“Keep This, Toss That”: Improving Records Management at an Academic Institution

By Cliff Hight and James W. Smith

ABSTRACT: Academic archivists often have institutional records and information management duties that touch all facets of the records life cycle. This case study describes a records pilot project with Kansas State University’s Office of the Provost. It helped meet the office’s management and storage needs, provided a test bed for assessing the current retention policy and schedule, and allowed development of an efficient survey method to hasten retention decisions. Other benefits of the project included opportunities to apply basic processing concepts to decrease time for arrangement and description, an improved understanding of records management training gaps for office staff, and another occasion to advocate for the relevance of archives and archivists.

Introduction

In March 1968, the special collections librarian at Kansas State University (KSU) wrote a campus administrator requesting him to review distribution lists and ensure the special collections unit automatically “receive copies of all non-confidential memoranda, handouts and publications. . . .” Furthermore, he reminded the administrator, “These archives will be the official University Archives. We wish also to ask you to consider Special Collections as a depository for your back files of correspondence and memoranda. . . .”[1] Despite such calls to action, campus units did not always comply, and distribution continued to be spotty.

KSU, a land-grant university in Manhattan, Kansas, opened in 1863. Over a century later, in June 1967, Kansas State University Library established a special collections division, which included building an official university archives. For the next 16 years, a special collections librarian led the small division and served as the de facto director of the archives. In 1983, KSU hired its first professionally trained archivist, Anthony R. Crawford, to develop a more professional focus on managing historically significant university records. He operated as the university archivist and curator of manuscripts until his position was split, and Cliff Hight became the university archivist in 2011.

The current records retention policy and schedule at KSU was approved in 1993 and was occasionally updated with minor modifications. By 2011, the policy and schedule needed a major revision—mainly because of changes in technology, statutes, and the state retention policy and schedule. Additionally, pockets of interest in updating them existed on campus. Some staff members in the Office of the Provost expressed support by offering to use their office’s records as a test case for evaluating the current policy. One of the provost’s staff, a trained archivist who had worked for the National Archives and Records Administration and the National Park Service, recognized the need to improve current records and information management (RIM) practices in the office.

KSU president Duane Acker instituted the Office of the Provost in 1980 to be the chief academic officer and oversee all colleges and affiliated academic departments. There have been four provosts at KSU including, currently, April Mason (since 2009). The Office of the Provost works with the Office of the President to help manage university priorities, program budgets, and faculty policies. The provost serves as the president's representative in his or her absence and is the university's representative to the Council of Chief Academic Officers (COCAO).

The pilot project began as an analysis of records and RIM needs of the Office of the Provost to determine if the existing records retention policy and schedule were adequate to address its needs. The project started in this office because it bears ultimate academic responsibility for the university, and project staff believed beginning there would add greater weight when embarking on future undertakings with other campus units. Questions at the outset of the project included how were the current policy and schedule effectively meeting the RIM needs of each department while aligning with legal requirements? Did the policy and schedule effectively address analog and digital records? How could the archives more effectively administer its institutional RIM duties? These questions indicated that the records infrastructure at Kansas State University might require improvements at every phase of the records life cycle, from creation to disposition.

This photograph shows one of the damaged record cartons that was crushed due to poor inactive storage conditions. Photograph by James W. Smith.

Literature Review

Professional literature influenced project planning and decision making. "Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records," written by Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young in 1985, was the oldest article consulted.[2] They noted that traditional forms of appraisal at that time were inadequate for selecting administrative records. To provide clearer explanations for making appraisal decisions, Boles and Young created a model that institutions could adapt based on their respective records retention policies and schedules. Their prototype outlined a practical method for appraising university administrative records, especially because public educational institutions have transparency obligations to the public that must be balanced with records restricted by exceptions to applicable open records laws. Their paradigm consisted of "three general categories of decisions evaluated when appraising records: (1) the value of the information, (2) the costs of retention, and (3) the political and procedural implications of the appraisal recommendations."[3] Each category is further refined into sublevels to assist the decision-making process. The strength of this model is its tractability, as the authors noted: "Because of its flexibility and comprehensiveness, the model reflects appraisal in a number of situations: as part of a records management program, in traditional appraisal situations, and during reappraisal."[4]

During the pilot project, this model helped expedite appraisal by taking cues from the value of information segment and its "three sub-components: (1) practical limitations, (2) duplication of information, and (3) topical analysis."[5] Project staff followed the model to survey nearly 200 linear feet of records. They recognized a topical arrangement and identified duplicate records. The project assistant's appraisal notes became the foundation of the description and provided a broad idea of series content, helping project staff then make retention decisions.

