

ICA/SUV Communique

**Newsletter of Provisional Section of University and
Research Institution Archives**

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From the Chair

This second issue of the ICA/SUV newsletter Communique comes to you as an informal report on the Washington Seminar and on the continuing work of the section's committees. The Washington Seminar was a stimulating two days of presentations and discussion as the excellent reports in this issue by Sofie de Winter and Brenda Weeden attest. Section committees met in formal and informal meetings; their activities will continue to be reported in the newsletter.

Even the section business meeting was a lively affair. There was a long discussion about procedures to be followed in electing the new slate of section officers. The outcome of that debate was explained in the information accompanying the nominating packet which should have reached those of you who are members of the ICA/SUV.

Among the goals of the section are two which I think are being achieved: to aid in the communication between archivists with similar tasks and responsibilities and to bring archivists together to work on mutual problems and possibilities related to the documentation of their institutions. Increased communication took two steps into the information age with the creation by Gavan McCarthy of the Science, Technology and Medicine Archives listserv (to subscribe send email to: <majordomo@asap.unimelb.edu.au> and in the body of the text say: "subscribe stama") and the appearance of the ICA/SUV homepage URL address on the World Wide Web is http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/archives/ica_suv/welcome.html) created by Tim Robinson.

The ICA/SUV steering committee is planning the section's activities for Beijing. We urge members to attend the ICA quadrennial congress in Beijing and to take part in the ongoing activities of the section. Information about the Beijing conference is included with this newsletter. Marjorie Barritt for the steering committee

Report from Washington

The ICA/SUV's 1995 seminar was held in Washington D.C., August 28 and 29.

Day One at Howard University Applications of Archival Techniques at a University:

Problem and Solutions Report by Sofie de Winter, Universiteit Gent, Belgium

In her opening remarks, Marjorie Barritt, chair of the ICA/SUV, noted that there were thirty-three participants from ten countries. Frank Scheelings, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, chair of the Guidelines Committee and organizer of Day One, introduced the seminar and speakers and the major themes of the presentations.

"The Position of the Archives Service within the Framework of the Scientific Institution" **Alois Kernbauer, Karl Franzens University, Graz Austria**

In his introduction, Kernbauer presented the system of the Austrian archive, which includes a Central Archives and its several departments: the Archives of the Republic, Archives of the Nine Federal States, Roman Catholic Church Archives, and Scientific Institutions, Universities and Colleges. He discussed three university archives, sustained by the state, but originally rounded by the universities themselves: Vienna (1465), Graz (1585), and Innsbruck (1669).

Within the university Archives Services, the head of the archives is part of the administration as well as a professor of history. The tasks of the archives include scientific work, such as research and writing on the history of the university, as well as archival administration responsibilities.

In 1993, the Austrian parliament enacted a law to reorganize the universities by giving them full autonomy.

This law takes effect in 1996 and opens three possibilities for the archives within the university: the archives may become a part of the university administration, in other words the archives as an administrative unit; the archives may become a part of the Department of History, in other words the archives as a separate, highly independent academic unit; or the archives may become a special unit such as a library.

"Rights and Responsibilities of the Archives Service in the University" **Virginia Teehan, University College Cork, Ireland**

The rights and responsibilities of the archives service are directly linked with the image and defined role of the archivist. Understanding the role of the university archivist demands that one separate the functions of the archivist as one who cares for collections which facilitate academic and general research from the university archivist as one who is responsible for institutional records management. Clarity is essential in defining both of these valuable roles. Unfortunately, the narrow perception of university archivists as 'keepers of manuscripts,' i.e., caring for research collections or guardians of the older, official record, is all too common.

A function which all university archives services have in common is to reflect the aims, activities, and ethos of the college or university they document. Inherent within all archival services are understandings of what material will be acquired and the procedures governing access and use. Universities are not defined exclusively by formal decision-making processes but more accurately characterized by the activities of the people who work and study there. Being aware of, and sensitive

to, these activities and developing appropriate professional means of preserving them is one of the largest challenges facing modern university archivists.

The general philosophy underpinning university archives services forms the nature and character of the service. A natural progression from this general philosophy is the definitive framework supporting the more detailed rights and responsibilities of the service. The rights and responsibilities of the service must be comprehensively outlined in a mission statement. In general, the statement might include the following: the authority from which the mission statement derives, the authority from which the archives derives, definitions used by the archives service, the institutional placement of the archives, and the functions and responsibilities of the archives.

