bought into this mantra whole heartedly. Before spring 2012, SAFA staff again held individual meetings with faculty to pare down documents used; to make small tweaks to facilitation and assignments; and to streamline the agendas and objectives for each class visit.

In the second term of SAFA, 14 courses visited BHS (only one less than in the fall semester) and BHS welcomed 201 unique students into the building (the reduction is the outcome of faculty success at securing lower enrollment caps). Yet the "less is more" can be seen by the fact that faculty requested and used 207 documents (half the amount of the fall) in 19 visits to the archives, dropping the "door count" down to 339 students. Yet 53 students still returned to BHS on their own for independent research, comparable to the 62 of the previous term, and the quality of each class visit vastly improved. In the spring, staff also began planning the Summer Institute and the Fellowship discussed in **section 7**.

Between the summer of 2011 and 2012, SAFA staff established and refined the procedures that make a robust in-archives experience possible for hundreds of students and faculty members each year. They worked with faculty to identify excellent primary sources that help students achieve a wide range of skill and content objectives. (Many people will continue to benefit from the rich documents identified by SAFA faculty and staff: future classes, other education programs at BHS, even exhibit-goers). Staff also worked closely with faculty to refine assignments and lessons plans, create better and more specific handouts for students, and improve in-archives facilitation. This year built the foundation for the next phase of the project: creating a body of shareable academic products related to BHS collections; disseminating project findings; and establishing a permanent post-secondary education program at BHS based on this FIPSE-funded project.

3. Project Staffing and Participating Faculty

The core SAFA staff remain Robin M. Katz, Outreach and Public Services Archivist, and Julie Golia, Public Historian. Both work on SAFA 100% of their time. Since the departure of Chela Scott Weber, Director of Library and Archives, in June 2011, BHS President Deborah Schwartz has served as project director of this FIPSE project. In April 2012, BHS hired Jacob Nadal as the new Director of Library and Archives. His resume is included in the appendix of this report. With FIPSE's approval, we would like to ask that Nadal become the new project director as of this writing.

SAFA staff quickly determined that an Archives Assistant was necessary, and they reallocated money originally meant to pay students to provide technical support. Lauren Onifer, a Masters of Information and Library Science student at

Pratt Institute, was hired in September 2011. Onifer works about 120 hours per term, fielding document requests and locating, pulling, preparing the hundreds of primary sources used each semester.

As noted in the 2011 report, Aaron Kendall, Contract Educational Technologist, was hired in May 2011 to help set up and support the SAFA websites. He played an integral role in establishing the website structure, and assisted with the move to blogs during the spring semester. However, as faculty became more familiar with the WordPress platform, requests for his support tapered off. As of June 2012, Kendall no longer works on the SAFA project. Katz and Golia will take a more hands-on approach to blog support, both technical and pedagogical. SAFA staff recommend that the money saved from Kendall's fees can be reallocated to design and populate a more robust project-level website to launch at the end of 2013. See **section 7** for more details.

Recognizing that SAFA required a greater time commitment than they were able to make, Michael Bokor (LIU, English) and Matthew Gold (City Tech, English) opted not to participate in SAFA for the remainder of the grant period. In exit interviews with SAFA evaluators, both offered positive feedback about project goals and successes despite their inability to continue. Because of this, Justin Davis (City Tech, Communications) is able to join the project. Davis participated in a SAFA learning community with Jody Rosen in fall 2011.

4. Policies and Procedures

As explained above, SAFA staff used the 2011-2012 year to experiment and refine procedures in order to make this complex project more manageable. The following policies and procedures allow SAFA to run smoothly.

Before each semester, SAFA staff take two weeks to meet with each partner faculty to discuss their general plan for the upcoming term: which documents they will use; how many visits they will make to the archives; when those visits will occur; and how SAFA fits into other class activities and larger course goals. When necessary, SAFA staff set up research appointments for the professors and suggest resources from our collections or elsewhere. The amount of time spent on intensive research has tapered off significantly as staff and faculty alike discover and settle on usable documents. The collaborative planning process is more streamlined now that most faculty are refining existing work, rather than crafting new curricula or selecting entirely new documents. This face-to-face meeting time in BHS's space helps keep the project on track.