"More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing" (MPLP) by Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner also influenced the execution of this project.[6] Their emphasis on speeding up and streamlining the processing of archival backlogs generated internal discussions about improving efficiencies and describing holdings at the appropriate level. Lessons learned from their article also can be applied to fledgling RIM programs. According to a 2003–2004 survey conducted by Greene and Meissner, "[O]n average, repositories are taking in more material per year than they can process, a fact acknowledged by 78% of repositories."[7] While this statistic applies to holdings already in archival repositories, it is likely that many offices at institutions with struggling RIM programs store more materials each year than they should.

Greene and Meissner discussed the effect of archival description and preservation on processing. They wrote that description "should be flexible, should vary from collection to collection (and even within collections), and should strive first and foremost to provide general descriptive information about all of our holdings, rather than minute descriptions about a few."[8] Addressing the role of preservation, their analysis showed that processors were interpreting manuals too closely and trying to do more than recommended, such as protecting against acid migration and always removing metallic fasteners, which resulted in slower processing rates and limited the quantity of materials available to users. Because use is the most significant reason to maintain archival holdings, MPLP sounded a clarion call to the profession that traditional processing methods lack the flexibility to address widespread backlogs at archival repositories. Greene and Meissner then proposed a number of practical processing suggestions and ideas to decrease turnaround time between acquisition and user access, such as replacing folders only when dilapidated, not removing staples or paperclips, and creating an intellectual arrangement that may not mirror the physical arrangement.

Because a significant portion of the pilot project included RIM, Joanne Kaczmarek's 2006 *Archival Issues* article, "Establishing a University Records Management Program from the Inside Out," was very informative.[9] She described efforts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to improve RIM by embedding information specialists within campus units. The project developed out of a tight budgetary climate that pushed the archives' staff to reconsider their approach to campus RIM. Furthermore, she recognized the importance of receiving support from upper management, especially in an academic environment.

In this case study, Kaczmarek and her staff worked with the power plant on a shared concern about effective information management and hired an information specialist to improve RIM within the campus unit. Kaczmarek explained they strategically recast "records management" as "information management" in an attempt "to shift perceptions beyond the hackneyed regulatory view of records management often conjured up by the RM and RIM acronyms."[10]

Kaczmarek pointed out that understanding the information management needs of campus units allowed the archives' staff to create effective plans for an information specialist to meet the specific needs of each unit. She also pointed out the value of stepping back from overemphasizing statutes and policies and instead focusing on meeting the information management needs of the units. By doing this, Kaczmarek asserted,

> [T]he Archives has been able to gain more continuing support from all levels of administration. This in turn makes records management efforts more effective and sustainable. Perhaps more importantly, the success of any approach to records management will help secure the documentary evidence necessary for a healthy archives program.[11]

Another publication that affected decisions during this project was Nancy M. Kunde's chapter on RIM at academic institutions in the 2008 book, *College and University Archives: Readings in Theory and Practice,* edited by Christopher Prom and Ellen Swain.[12] Kunde recognized that most RIM programs at academic institutions are not well situated in the organizational structure and wondered how to make them more relevant to mission-critical activities of the institution and its resource allocators. She also noted that surveys from the 1980s and 1990 found "that as long as records management remains a part-time responsibility of the university archivist, RIM programs will likely not achieve their full potential."[13] She reported similar news from a 2002 study that found "records professionals generally were left out of institutional information management strategies."[14]

