THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS: UNIVERSITY ARCHIVISTS AND DUAL APPOINTMENTS

William J. Morison

It is said that no man can serve two masters. This may be true. But men and women whom universities appoint as archivists frequently serve two masters. There are archivists — and their number may be legion — who have dual appointments, joint appointments, or other kinds of split assignments in their universities; who in fact are working at two jobs or in two professions; who report to two different bosses; who must fulfill not one but two sets of merit and promotion guidelines; who must serve two groups of clientele; who must answer two different telephones; but who, alas, draw only one salary.

This article is a brief inquiry into the nature of dual appointments. It describes some of the split assignments held by archivists in American universities today; it reviews some qualitative aspects of dual appointments; it summarizes advantages and disadvantages of having a dual appointment; and it suggests factors which should be understood by individuals who hold or are considering dual appointments, or by administrators who are thinking about creating them.

The term “split assignment” is used herein to denote a formal or informal arrangement in which part of a university employee’s responsibility falls in the area of archives, and part in some other area. Specific types of split assignments are dual appointments, in which one post is on the level of administration and the other on the level of faculty; and joint appointments, in which both posts are considered faculty positions.

Archivists with split assignments are located in colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada. Based on the information at hand, however, it is difficult to know who has a split assignment and who does not. A 1966 survey of American and Canadian colleges and universities found that only 9% of the institu-
tions that had archives employed a full time professional archivist. In his analysis of this survey, Robert M. Warner of the University of Michigan, then chairman of the College and University Archives Committee of the Society of American Archivists, concluded that most archivists in institutions of higher education were actually librarians who administered their schools' records "as a part time or even incidental function of their activities." Another survey in 1970 found that nearly 32% of the college and university archivists contacted performed other duties, including teaching, to supplement their salaries. A cursory review of the 1972 directory of College and University Archives in the United States and Canada reveals a high proportion of college and university archivists who spend less than 100% of their work week at their archives posts. In her introduction to the directory, Ruth W. Helmuth, Case Western Reserve University archivist, somewhat sadly called attention to the fact that there were "comparatively few full time university archivists" in the United States and Canada.

This study is concerned primarily with dual appointments in universities, though much of this information is applicable to all types of split assignments in colleges and perhaps other institutional settings as well. The author corresponded with nineteen university archivists, chosen more or less arbitrarily, who have split assignments, and who somehow carved out the time to share their thoughts. This article reflects their concerns along with the author's, although of course only the latter is responsible for conclusions drawn from this information.

A university archivist may be the director of an independent administrative unit with a large staff and broad archives, manuscripts, and records management responsibilities; or he or she may constitute a one-person office within an administrative unit such as the library; or be subject to some other administrative relationship. At the same time, regardless of the structure of the bureaucracy, the university archivist may also have a faculty appointment in an academic department; or be the director of an oral history center; or hold another position in a library; or occupy a separate administrative post in the university in, for example, the development office or the president's office.

Reporting lines vary at least as much as job combinations within dual appointments. The dual appointee as archivist might report to
the vice president for academic affairs, the vice president for public services, the provost, the executive vice president, the president, the director or dean of libraries, the head of special collections, the head of reference, an assistant dean for library services, or even to a university-wide committee. An entirely different reporting line may exist for the dual appointee in his or her other role.

Why do dual appointments exist and how do they come about? Very often the answer is a personal one. A faculty member saw the need for a university archives, helped create it, and received an additional appointment to direct its operations. An appointment such as this exists not only at the pleasure of the president and board of trustees, but also at the pleasure of the faculty member who simply prefers this arrangement. In many cases the university administration, apparently convinced that it needed an archival program, looked to someone within its own academic community to take it on as a temporary, then permanent, arrangement.

In the beginning, the administration possibly considered the establishment of a university archives to be an experiment. One could staff it with a dual appointment and preserve all options. Budgetary considerations were probably not ignored by university administrators who themselves were often called upon to wear more than one hat, and who might naturally have looked to a faculty member or other administrator with a potential for persistence, patience, administration, and achievement.

Furthermore, there may have been a belief within the central administration that, at the beginning at least, there was no need for a full time archivist — that the workload would not justify it. As these archival programs grew and proved their worth, their staff sizes tended to grow under the administration of archivists who preferred to retain, not forsake, their other assignment in the faculty or administration. Sometimes this has proved frustrating to the dual appointee, especially in instances where the press of work has not been accompanied by an enlargement of the archives staff.