After piloting the blogs, SAFA staff want to institute deadlines and consequences regarding the blogs. Next year, faculty will have to set up their blogs before the term starts by changing all placeholder language, setting categories, and drafting all prompts. They should also include blog assignments in their syllabi.

Four weeks before a class visit, SAFA staff send faculty an email reminder restating deadlines and consequences. Three weeks before a class visit, professors must submit online call slips requesting collection materials for the visit. They also must send SAFA staff an agenda for the class visit including a time break-down, the role of SAFA staff, and any station/set up information. Next year, professors will include in this agenda the learning objective(s) for each visit and an explanation of how the visit relates to any blog prompts and assignments. If these are not submitted three weeks before a visit, the visit is cancelled and not rescheduled.

Professors complete one online call slip for each collection item they want to use in a class visit. Because of the document analysis focus of SAFA, professors usually request individual items; in some cases, they use an entire folder of material. The call slip is a Google form which populates a Google spreadsheet used by SAFA staff to track collections as they are located, pulled, and reshelved; to organize materials into groupings/stations; to note care and handling concerns; and to document rights assessments. The Archives Assistant often communicates with faculty about unclear call slips. She locates requested items using various back-end library databases, pulls them using out cards and paper call slips, and stores and organizes them in temporary archival folders and boxes. She then drafts citation lists for each visit, and Golia and Katz finalize these. They also look for condition issues and pedagogical concerns (i.e., will students have enough time to read this?).

One week before a class visit, SAFA staff send the approved citations to the professor. This takes a significant amount of time, but was deemed necessary when, in the first term, professors created incorrect citations, confusing both students and BHS library staff. Next term, SAFA staff will post citations to each class blog for easier, more centralized access and to promote regular use of the blog among faculty and students.

Because digital cameras are now a standard research tool in special collections libraries, SAFA students are encouraged to take photographs in the archives. In the first semester, SAFA staff used a complicated system by which faculty submitted requests to post a document image online. Once received, Katz researched rights information and responded. In one case, a class secured permission from a rights holder to use her photograph. One drawback of this system was that professors served as intermediaries for student requests. Another was that the request occurred after a class visit. Because there is little turnaround time at the end of the semester, many classes didn't even request to use images on their websites. So for spring 2012, SAFA staff decided to make rights assessments ahead of time. Though time intensive, this is possible to do when pulling at the item level. The assessment must be done by a professional librarian or

archivist (in this case, Katz).. During a class visit, individual citations accompany documents and include rights information and care handling notes. For example:

Group 1

Bathing suits to hire, circa 1975, v2008.013.19; Lucille Fornasieri-Gold photographs, 2008.013; Brooklyn Historical Society.

🔲 *Photographs of this item may be used for personal research purposes only. They cannot be published online.*

❗ *Please use white gloves with all photographic prints and film.*

Group 1

Daguerreotype of Christina Payne Hallock, circa 1850s, DAG.04; Photography collection; Brooklyn Historical Society.

🔲 *Photographs of this item may be used for personal research purposes only. They cannot be published online.*

This rights clearance system encourages students right away to use certain images on their blog and elsewhere. It has actually been easier to manage because there is a consistent workflow as part of the preparation for a class visit. And in spring 2012, more students used images of document on their class blogs.

SAFA staff have already worked on teaching students why, when, and how to cite archival material. Most first year students think about citations in terms of plagiarism. To make citations a less punitive topic and to engage students in an intellectual community, Golia and Katz tell students that their citations (especially on their websites) help other researchers locate unique items held only at BHS. Because students sometimes did not correctly cite or caption photographs on class sites and blogs, citations will become a bigger priority next year. Hopefully these activities will provide students with a better understanding of intellectual property, and make them more respectful of copyright laws and more critical of online information sources.

Onifer reshelves materials when a visit is completed. Because collection items can be "out" to SAFA for 3 to 6 weeks, materials must be easy for reference staff to find in case other patrons need these documents.

When a class arrives at BHS, Golia and Katz greet the students, introduce themselves, and briefly cover the institution's 149 year history. Because IDs from partner campuses grant free admission, students are encouraged to return to see exhibits, attend public programs, and use the library. Outside the entrance to the Othmer Library, Katz and Golia explain that a special collections library holds different materials then the libraries they are familiar with, and that is why students will check bags and coats, sign in, and comply with other rules.