One remedy Kunde recommended was to collaborate with faculty members who have research data management requirements: "Research represents the lifeblood of many academic institutions. Inserting records requirements into this arena ensures that researchers have their data available for future projects, can meet patent documentation and other needs, and that the institution's liability is protected."[15] She further recommended developing and maintaining good working relationships with the legal and internal audit offices, including requesting that records retention compliance be added to audit checklists. At the same time, she cautioned archivists to be judicious in creating ties to avoid being overwhelmed and that it is best to have some RIM basics in place, such as policy, procedures, retention schedules, and training, before expanding RIM activities. Kunde suggested that smaller programs must think creatively, "The reality of small programs and low levels of staffing suggests that efforts to collaborate, broader approaches to education, and the development of guidelines can benefit everyone."[16] Underlying all of these activities is the need to think strategically and, in Kunde's words, to ask this question: "What sort of strategy will make the university records program relevant in my institution?"[17]

The previously cited works influenced project staff as they planned and made decisions throughout the undertaking. Project staff developed appraisal criteria based on concepts from Boles and Young, augmented processing methods and RIM efforts with suggestions from MPLP, used Kaczmarek's value arguments when writing the project report, and followed Kunde's RIM strategies during the project. One principal reason this pilot project occurred with the Office of the Provost was to increase the relevance of RIM and the university archives to the institution.

Records of the Office of the Provost Pilot Project

In May 2011, faculty from the KSU Libraries' Richard L. D. and Marjorie J. Morse Department of Special Collections met with the provost's executive team to discuss ways the university archives could assist staff in the Office of the Provost to meet their records needs.[18] Two main concerns arose during this meeting: a records survey had not occurred in recent memory, and office staff found the university's outdated records retention policy and schedule challenging to apply effectively. Shortly afterward, office staff and department personnel decided to begin a pilot project within the office to address these concerns with plans to apply the findings of the project to other campus units.

The project began with a literature review, noted above, which provided guidance for project planning, especially regarding appraisal, scheduling records, and description. Project staff then examined the existing KSU retention schedule and reviewed records the office previously transferred to the archives. This approach helped evaluate how effectively the office had followed the schedule in transferring appropriate records to the archives. Although many of the records adhered to the schedule, it became apparent that other significant records in the archives were not scheduled but should have been. Furthermore, the retention schedule was missing important records series, such as contracts, security records, and maintenance records. To fill this scheduling gap and others, project staff drafted a revised retention schedule. This draft included formatting changes that improved clarity for university staff members confused by the disorienting codes describing the disposition of records. The draft also grew out of the existing schedule and a review of schedules from local and peer institutions.[19]

As the draft schedule solidified, project staff began an inventory of the office's inactive records. Throughout the inventory, project staff compared records series in the office to the draft schedule and the State of Kansas schedule. Edits occurred as project staff noticed discrepancies between schedules or when new series were inventoried. This approach provided improved documentation of changes to the draft schedule and influenced decisions later in the undertaking. Project staff also experimented with different formats for the schedule and shared them with the office staff to better understand the schedule's usefulness. Based on their feedback, project staff settled on grouping records series by overarching functions, such as administrative, financial, legal, and so on, to improve usability by office staff.

Initial project goals included exploring the office's electronic records as well, but project staff recommended delaying that portion as they recognized the scope of work required for processing the paper records, updating the retention schedule, and improving institutional readiness to appropriately manage and preserve electronic records. Instead, project staff suggested doing a later pilot project with the office to address unique opportunities with electronic records.

The project assistant spent 120 hours surveying approximately 200 linear feet of materials. The assistant created a structured spreadsheet designed for easy migration to become a container list in the institution's archival collection management system. The document included columns for the records series titles (administrative, financial, etc.), space for container information, folder titles (if given), and dates. While the survey basically functioned as a container list for archival records, it also provided an easy way to identify materials with expired retention periods.

At the same time, project staff applied several MPLP concepts, including refoldering only when necessary, not removing staples or paperclips, and arranging records intellectually rather than physically. These tactics dramatically increased processing efficiency considering that this number is well under the surveyed response of "14.8 hours per foot average reported" in the Greene and Meissner article.[20] Following their advice not to look at every folder or item and yet still take enough time to grasp the content of the records made such speed possible. The fast-moving surveying of records rarely slowed; it only diminished when the project assistant discovered mold on some records in crushed boxes and took proper remediation steps.