University archivists with dual appointments seem to believe that their training is appropriate to their position as archivist. Many holders of dual appointments were trained in history and have master's or doctor's degrees. They have generally attended archival workshops or similar training seminars, and they find their involvement in regional and national archives associations to be useful.
Almost to a person, the archivist with a dual appointment contended that the training he or she received for the other post constituted acceptable basic training for the archives post. Some had worked as staff assistants in archives when they were graduate students. Most stressed the benefits derived from on-the-job training. Not surprisingly, few dual appointees with whom I have corresponded had any formal graduate training specifically in archives. One suspects that on occasion a member of the staff of a dual appointee has more formal archival training than his or her supervisor.

In answer to the question, "What do you do to increase your knowledge and expertise in each post?" the respondents wrote that they read the professional literature, attended seminars and meetings of the professional associations, and learned from colleagues in their fields. Some benefited from teaching archives courses. One person's reply was, simply, "read and listen." Another's reply was what we might expect from persons attempting to maintain competence in two fields: "scramble." Dual appointees tend to be active in the work of archival organizations. They occasionally read papers at professional meetings and publish articles in journals. Many dual appointees also pursue research interests in their other field, and many holding faculty positions are eligible for sabbaticals.

Several archivists with dual appointments were asked two questions about the time they spend at each post: how much time are you supposed to spend, and how much do you actually spend at each post? In this matter there was little agreement, and few clear patterns emerged. Dual appointees are asked to spend anywhere from 20% to 75% of their time in the archives portion of their appointment. In practice they spend anywhere from 17% to 85% of their time in the archives portion of their appointment. The existence of the two positions — or in some cases more than two — means that many dual appointees work, or claim to work, far in excess of the normal 40 hour work week — a matter to be discussed subsequently.

As one might expect, most of the dual appointees consider one of their posts to be their primary responsibility and the other to be secondary. In some cases this is a contractual matter and in others it is merely implied by the university administration. Those archivists who hold faculty appointments in an academic unit other than a library tend to consider their professorial functions to be their primary duties. Dual appointees whose posts are both library positions tend to
consider, for instance, their manuscripts department work, or their reference department work, to be the primary function. There are exceptions, of course; many dual appointees are responsible first to their archives duties. The distinctions often are not very clear-cut. Even in instances where it is considered secondary, the archives portion of a dual appointee's time and effort appears to have a tendency to grow in the direction of its becoming the primary function. Two replies, both from dual appointees whose faculty positions are the primary ones, are illustrative: (1) "I would consider my primary function to be a Professor of History. While the archives has become an essential function in the university, it remains secondary in many respects. It is very difficult to say which is my primary function, because while the university administration is more concerned with the archives, the graduate students and the history faculty are more concerned with the history activities;" (2) "Academic function is considered primary — even more so by department and university than by me — in fact, I think there is some perception of my function as full time faculty and full time archivist."

A related question concerns the expenditure of effort within the archives portion of the dual appointee's responsibility. Here a clearer pattern emerges. Nearly all of the dual appointees indicated that they spend most or all of the archives portion of their time in administrative tasks and comparatively little time in processing, assisting researchers, or in other matters. Most of the dual appointees queried supervised staffs of three or more full time, plus three or more part time persons. The staffs of several dual appointees exceeded a dozen full time positions.

Many dual appointees lend emphasis to their occupational bifurcation by the fact that they work out of two separate offices, and often in two separate buildings. Furthermore, some dual appointees appear to be understandably unable to avoid doing some archival work in their non-archives office, and vice versa. Other dual appointees are able to work out of one office.

Annual salaries of dual appointees range from approximately $12,000, or roughly the equivalent of an assistant professor's salary, to more than twice that, or roughly the equivalent of a department head or an assistant vice president. Many dual appointees have teaching responsibilities, and their salaries are often pegged to the professorial salary structure. Others receive administrative supple-
ments that put their pay more in line with that equal to, or greater than, a department head's. Those whose salaries are split between two budgets tend to have higher salaries than the others.

Asked whether or not the dual appointee could resign from either post but keep the other, several respondents answered yes, several no, and several were uncertain. Asked what will happen when the dual appointee leaves the university, some believed that another person would fill the dual appointment, while others believed that two full time positions would be established.

