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> *To be successful, an archival administrator must be both a "leader" and a "manager." Leadership involves establishing a vision and communicating a shared mission while management involves securing and administering resources effectively and efficiently. Two articles we read this semester challenged archivists to rethink current practices. F. Gerald Ham's "The Archival Edge," asked us to reconsider the mission and vision of archives. Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner's "More Product, Less Process," asked if we are managing resources properly. Select three topics covered this semester (appraisal, arrangement, preservation, digital records, etc.) and discuss how you will be both a "leader" and a "manager" in each area, taking into account these two influential articles. The answer should be based upon the lectures, discussions, and readings for the semester.*

From all that I have read and learned this semester about the archival profession, one of the surest paths to success is the ability to find a somewhat elusive balance between being a leader and a manager. A leader alone may lack the skills to implement new ideas, and a manager doesn't necessarily have the same creativity and big picture way of thinking that is required to imagine new possibilities. We cannot count on the pairing of an effective thinker-and-doer team to come together in every repository. Therefore, it is up to individual archivist to find ways to encompass both spheres if they are to keep up with the constant thrum that underlies the entire profession; the rhythms of change. Some 21_{st} century archivists are inclined to adhere to older 20_{th} century stereotypes of our profession; fastidious custodians who are most concerned with meticulously conserving historical records and adhering to traditional processing standard. However, in reality, we must be open-minded and ever adaptive to current societal patterns and technological developments. Janus is our patron god, as we too must keep one face turned towards the past and one looking to the future both in our collections and in our professional roles. With this in mind, I intend to delve into three spheres of archival work that are undergoing some radical changes: acquisitions, arrangement, and preservation. By reviewing the past practices of these three areas as well as modern challenges of the present, I intend to provide illustrations of how I intend to be

both a leader and a manger when it comes to implementing the lessons taught by our assigned literature

The old stereotype mentioned above, about archivists as custodians, started to fall out of favor by the last three decades of the 20th century. F. Gerald Ham expounded to his colleagues in 1974 that this image was affecting not only researchers, but the writing of history itself. "[T]he persistence of the custodial tradition has not only been a major factor in the archivist's failure to deal with acquisition policy on a coherent and comprehensive basis, but has resulted in an obsession—with the "nuts and bolts" or craft aspects of our work" (Ham, 7). This preoccupation with how to process archives that are given to a repository means that those institutions that produce the most records, i.e. those who hold power, are bound to be over-represented in history while the history of the common people goes unrecorded. These large gaps in our society's history is not only an injustice to those who are being forgotten, it is also denying future generations a more nuanced understanding of our current times. Ham believed that archivists should take on the responsibility of filling in these missing pieces: "Most researchers are caught in their own concerns and do not worry about all the history that needs to be written; yet in terms of documentary preservation this is precisely what the archivist must do" (8). Archivists must seek out new ways to gather information for a more inclusive historical record. There are ways to gather this data beyond textual documentation, including oral histories, videos, photographs, ephemera, etc. It is up to the archivist to utilize these tools to provide a new kind of historical insight that traditional record keeping overlooked— the human side of history.

As an archivist seeking out new acquisitions for my repository, I would seek to lead my colleagues towards new fields of information gathering. While history does sometimes repeat itself, it is not bound by that idiom, and completely new experiences are happening in nearly every corner of the globe. Because of this, it is important to have a leader who understands the bigger

picture of the world, well versed in the lessons of history, and up to date on current events and the ability to recognize when history is being made. If we are to provide users with the best information possible, we must find ways to document the here and now. Heather Soyka and Eliot Wilczek took on such a challenge when they sought a way to record the experiences of soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan beyond military parlance, as described in their article "Documenting the American Military Experience in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars." They recognized that these wars were unlike any other war the US has ever fought. Soyka and Wilczek were able to identify a major hole in the history of the wars—how soldiers managed to walk the line between benevolent occupiers and lethal invaders in their daily interactions with local populations. This kind of day to day routine is not something that makes it into the official military history records. Soyka and Wiczek also identified the major problems in collecting such data, including sifting through the sheer bulk of military records, the unsecure internet forums soldiers use to communicate their experience that are going unrecorded, the lack of incentive amongst officers as there is no reward for good record keeping, etc. Leadership requires more than big picture thinking; it also requires an ability to zoom in and pinpoint where potential challenges and their solutions lay. Beyond leading new discussions about how and what we should be archiving, I would then seek to exercise my managerial skills and put my ideas into action. This would include researching available options for data collection, the latest technologies that would aid record collection, and learn as much as possible about the group I'm seeking to work with and how they document (or don't) their operations. I would also come up with an acquisition plan, by utilizing shared experiences of other archives, and insights from members of the staff. Finally, I would create a budget management plan to assure that the cost of acquisition doesn't go beyond our limits.