Combining appraisal and basic processing with the records survey allowed the project staff to make decisions more efficiently on what to retain. Of the 200 linear feet reviewed, over 40 percent (86 linear feet) had expired retention periods and could be destroyed, while the remaining 60 percent (114 linear feet) were transferred to the archives. Thus, the project assistant performed nearly all the appraisal, arrangement, and description of the 114 linear feet retained in 130 hours. Because project staff had formatted the inventory like a container list, the project assistant was able to quickly create a finding aid. Moreover, it helped in identifying sensitive materials to restrict—such as documents containing Social Security numbers—and those needing conservation. Completion of the arrangement and description, as well as mold remediation activities, required approximately 30 additional hours, resulting in a processing metric of 1.4 hours per linear foot. [21]

Project staff realized that better educating office staff about recordkeeping practices would help in at least two ways. First, it would reduce confusion office staff felt when trying to apply the retention policy and schedule. Second, it would streamline some office procedures and reduce burdens on office staff. One method consisted of creating transfer forms that included a container list as part of the agreement. The office staff were very helpful during the project, and a rapport developed as project staff showed a commitment to helping them meet their RIM needs. However, office staff expressed concerns about poor recordkeeping communication and limited procedural documentation. One proposed solution was to expand the existing recordkeeping web presence, which consisted of the retention policy and schedule, and add FAQs, links to training documentation, and updated transfer forms and contact information.

The project assistant found mold on some of the records, including the contents of the folder in this photograph. Photograph by James W. Smith.

The project staff also learned about the office's recordkeeping culture in which staff members took care of their own records, and all were uncomfortable destroying those that had met their retention length, believing they might someday need such records. This uneasiness reinforced one of the office's biggest RIM concerns—space. The volume of their inactive records exceeded the capacity of their storage space, which led them to store additional inactive records in active office spaces. This situation also strengthened the project staff's resolve to develop a better RIM training and FAQ resources.

To complete the pilot project, project staff created a report for the provost that outlined actions taken and provided seven recommendations for improved institutional record-keeping:

1. Revise the records retention policy and schedule.
2. Create a records manager position.
3. Develop a web presence for records questions.
4. Implement a university records committee to maintain records-related policies and schedules.
5. Proceed with second pilot project to address electronic records management.
6. Establish point of contact in central administrative offices and colleges for RIM communications.
7. Ensure resources exist to meet growing needs of archives and users.

In summary, the pilot project with the Office of the Provost included a number of activities to address RIM concerns of office staff and assess the relevance of the existing records retention policy and schedule. By reviewing transfers already in the archives, project staff could compare holdings for compliance with the schedule and establish precedent for future materials received from the office. Project staff then recognized gaps in the schedule and began drafting a revised retention schedule. Next, the project assistant surveyed inactive office records, expanding the draft schedule as he found new series. The survey allowed project staff to select and transfer appropriate records to the archives while creating a finding aid from the inventory. Throughout the project, the university archivist and project assistant learned about the office's recordkeeping culture and began developing improved RIM training and FAQ resources. Finally, project staff created a report for the provost that included seven recommendations related to improving institutional recordkeeping.

Analysis of the Case

This pilot project included programmatic successes, areas for improvement, and a clearer vision of how the archives should better serve the institution. Analyzing each of these topics yields insights beneficial to archivists in similar institutions and beyond.

Project Successes

Successes included improving the office's records management, increasing the rate of processing, progressing toward a revised retention policy and schedule, enhancing the visibility of the archives with the Office of the Provost, and understanding how to apply these lessons to future RIM projects.

Project staff successfully assessed the office's records, transferred appropriate records to the archives, and advised office staff on RIM practices. The project assistant's positive interactions with office staff provided additional opportunities for him to share RIM techniques.

Another positive outcome of this project was the increased departmental processing metric. While archivists should not expect the same rate for all processing, applying certain MPLP methods in this case yielded a processing rate of 1.4 hours per linear foot. This metric was well under the time estimated for completing the project. Because this survey is likely the first of many at this institution, this metric encouraged the project staff, and they plan to continue applying appropriate basic processing methods to future projects.

This project verified the premise that the institution needed to revise its 20-year-old records retention policy and schedule. A university records task force emerged from this project and has since recommended policy and schedule adjustments, including the establishment of a standing university committee to create and review campus records and information policies. This committee began meeting in 2016 with the university archivist as chair.