The foregoing remarks survey the terrain of the dual appointment, but they do not identify the value of the subterranean deposits, be they precious metals or fool's gold. Questions that remain involve qualitative aspects of dual appointments. What differences does a dual appointment make? What does it imply about the quality or effectiveness of one's work as archivist? One can make a stab at describing the form, but the substance of the dual appointment is less susceptible to definition.

Typically, the professor-archivist believes that his or her publication rate has been reduced as a result of the dual appointment; tends to take work home in the evenings and on weekends, or works extra hours at the office; perhaps learns not to accept every speaking engagement or book review requested; and believes that he or she in general must settle for less productivity in both posts. "I don't have the time to give either the attention it deserves," one person stated, "since I prefer the professorial role, the archival function suffers by comparison."

Similarly, the dual appointee without teaching responsibilities also often feels frustrated. According to one, "I feel that my archival work suffers from a lack of long continuous periods in which to work. It's hard to organize work. I don't feel my reference work suffers as much although I don't have as much time to keep up with professional reading. If I become a full time archivist, I will have more time and resources to plan more projects, expand holdings, etc."

Regardless of the nature of the non-archival portions of their dual appointments, archivists tend constantly to worry that their divided responsibilities result in compromising the quality of their work. One archivist-history professor remarked, "It means that you never have enough time to give your best to either one. I am not able to research and publish as much because of the archives job. I cannot devote as
much time to graduate students as I would like and as they would like. I am not able to keep up with the most current research and writing in my field as a history professor.’’ An archivist who began to teach courses in archival science found that the classes had ‘‘really consumed much more time and energy than I anticipated. I have never really been on top of the archives job since I started teaching.’’ An archivist with additional administrative responsibilities in his university sounded a common refrain: ‘‘Generally I feel negative about the current situation because my work load is not adjusted and I have basically two full time jobs.’’

Dual appointees were also questioned on whether or not their dual roles affected the way they were perceived by others in their university communities. Archivist-faculty members apparently believe that their archives responsibilities bring them into contact with greater numbers of university employees over a wider range of occupations. ‘‘Many people throughout the university know me as the archivist because of our records management program and my activities as archivist,’’ stated one. ‘‘My archival appointment plus earlier work in getting [the] archives established personifies me as the ‘Archives.’ I get a bit of general academic attention and inquiry I would not get as a professor only,’’ claimed a second, and others pointed out that their archives duties permitted them to serve on boards and committees which thus proved beneficial to the archives and perhaps to their own professional growth. More than one respondent with other important university-wide administrative responsibilities believes that his or her dual appointment improves the stature and visibility of the archives as a vital administrative unit. A comment on the present state of affairs in the history profession was offered by a teacher of archives courses who observed that the university’s history faculty were ‘‘uneasily grateful’’ for the teaching responsibilities, because ‘‘most of their graduate students are here for archives’’ training.

Not every dual appointee believes that the status of the archives has been thus improved, however. One suspects that there may be prevalent an assumption that the archives must not be an essential or vital unit, otherwise it would deserve a full time director. Another senses that he ‘‘is always perceived as not being ‘around’ often enough by comparison with others in either a department or an administrative office. There is little understanding that one cannot be in two places at once.’’ Still another feared that he ‘‘may be somewhat
a second-class citizen in the history department, but no other discernable effect.” Finally, another dual appointee voiced a common regret: “In some ways I am ‘neither fish nor fowl.’ The History Department now considers me as part of the library and the librarians are not quite ready to accept me as one of their own.”

A matter that closely affects archivist-faculty members, but which may have broader implications, is the issue of how one is evaluated for merit raises, promotion, and tenure, especially if the archival role is seen as chiefly administrative. Some archivists who are members of history departments, for example, are judged solely on the basis of their teaching competence and publication record. The archives hat is considered administrative service, analogous to membership on university committees. Responses suggest that it is better to have earned tenure prior to appointment as archivist because a dual appointment would not leave enough time to establish a tenure level record.

This raises the question, to what extent is a portion of one’s work as archivist seen as a research, teaching, or service component? Apparently few if any universities have created separate and distinct promotion and tenure criteria for their archivist-faculty member. Practices appear to vary widely. Some deans and department chairmen ignore the archival responsibilities, while others appreciate the teaching, research, and service components involved in archival administration.