Most students are both excited by the beauty of our interior landmarked library and intimidated by the space and the materials. To balance the need for care and the desire to make students comfortable, SAFA staff cite preservation and security concerns students read each rules aloud while also stressing that rules are equally applied in order to continue to provide access to all users of today, tomorrow, and future generations. In the introduction, students must sign a copyright statement; next year, they will sign a photo waiver if they choose. During 2012-2013 year, SAFA staff will pilot on-campus pre-visits to minimize in-archives time needed for introductions and to prime students on the nature of primary sources, archives, and knowledge production. SAFA staff also provide customized introductions on particular formats or historical topics as needed.

SAFA staff encourage faculty to create handouts with questions to help students understand and analyze the selected documents. Faculty generally email these to SAFA staff the night before the class visit. Virtually all SAFA class visits involve small group work. For most documents, a group of 3 - 4 students is ideal. More than two people is useful for helping decode, analyze, and discuss; with fewer than 4 students, it is harder for a student to be left out (or check out) of the activity. Some SAFA classes have successfully worked individually or in pairs; some large documents work well with a bigger group; and there is potential for class-wide activities.

5. Summer Institute 2012

The 2nd annual SAFA Summer Institute occurred June 11 - 15, 2012. While the 2011 Institute centered on research and brainstorming, this year focused on 1) refining and revising existing curricula and 2) disseminating SAFA's pedagogical model to national partners in Philadelphia, PA; New Bedford, MA; Providence, RI; and Burlington, VT.

For the first three days of this year's Summer Institute, local Brooklyn faculty workshopped existing course content. SAFA staff held five workshops in areas of SAFA-related pedagogical design: Course Design, Assignments and Context, In-Archives Activities, Blogs, and Dissemination. At the end of the week, faculty submitted a dossier containing worksheets and revisions pertaining to each of these workshops.

The Course Design workshop focused on articulating broad course goals and specific, measurable learning objectives for upcoming SAFA classes. In the Assignment and Context workshop, SAFA faculty planned ways to teach students what they need to know before coming to the archives. Professors also workshopped existing assignments with their peers, and spent time alone refining and editing their assignments for the upcoming year. In the In-Archives workshop, SAFA staff reviewed good facilitation skills and shared ideas for more successful wrap ups. SAFA staff also highlighted 4 successful handouts from class visits to BHS, and made a case to professors for shorter, more specific

prompts. Generic archives prompts, such as those provided by NARA

http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/, do not always serve first-year college students' needs, especially

when documents lack a clear author or date. More importantly, tailored documents will better lead students to understand

what they are supposed to do or learn in their class visit.

Over the past year, SAFA staff have held several sessions to teach faculty how to use WordPress, the platform

behind the SAFA blogs. The Blog workshop at the Institute focused less on the technical details and more on the design,

purpose, tone, and structure of the blogs. It was enlightening to hear how professors felt about the website requirement.

SAFA faculty have a range of technical skills and attitudes towards new media. However, for those who have limited

experience teaching with digital tools, the blogs require an incredible amount of time and energy from SAFA faculty. After a

year of trial and error and the opportunity to find like-minded peers, all SAFA professors are now focused on improving

their blogs for the coming year.

In the dissemination session, SAFA staff and faculty touched base about completed or forthcoming presentations

and publications. Professors helped brainstorm media outlets, newsletters, conferences, journals, and other ways to spread

the word about SAFA's findings. Exciting collaborations emerged across disciplines and campuses. For example, an English

professor from LIU and an American Studies professor from St. Francis College plan to submit a proposal for the American

Studies Association conference in 2014. A photography professor from City Tech and an art historian from St. Francis intend

to collaborate on a project on formal analysis and visual media.

On Thursday and Friday, 10 representatives from the national partners joined the Summer Institute. There were

introductions, a project-level overview by SAFA staff, and presentations by five Brooklyn faculty on their SAFA experience.

In the afternoon, SAFA staff met with the staff of archives and museums to discuss project management, collection

management, and faculty development. Concurrently, the Brooklyn and national faculty met to discuss pedagogy and

course design. The evening ended with a walking tour and a reception.