Another facet of improving RIM guidance included recognizing the need to make relevant information more easily accessible. During project interviews, office staff expressed concerns about finding the retention policy and schedule, which was only available online in the university's policies and procedures manual. Even then, the retention schedule was a web link buried within the text of the policy. When office staff received copies of the existing schedule, they reported to project staff that its layout was unintuitive due to the use of disposition codes and vague descriptions of record types. Such feedback during these informal meetings with office staff led to the proposal to improve RIM training and FAQ resources.

A secondary benefit of this project was that the university archives became more visible to the provost and her staff, which positively influenced other areas of the undertaking. The project assistant's everyday exchanges with office staff helped form a more trusting relationship and encouraged all parties to help each other. Also, since the completion of the project, the office staff have more consistently approached the university archives about records to transfer. Furthermore, the provost has supported some of the project report recommendations, such as creating the aforementioned task force to formulate next steps in revising the retention policy and schedule, which has led to additional recommendations and meetings with her and her staff.

Department personnel can apply the positive elements from this test bed to future RIM ventures. For example, it is imperative to understand the context of the records environment before looking at the records. Archivists can gain this knowledge by examining retention schedules, interviewing records creators and keepers, and analyzing the potential administrative and research values of the records. After performing an effective records survey, processors can continue employing MPLP strategies—such as minimal refoldering, leaving most staples and paperclips, and arranging intellectually rather than physically—to reduce the time required to make archival records accessible.

Areas for Improvement

Project staff recognized at least three ways to improve future endeavors with university records: review professional literature more thoroughly before embarking on a project; meet more frequently with records custodians during a project; and establish a more formal appraisal process to assist with retention decisions.

When this project began, the focus was on records management from an archival perspective. Project staff studied articles focused on archival thought and appraisal methods, which were helpful but, in hindsight, were too narrow for addressing the interdisciplinary connections of the project. For example, articles in RIM publications, as well as professional literature addressing the psychological facets of recordkeeping behaviors, would have provided an expanded perspective for project staff and helped them better foresee possible recordkeeping challenges during the project.

Throughout the undertaking, project staff had a recurring concern that they met too infrequently with the office staff. Opportunities were limited due to busy schedules and heavy workloads. This issue could have been minimized if project staff had established expectations for consultations at the beginning of the endeavor. In the few meetings held during this project, office staff provided beneficial information, and several more appointments could have yielded additional tidbits from the records custodians, who had an intimate knowledge of the records and their usage. The meetings that did occur with project staff and office staff—beyond providing pertinent information about the records—helped develop more trusting relationships with higher levels of cooperation. In future surveys and inventories, additional meetings could provide more training opportunities and discussions of policies and procedures.

Another improvement for future projects would be to better document the appraisal process. The department has a history of capturing little appraisal information beyond a records retention policy and schedule and the documentation that accompanies records transfers. For example, when nonarchival records were sent to the archives in the past, they included limited documentation of why they were exceptions to the retention length outlined in the schedule.

By creating an appraisal report that remains with other documentation of the materials, the department could justify to future archivists why those records were retained. In fact, some archivists argue that appraisal should be the most intellectually challenging portion of archival work and that much of that effort should occur before the archivist sees the records. Mark Greene said,

> The foundation of the [appraisal] process, paraphrasing Terry Cook about macro appraisal, first is a thoughtful assessment of the activities of the records creator against the repository's acquisition priorities. Those priorities can be identified at the level of the creator and, in the case of high-priority creators, by series.[22]

Moving forward, department personnel would benefit by elucidating their reasons for selecting records, especially after performing a thoughtful analysis like the one Greene suggested above.

Clearer Vision for University Archives

The pilot project helped department staff clarify their vision for the university archives, especially related to expanding training, improving advocacy, and understanding recordkeeping behaviors. Developing RIM training opportunities and raising RIM awareness at KSU will require an active approach that includes interacting with recordkeeping staff, as well as a more passive component of sharing information online. Training of recordkeeping staff will include sharing informational materials and providing instruction about records retention policies and schedules, cost-saving tips, security measures, environmental protections, RIM resources, and discussions of office records.

Part of the retention policy and schedule training should include emphasizing the proper use of the records transfer form. Highlighting this tool would help transferring offices understand that they are essentially creating a container list by accurately filling out the form. This efficiency would reduce processing time and make records available more quickly. Another benefit of this change would be to alleviate the fears that some recordkeeping staff have of losing control of their records. In addition, these in-person trainings would help build and strengthen the interpersonal ties between campus stakeholders and university archives staff.