This matter concerns faculty members who are archivists and who are thus expected to be in their offices for more than a few posted office hours, shoulder major administrative responsibilities, teach from one to three courses per term, produce books and articles in acceptable numbers and quality, and be judged by the full rigor of tenure and promotion standards established for their colleagues with full time professorial appointments.

Most of the foregoing remarks apply to archivist-teachers. It is not clear the degree to which archivists on library staffs or faculties, who may have separate responsibilities elsewhere in the library, are evaluated in terms of their archival responsibilities and performance. Such matters as papers presented at archives conferences, articles in professional archives journals, quality of service to patrons, and so on, are probably considered for merit, promotion, and tenure more often when the dual appointee has a library base instead of one in the
traditional liberal arts. Some people indicated that this whole matter was under study by their universities. One person preferred not to answer this question because it would require a long essay.

Do faculty appointments give an archivist more status? It appears that some university archivists who do not have concurrent faculty appointments believe that they have less status in the eye of the university; those who do have concurrent faculty appointments believe that they have relatively more status in the eye of the university community, or at least the faculty. One faculty member claims to have been appointed archivist “to give a new function prestige or credibility.” It also appears that some faculty members who also have appointments as university archivists contend that as a result of their archives appointment they have more status than other faculty members. One person said that it did not make any difference.

Such issues raise the question of whether or not dual appointments exist because archives cannot make their way in university bureaucracies. For example, does the existence of a dual appointment indicate that the administration believes that archives work is not a full time job? Few people responding to the questionnaire admit that their dual appointments are indications that their central administrations believe this to be the case. One university archivist wrote that his administration might even restrict him to working with university records, as opposed to non-university materials, because of the need for more staff time spent on university materials. This same university is proposing to add a full time records manger. Furthermore, as mentioned above, many dual appointees, while themselves partial appointments, direct staffs of one or more full time professionals and/or clerical help. One university archivist admitted that while some administrators might not understand the nature of archives, nevertheless, his university’s chief administrators do see it as a full time job. One respondent suggested that this question would be answered soon, since a full time position was being proposed to the administration. From the data reviewed, there appears to be no indication that a dual appointment indicates an admission by an administration that archives work is generally less significant in some way.

One can bring to the archivist’s work a background of experience from another profession. This can help or it can hinder. A librarian can try to treat portions of record groups as single, discrete items,
and thus destroy archival integrity; but a librarian can also bring to archives work a respect for the importance of archives as reflections, even creations, of American culture. A historian can assume with little further investigation that he was born to be an archivist — and almost any archivist who has served historians can tell you otherwise — or a historian can make excellent contributions to the strengthening of finding aids and to the appraisal of record groups.

All respondents apparently believe that their archives work benefits in some ways from insights brought from their other profession or role. An archivist who also serves as executive assistant to the chancellor contends that he has “a better grasp of exactly how the university functions and how decisions are reached from the perspective of the office of the chief executive.” An archivist who is a history faculty member states that he “is much more aware of the things researchers and scholars need and use because of my work in the history department. I have a better insight to the best way to arrange manuscript materials because of my work as a historian. I am a better historian because I am an archivist and a better archivist because I am a historian.” Another historian was “better able to evaluate the research potential of collections offered to the repository.” Another cited the advantages of “easy access and acceptance in all academic areas, more ‘clout’ with [his] administration, [and] probably [a] higher salary.”

While acknowledging differences between library classification and archival arrangement and description, one reference librarian-archivist believed that her library training helped her “initially with organizing and classifying skills . . .” Another dual appointee warned of “a danger of perfectionism in self-contained archival work” and asserted his improved ability to set priorities more clearly. A university archivist with additional records management responsibilities noted advantages accruing to the archives from the blend of the two areas. Dual appointees, whether or not also faculty members, are unanimous in recognition of the professional aspects of archival work, and underline the need for attention to the quality of the contents of the historical materials entrusted to their care.

The most striking thing about the responses of dual appointees concerning qualitative aspects of their roles is their attitude. By and large, they appear to be enthusiastic about their work, and few appear desirous of dropping either role. This is not to say that they cannot suggest ways to improve their situations, or that they are blind
to disadvantages of dual appointments. Many of the dual appointees seemed to enjoy getting something off their chests. Frankly, dual appointees wear hair shrits. Chief among disadvantages — and the one cited by every respondent — was voiced by the lament, "There is never enough time to get everything done! The demands on your time are impossible." These words and similar bemoanings came through almost as audible groans. "Over-worked" was the common chorus, with these refrains running through the verses: too little time to be thorough; impossible to be in two places at once; double the amount of paperwork and report writing; conflicting expectations of supervisors; difficulty in keeping up with the literature of one profession, not to mention two; too many committee meetings; and the "enormous time commitments" necessary to "keep all your constituents happy."