The implementation of this statement demands a guarantee of continuous commitment from the highest university government level. On behalf of the archivist it demands professionalism, sensitivity to the ethos of the institution. and realistic expectations of what is attainable within the internal financial and political environment.

"Building Financial Resources: The Cost Recovery Model"

Mark Frazier Lloyd, University of Pennsylvania, USA

The dominant model for the life cycle of documents found in most large American research institutions contains three separate categories: operation systems, i.e., active records; records management, i.e., inactive records; and archives, i.e., historical records, rare books and manuscripts. An alternate model is a unified institutional archives and records management program.

Archivists are correct in describing their core mission as an academic support service, which incorporates such basic services as appraisal, preservation, and provision of the broadest possible scholarly access to collections of historical significance. Records managers, on the other hand, provide a business service, traditionally justified in terms of improving administrative efficiencies, reducing costs, and improving productivity, but also, increasingly in recent years, as an effective tool of risk management.

If the archival profession is to move towards institutional power in colleges and universities, it should examine the opportunities apparent in the cost recovery model of records management. Within all large, research institutions a revenue stream confers considerable power upon its owner. When a records management program becomes fully self-supporting, then its surplus funds are viewed as operating reserves and may be utilized in any number of ways to support and advance the archival program.

The complementary tasks of archives administration and records management lend themselves to a joint mission statement and unified administration. The linkage of the archives to a value-added business service function gives greater credibility to archivists' argument that they must have a voice throughout the life cycle of records, most vividly illustrated by the current hue and cry over being present at the creation of electronic records. The cost recovery model then, though it challenges some of the most deeply held assumptions of our professional culture, may represent an organizational structure better adapted to the harsh realities of institutional management and serve as the best

bulwark against the caprice of the cost-cutter in an age of institutional scrutiny and downsizing.

"Providing efficient records management"

Guy Dinel, University Laval, Quebec, Canada

In most cases, the services provided by university archivists are cultural or scientific by nature, the main objective being to guide users to make available documentary resources. In the last twenty years many university archives extended their activities by offering a different kind of service to other units of their institution: records management or information management.

There are three reasons why university archivists should offer services in records or information management: legal requirements, economical and administrative reasons, and cultural and heritage needs. For the most part, records management services provided by university archivists can be grouped into three categories: development and dissemination of records management policies and regulations, conception and implementation of records management systems, and advising university personnel. Specific records management activities include: records creation, design, and application; creation and maintenance of record retention schedules; management of active and semi-active records; the identification and protection of essential records; and the transfer of information to another media.

"Electronic Recordkeeping Strategies For The University Archivist"

Glenda Acland, The University of Queensland Australia

This paper is predicated upon two concepts: that archivists need to develop specific strategies to ensure electronic recordkeeping and that the archival mission is empowered in so doing through a direct and close relationship with the administrative and decision-making core of the corporate body of which it is part. It is based on the concept that the essential characteristics of a record are structure, context, and content and that these characteristics must also be present in an electronic environment for a record to be identified and preserved as evidence of organizational or Social activity.

Basically there are two types of archival programs in Australian universities. Those responsible for the records of the university itself, the "in-house" or "corporate" archives, and those responsible for the collection of non-university records considered to be of value to that university, scholars in general, or the community of which the university is a part, the "collecting" archives. The primary responsibility of Archives and Record Management Services (ARMS)--the "corporate archives" which has responsibility for the university records--is the management of all stages in the continuum of the university's records. The ARMS is positioned within the central administrative structure of the university.

To be successful in an organization whose imperative is not archival, the university archivist must be able to offer a tangible and visible benefit to the organization as a whole. As technology is now resulting in the loss of institutional memory and eroding the evidence of institutional activity, the corporate archivist should be well placed in directing the organization on how to save its memory. University archivists should seek out opportunities for opening up a dialogue. They should be actively involved in electronic recordkeeping and look for, or make, opportunities to support senior staff with

their special skills. They should raise the importance of the nexus of recordkeeping with organizational accountability. A desired outcome is to create an organizational culture that is comfortable with electronic recordkeeping regimes and operates to ensure them as part of its everyday business. Archivists must integrate recordkeeping and accountability into the normal course of business rather than allowing it to be extraneous or someone else's responsibility.