Online RIM resources will include a web page built into the university archives website featuring information about RIM policies and procedures, including the university's records retention policy and the state's records retention schedule, as well as contact information and a frequently asked questions section. The web page's purposes could include simplifying the flow of information, providing answers to many of the basic questions, and creating a point of contact for more complex questions.

Training also will provide best practices for security measures and long-term storage methods, which were deficiencies revealed during the pilot project. Examples include ensuring that records with personally identifiable information have proper access restrictions, understanding the stacking limits of standard record cartons, balancing storage needs of active and inactive records, and taking basic steps to better protect records from environmental hazards.

Beyond training improvements, this project revealed the need to develop an effective advocacy message from the university archives to campus units and beyond. Advocacy has been a topic of growing prominence in recent archival literature.[23] One of the most important reasons for developing an advocacy strategy is to strengthen human relationships with the right stakeholders both within and outside the organization. While the profession focuses on acquiring, preserving, and making accessible the documentation of human experience, effective interpersonal interactions with record creators and record-keepers undergird these efforts. In this case, it was clear that the university archives staff should thoughtfully compile a list of potential allies in all audiences and then plan how to develop mutually beneficial relationships with them. Furthermore, the university archives' talking points should align with messages of the department and university libraries.

Another basic effort should include crafting a few concise, key messages that can be tailored to help participants care about the role of the university archives. Whether performing professional activities (developing records schedules, appraising records, building donor relations, etc.) or engaging in other everyday duties (attending meetings unrelated to archives, building rapport with colleagues outside the profession, etc.), archivists should be prepared to clearly communicate the value of what they do and how it helps others fulfill their responsibilities.

This photograph depicts the records in archival storage after processing. Photograph by James W. Smith.

For example, in this case study, interactions with office staff became opportunities for project staff to share archives and RIM concepts. As Edie Hedlin pointed out, "Such interaction [with others outside the profession] is crucial in archival advocacy and serves to broaden others' knowledge of and support for one's program."[24] By using basic advocacy concepts to strengthen relationships with office staff, project staff developed greater external support for the university archives. Since the completion of the project, office staff have consistently contacted the university archives with questions and records to transfer. And, their positive experiences help them promote the services of the repository and clarify its goals to others.

This project also showed the value of developing a better method of communication between campus units and the university archives. Project staff proposed appointing records liaisons from existing staff in appropriate campus units, which has positive and negative consequences. Benefits include giving the archives points of contact in campus units and someone to disseminate information to other recordkeepers in the units.

Drawbacks revolve around implementation challenges. Some units might hesitate to take on this added responsibility, although demonstrated success with other units could possibly mitigate these negative perceptions. Additionally, the liaison model might not fit existing office recordkeeping cultures, which would hinder implementation. Effective training and advocacy strategies would help develop better recordkeeping cultures in such offices.

Another opportunity for advocacy involves seeking appropriate resource levels for the university archives to provide services that meet users' needs. The aforementioned university records task force came out of this pilot project as a platform to discuss institutional RIM topics. Among the task force's highest recommendations, which repeated proposals in the pilot project report, was to create a records manager position and a standing university records committee. The former will provide greater capacity to address the identified RIM gaps, and it represents a significant investment of resources. The latter will provide guidance and expertise to the university community, and it signifies a time investment from existing university personnel.

In addition to appealing for these changes in the pilot project and task force reports, the university archivist was invited to join the dean of libraries to discuss the suggestions during one of her monthly meetings with the provost. This opportunity increased the visibility of the archives to significant institutional officers and resulted in increased support from the dean and the provost as they agreed with these recommendations. Their backing will allow the archives to engage more fully with stakeholders and expand and improve RIM training and services.

One revelation from this pilot project that remains mostly unexplored is the influence of recordkeeping behaviors on RIM. The project interviews unearthed some deep-seated feelings of office staff that led to unfavorable behaviors, such as being apprehensive about disposal or transfer of records. These perspectives likely exist across the institution and often lead to problems that include overflowing storage areas with security and environmental control issues. Such fears often cause recordkeepers to believe that every document is important, even if it is beyond its retention length. Analyzing these traits helped project staff see the value of better understanding recordkeeping behaviors. Further study of this subject, possibly in partnership with organizational psychologists, would greatly benefit the profession as archivists interact with record creators and recordkeepers in a changing RIM environment.