Let me share the candid comments on the disadvantages of dual appointments from four colleagues: (1) "It also occasionally puts a strain on my relations with people because I do not spend much time in casual conversation. This may be seen as being aloof;" (2) "Having less time for both historical manuscripts and archives, it has taken longer to know both, and processing in both is slower. There seems to be little time for active soliciting of material for the Archives as opposed to trying to keep the backlog to reasonable proportions;" (3) "Probably one of the hidden hazards of dual appointments is that one loses one's claim to indispensability as a faculty member but does not fully establish it as archivist;" (4) "Possibly spread too thin; would like to be doing more of the basic archival functions, including processing; not as easy to keep in touch with collection content." Some seem to think one area of the dual appointment suffers at the expense of the other; others seem to believe that both areas suffer equally.

All in all, university archivists with dual appointments appear to have the nagging feeling that each of their part time jobs should be full time, and that in effect they have to put in many more than the usual forty hours per week in order to stay ahead of the hounds. As one put it, "Joint appointments tend to equal two two-thirds-time jobs." Another noted that his "University has a good thing going, since they have me doing two jobs for one salary." And another warned that "joint appointments can be very hard on young staff members who are not established or are without tenure." It is obvious that for some archivists, split assignments are good for producing
splitting headaches.

Though not without pain, dual appointments are obviously a source of joy to many university archivists. Just as they are straightforward about the disadvantages of dual appointments, they are eager to share the pleasures of their split assignments. For many, there seems to be a spirit of challenge that surrounds their work. Variety stimulates creativity, turns away boredom, and resists stagnation. One historian-archivist is much more aware of the varieties of research materials available and can suggest lively and significant topics for his students’ theses and dissertations. He is better prepared to teach historical methods, and delights in holding classes in the archives to take advantage of materials available there. Still another mentions that his teaching “provides numerous leads to new collections.” Furthermore, one dual appointee points out that whereas he may have two jobs with only one salary, he might also have more job security. “It is harder to get rid of a person with two positions,” he claimed.

An archivist believes his additional university-wide administrative responsibilities give him “an opportunity to see how the university is run on a first-hand basis” and enhance the importance of archives in the minds of top level administrators. A reference librarian knows much more about the structure of her university and can thus be of more assistance to both sets of patrons. Still another dual appointee cites “wide exposure to university activities and problems and opportunity to increase awareness on both sides.” And one cites, simply, “better personal satisfaction.”

There emerges a portrait of the “typical” dual appointee discussed in this paper. As far as I know, the stereotype that follows is a caricature into which no one person fits precisely. The university archivist with a dual appointment is male, in his forties, and works at a large state university in the Midwest. He is a tenured professor in the history department, but his office is in the university archives, which is also a manuscripts repository. He teaches one or two courses per term or year. His salary is higher than it would be if he did not have the administrative appointment. He supervises a staff of five to twelve full time persons, plus clerical assistants. He spends most of his time in administration and collection development. He believes that he is both a better archivist and a better historian, but though he understands both worlds, he often senses that neither world quite understands the other. He is considered an administrator by his
faculty colleagues and a scholar by his fellow administrators. Therefore he is understood by nobody. He participates more fully in the university's functions than if he were either faculty member or administrator only. He works extremely hard to retain proficiency in two professions, but often feels the pressures and frustrations attendant upon this impossibility.

This, then, describes the nature and suggests qualitative aspects of dual appointments held by some university archivists. Taken together, they can help outline the contours of dual appointments. In and of themselves, dual appointments are neither good nor bad. Many factors, some of which have not been treated here, influence one's appraisal of them. This article does not attempt to speak to the question of whether or not the university community would be better served if its archives were not directed by a dual appointee, nor does it address the problem of the college archives that receives only a fraction of the effort of a librarian who is not an archivist. Rather, it focuses on archivists who hold dual appointments in universities, many of whom themselves tend to supervise staffs of full time professionals. Dual appointees seem to work extremely hard, and they seem to enjoy their work. One likened his dual appointment to "running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. It's the best of both worlds," he asserted, "even when the worlds are both too much with us."

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