On Friday, all national partners discussed universal concerns such as the lack of funding and support for national

partners, the challenge of being further than walking-distance away; and the lack of a supportive network like the one in

Brooklyn. National partners brainstormed about potential costs, technology needs, the relationship of education activities

to digitization, and evaluation strategies. National partners indicated that SAFA-like collaborations would not begin until fall

2013 (perhaps spring 2012 in one case). In regional groups, faculty and staff began to outline their plan of action to pilot

regional collaborations back home.

6. Working with Evaluators

Our independent evaluators at Education Development Center (EDC) have been an invaluable resource for designing, implementing, and assessing SAFA. With their help, BHS has conducted additional assessment activities such as end-of-semester questionnaires (sent to all local participating faculty) and evaluation forms (sent to all Summer Institute participants). In their Evaluation Report, they will address the baseline data collected over the past year, as well as some initial findings about student engagement, student performance, and faculty development.

7. Looking Forward: Summer 2012 and Beyond

Fellowship: Originally, SAFA summer interns were to curate physical and digital exhibitions, which did not build upon the themes of the SAFA program: research and critical thinking skills. Additionally, no funded research fellowships existed for first year students in the United States. As such, the internship was renamed a "fellowship" in which students engage in intensive primary source research in order to complete a scholarly or creative project.

All students enrolled in a SAFA course during the previous school year are eligible to apply. This year, 26 students applied (6 from LIU, 7 from City Tech, and 11 from SFC). The 2012 fellowship will run for four weeks from July 23 to August 17, 2012. Fellows will meet at BHS from 11am to 4pm, Wednesdays through Fridays. All fellows will receive a $1,000 stipend. This year's fellows will select and research an area of interest using the Gabriel Furman diaries <http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/bhs/arc_190_gabriel_furman/>, which cover a wide range of topics in 19th century Brooklyn. Each fellow will work with SAFA staff to craft a final project such as a walking tour, an interactive map, a re-enactment, a poem, a song, or an architectural drawing. At the end, students will showcase their projects via a website, a public event, and an installation at BHS.

BHS Building Renovation: The renovation of BHS was delayed by several months and will begin mid-July 2012. This will put a premium on the library space in which all SAFA visits (and the fellowship) are held. However, BHS has made these limitations clear to participating faculty, and the institution's administration has emphasized that SAFA class visits continue to be a priority for the historical society.

Dissemination: In the first year alone, SAFA has appeared in 10 presentations and 2 publications. Ideas for the future include traditional academic formats such as conference papers, refereed journals and other scholarly publications; more public coverage through news media outlets and presentations on campuses and around the city; and creative forms of dissemination such as exhibits of student work. For more, see the appendix**.**

Project Level Website: One of the main strategies for dissemination will be a project level website at

http://safa.brooklynhistory.org.aimed at three audiences: staff and users of BHS; staff of other archives, libraries, and

museums; and faculty nationwide. Lesson plans, activities, handouts, and other materials to support general instruction in

our library can serve current and future BHS staff and teachers and students who visit BHS or use BHS collection. These

might address content points (ex: the Draft Riots of 1863), specific documents (ex: the hate mail sent to Henry Ward

Beecher), or topics like primary vs. secondary sources or care and handling training. The SAFA project hopes to inspire

similar collaborations nationwide by sharing findings, statistics, and documentation of project and collection management

practices with professionals outside of BHS. A wide range of faculty nationwide could use articles about pedagogy and

primary sources; sample syllabi, assignments, in-archives activities, handouts/prompts, rubrics, etc., or contextual materials

such as a timelines and glossaries.

8. Sustaining and Expanding SAFA after 2013

Through dissemination activities and word-of-mouth, BHS is becoming an archives known for postsecondary

learning. There continues to be broad interest from new faculty, and current participants anticipate using BHS collections

for years to come. To expand or even sustain SAFA will require continued support and staff time, but this is both a concern

and an opportunity. Over the next year, BHS staff, faculty, and campus administrators will seek permanent support for this

type of work. Smaller pieces of SAFA might be built out (such as the fellowship) and many potential collaborations (such as

the American Studies capstone experience mentioned in last year's report) may emerge. The documents identified, the

curricula developed, and the expertise gained through SAFA will benefit future postsecondary programs at BHS and beyond.