Perhaps one of the most important shifts in archival practice is the effort to move away from traditional processing standards, because they have begun to hinder more than they help.

The scourge facing most repositories in the US is backlog. As Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner argue in their seminal article, "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," acquisitions are out pacing processing at an alarming rate, and as a result, many collections are left to gather dust, completely inaccessible to researchers. Green and Meissner believe that, "the archival profession has been unwilling or unable to change its processing practices in response to the greater quantities of acquisitions. We have been applying traditional approaches to a new problem and we have not been motivated to change the ways we do things, despite the clearly growing handicaps imposed by the status quo" (211). The one-size-fits-all approach to arrangement standards is proscriptive considering that no two archives are alike. Green and Meissner argue that when deciding on what level of arrangement to implement, the size and relative importance of the collection should be the factors on which to base standards. However, for most collections they feel that item level description is out of the question, and that series level arrangement is where to draw the line. If archivists are to fulfill their primary role, which is to provide access to their collections, they must choose quantity over quality in processing. They argue that series level arrangement is enough for researchers to find what they are looking for, and that most don't even take notice of a meticulously arranged collection. Green and Meissner write, "If a user is given an understanding of the whole and the structure and identity of its meaningful parts, then the vagaries that occur within a folder will not prove daunting and probably not even confusing...*Truly, much of what passes for arrangement is really just overzealous housekeeping, writ large*" (241, italics original).

Keeping Green and Meissner's caveats about over processing in mind I would continually seek out new ways to speed up the process of arrangement to prevent an ever-expanding, chronic backlog. I would begin by putting more emphasis on the appraisal, acquisitioning, and accessioning processes that must occur before arrangement. These steps provide a prime opportunity to

determine and document provenance, as Larisa K. Miller argues in her article, "All Texts Considered: A Perspective on Mass Digitizing and Archival Processing." Information such as names of creators, extent, dates etc. are all part of typical appraisal or accessioning practices, and, "Repositories might develop a [...] form to guide the process and encourage robust documentation" (523). Under Miller's model, this would be the total of metadata collected by archivists. Collections would then be digitized instead of physically arranged. I would seek to implement this standard for the majority of collections in my repository. Of course, certain collections will require more attention as to arrangement and preservation. However, the majority of collections produced during the 20$_{th}$ century are typewritten, meaning OCR (Optical Character Recognition) programs are able to accurately identify much of the text. This would allow users to search by keywords in a manner they are already familiar with due to search engines like Google. This also allows for what I think is an important adjustment to processing; intellectual arrangement. Green and Meissner write:

> Certainly, it is true that the order of folders in a series can, especially in large collections, affect a researcher's ability to find relevant material. Partly for this reason, archivists automatically pursue arrangement at the folder level after defining and ordering series. [...] But here we have allowed ourselves to conflate intellectual arrangement and physical arrangement. (241-42)

I would seek to move staff away from their inclination for physical arrangement by emphasizing the importance of intellectual arrangement. Our users will not be trained in the hierarchical style used by archivists, but if we provide them with an easy to search and use digital platform, we can design or implement software that provides more instinctive intellectual arrangements. Once the research had been done about what OCR software would best suit the repository's needs, and its implementation begun, I would use managerial skills to address all the smaller, though still important, problems that comes with such a massive transition. For example, determining the

repository's policy when it comes to putting private material online, and selecting what security we would place around such files. Miller suggests two solutions:

> Forensic software that identifies words of concern and patterns for other data of concern, like Social Security and credit card numbers, could be used to redact private data automatically via full text search. An alternative to redaction might be a nondisclosure agreement signed by users. This approach is already used for some collections that are only available in reading rooms, and it may be gaining momentum[.] (533)

This kind of on the spot problem solving that comes with change will require teamwork amongst a staff who all feel they are free to communicate their needs and concerns, and bring their own ideas to the table, while being provided with enough structure to clarify what their individual roles are.