Electronic records require the adoption of new strategies; developing these has been causing some angst around the world. With a sound foundation in recordkeeping principles, an understanding of outcome-oriented continuum management strategies, and effective positioning within the administrative core of the organization, the university archivist can successfully develop effective electronic recordkeeping strategies to enable the University to preserve its corporate memory.

Day Two at The American Institute of Physics

How Researchers Communicate in the Electronic Age Report by Brenda Weeden, University of Westminster, UK

The second day of the Seminar was spent in the attractive surroundings of the American Institute of Physics (AIP), College Park, Maryland. The Archives of Science committee had arranged a session with the theme "How researchers communicate in the electronic age." This proved to be a fascinating morning which brought the problems facing the archivists of contemporary science into dramatic focus.

Spencer Weart, Director of the Center for History of Physics at AIP, traced the growth of the huge multi-organizational collaborations which have become the norm in many sciences. The AIP has been conducting a series of in-depth interviews to discover how these collaborations are managed and whether any arrangements are made to keep the records. The results are seen as important not just for historians but as a help in the successful direction of future projects.

Tom Finholt of the Department of Psychology, University of Michigan, continued the theme of the changing environment in which scientists work by describing and demonstrating the prototype Upper Atmospheric Research Collaboratory. Information technology is used to overcome problems of gaining access to remote instruments and to facilitate international discussion. During the demonstration we saw on-screen real-time images from instruments in Greenland, as well as the "chat-window" in which scientists around the world compared notes by email, and the means by which formal observations could be added to the data. Finholt concluded that the prototype has been very successful with participating scientists but that no strategy has been developed for preserving the data long-term.

The final paper was from the perspective of an archivist with responsibility for locating and preserving the records of science and technology. Gavan McCarthy described how the Australian Science Archives Project (ASAP) has grown in just over ten years from a single-person unit into a million dollar business employing a number of contract staff. ASAP is self-funded and its success is based on a series of records management contracts for clients including pharmaceutical companies and privatized utilities. Its work extends to electronic records; McCarthy made an intriguing reference to the fact that his team was about to disentangle its first "electronic swamp." He felt the use of information technology added glamour to this commercial success—a point which was happily illustrated when one of the

physicists brought ASAP's web site instantly to the screen. ASAP always negotiates scholarly access to the papers it lists, and where appropriate arranges transfer to a suitable archive.

Lunch was followed by a tour of the Niels Bohr Library, during which delegates learned more of the diverse activities of the Center, including its extensive oral history program. Joan Warnow-Blewett and her colleagues are to be thanked for providing a memorable day.

Committee Reports

Bibliography Committee

Eli Hjorth-Reksen, Linköping University, chair

The first in a series of bibliographies of articles and books related to university archives was presented to the section at the Washington Seminar. Compiled by Jennifer Lammers of the University of Michigan, the bibliography includes articles written in the United States from 1985 through 1995. The bibliography is on the ICA/SUV homepage (see address on page one). Copies of the bibliography may be obtained from Marjorie Barritt at no cost to ICA/SUV members. Non-members will be charged \$5.00 to cover the cost of copying and postage.

Committee on University Guidelines

'Frank Scheelings, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, chair

The committee drawing up Guidelines for University Archives met in Brussels in October and plans to meet in January and March to prepare a final draft to present to the section before the Beijing conference. The focus of the Guidelines was defined as being for archivists and higher university managers. Discussions aimed at creating guidelines for the variety of archives departments, records management services, and information services are continuing.

Archives of Science Subgroup

Odile Welfele, Mission des Archives nationales, Chair

Gavan McCarthy, Anne Barrett, and Giovanni Paoloni of the Archives of Science Subgroup are representing the ICA/SUV in the planning of a joint workshop with the Commission on Bibliography and Documentation of the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science, Division of History of Science. The workshop, planned for late May 1996, will discuss and develop strategies relating to issues of common concern stemming from the impact of computer technologies on the creation and maintenance of records in the modern scientific workplace. The meeting will be limited in size and include representatives from the archival, scientific and historical communities. Outcomes may include press releases, discussion papers for Internet communities, articles, and plans for a general conference.

Prepared by Tim Robinson, February 1996