Finally, we come to a topic Greene and Meissner feel very strongly about; preservation. They identify the direct contradiction in many literature sources about archival processing where archivists are instructed to avoid item level description, but should take preservation measures by handling each item, removing any paperclips, staples, brads or other items that might damage the paper, as well as refoldering and rehousing all documents into acid free containers. This laborious practice can eat up most of the archivists limited processing time. Greene and Meissner quote archival author Kenneth Duckett's opinion of these preservation tactics: "The concept of acid-free storage in an intriguing one. The commercial possibilities have not been overlooked... But the curator might do well to look behind the fetish to the practicalities of his own situation" (219). Indeed, archival quality materials are not cheap, and if they are used indiscriminately, a repository could use most of its budgets on these materials—money that could have been spent on acquisitions— and most of its time in rehousing— time that could have been spent making the collection accessible to the public. According to Greene and Meissner, they are not even necessity:

> Certainly, the preservation literature we examined in our literary review nearly all contain at least the implicit notion that the inside of a file folder is a grisly and dangerous environment, one in which poor quality paper is self-destructing at a rapid pace and taking

down all its neighbors for good measure. However, there is good reason to believe that the file folder neighborhood is not quite that hostile, or at least not that volatile, and it can be managed by controlling the storage environment on a macro level, without such intensive work at a micro level. (250)

The fears of mass disintegration of materials have been handed down to use from times when climate control was not a possibility, and materials really did decay at higher rates. However, this is not a modern problem for a several reasons. One of these is the fact that continual advances in speeding up the process of printing means more documents of low significance are also created, resulting in larger physical mass without inherent value, thus not every item is worth intricate conservation. Ham provides an example: "It is irresponsible and unrealistic to argue for the integrity of a file of gubernatorial papers that fills up 1500 document cases of which 80 percent is either duplicate or of marginal worth" (9). In the case of these kinds of collections, quantity does not equal quality. Climate control, as mentioned above, and its ability to neutralize acidic decay through precise temperature and humidity gauges; and digital preservation provides an extra precaution against the entire loss of material.

Determining a preservation plan for a repository first requires consideration of a somewhat philosophic dilemma about preservation; if absolute and permanent conservation of all documents is an unattainable ideal, then why should we as archivists even bother with it in the first place? Does impermanence void the considerable effort many repositories put in to preservation? James M. O'Toole ponders this dilemma in his article, "On the Idea of Permanence:" "To argue that permanence is devoid of meaning may be possible, but do certain basic human impulses thereby go unfulfilled?" (25). Many have theorized the archival obsession with conservation has psychological links with humankind's perpetual quest to leave a reminder of their presence on this earth. Much of the relevant literature assigned this semester describes that in the throes of the preservation obsession, many in the profession were made to feel a sense of shame if material in

their possessions depreciated in strength. O'Toole writes, "These [conservation] efforts were reinforced by a broader cultural disposition the preferred to see even historic items in their pristine condition. Deterioration "symbolizes failure," the philosopher of history David Lowenthal has observed, serving perhaps as a reminder of our own transience and mortality" (17). However, just as people must come to accept the fact that the guarantee of any kind of permanence is not a feature of life on earth, so too must archivists come to terms with preservation without the purview of perpetuity.

This kind of self-awareness about the temporality of life would allow me to put into perspective what goals are and aren't achievable and establish a plan that will allow for low maintenance, wide spread preservation that will last for a reasonable amount of time, while also making digital copies. With the kind of high resolution technology that is available today, copies have come to contain nearly the same amount of detail as the original, thus de-catastrophizing the gradual weakening of items. Having articulated my vision of semi-permanence, I would set about putting it into action. As I mentioned in regards to arrangement, the appraisal, acquisitions and accession phases would be used to identify major features of the collection in order to speed up the rest of processing. It would be during these procedures that major preservation issues would be identified and addressed immediately, rather than waiting to be discovered during arrangement, if ever. I would also seek to conduct climate control experiments such as the one conducted by Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, James Reilly, and Patricia Ford, which they wrote about in their report, "The Massachusetts Experiment: The Role of the environment in Collection Preservation." This would be done in order to discover how the geographical region of the repository affects its materials through the different seasons by measuring fluctuations in temperature, humidity, and dew points, and the effects they have on the four types of decay brought on environmental factors; natural aging, mechanical damage, biological decay/risk of mold, and metal corrosion (136). I

would also ensure this data was made available to other repositories in my area, so that they too

can implement the best climate control system for their needs.

By staying abreast of current trends, new advances, and solutions to unique problems, I

intend to be a leader in my field. Through patience, open communication, detailed agendas, and

careful planning, I also intend to exercise my managerial skills to advance the repository I work

for.

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