One method for modifying behaviors would be to create structures that encourage participation. In an RIM environment, this could include making compliance with the records policy and schedule an element for review during internal audits. While failing this facet of the audit might not require serious consequences, it could simply trigger an RIM training opportunity for the campus unit with the university archivist.

Conclusion

This case study, which focused on RIM practices in the Office of the Provost of Kansas State University, has implications for the broader profession. Despite the trend in the past 15 to 20 years toward born-digital and digitized records, many recordkeepers continue to manage paper records. Although much of the professional literature touches on handling such records, this project contributes beneficial lessons. Examples noted above include streamlining surveys to make faster retention decisions, improving workflows that bridge surveys and archival description, and applying MPLP concepts to reduce processing time.

The project further uncovered necessary changes required for the office to more effectively manage its recurring RIM needs. While the office and the department have interacted multiple times during the past 30 years, the organizational culture never developed to the point that personnel from both units consistently worked with one another to ensure that records were managed effectively and essential records were transferred to the archives. The results of this project and the continued interactions since its completion are evidence that it was a catalyst for RIM changes in the organization. The office staff remember the archives when they review inactive records and see historically significant materials. At the same time, improvements can be made within the more mundane recordkeeping practices. Ultimately, this project has begun a longer process of improving organizational recordkeeping activities, and it continues to be a work in progress.

One advancement to emphasize is the development of RIM training. It will need to be flexible and based on the needs of the respective unit. It can also address gaps in recordkeeping behaviors and provide frameworks to improve RIM activities. As department personnel continue analyzing the common themes from this project, they will find applications for other campus units.

Finally, this project is an example of advocacy—what happens when it is not effectively occurring, how to begin advocating, and how to start implementing it in other work that archivists perform. By strategically developing appropriate messages for stakeholders, archivists can remind administrators why they are essential to the institution.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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NOTES

1. Stanley Gutzman to Vincent J. Cool, March 7, 1968, Tony Crawford papers, Folder: "Special Collections Department, History, 1967–1968; 1997," Morse Department of Special Collections, Kansas State University Libraries.
2. Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young, "Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records," *The American Archivist* 48 (Spring 1985): 121–40.
3. Ibid., 124.
4. Ibid., 137.
5. Ibid., 125.
6. Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," *The American Archivist* 68 (Fall/Winter 2005): 208–63.
7. Ibid., 211.
8. Ibid., 215–16.
9. Joanne Kaczmarek, "Establishing a University Records Management Program from the Inside Out," *Archival Issues* 30, no. 1 (2006): 23–33.
10. Ibid., 26.
11. Ibid., 25.
12. Nancy M. Kunde, "Reframing Records Management in Colleges and Universities," in *College and University Archives: Readings in Theory and Practice,* ed. Christopher J. Prom and Ellen D. Swain (Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2008), 185–208.
13. Ibid., 187.
14. Ibid., 188.
15. Ibid., 196.
16. Ibid., 205.
17. Ibid., 196.

18. In this article, "office staff" refers to personnel in the Office of the Provost, "department personnel" denotes staff in the Morse Department of Special Collections, and "project staff" means the university archivist and the project assistant.

19. Other institutions reviewed included the State of Kansas, University of Kansas, Oklahoma State University, Auburn University, and North Carolina State University.

20. Greene and Meissner, "More Product, Less Process," 228–29.

21. The 160 hours noted here are in addition to the 120 hours spent surveying the records. This larger number of hours included selecting appropriate records series for retention, rehousing records from filing cabinets to record cartons, creating a container list, moving records to the archives, creating a basic finding aid in the collection management system, and labeling boxes. Even if one includes the surveying time as part of the processing metric for the archival records, the rate is 2.46 hours per linear foot (280 hours for 114 linear feet).

22. Mark A. Greene, "'If You Cannot Get Rid of the Family Skeleton, You May As Well Make It Dance': How One Repository Tangoed Successfully with Some Controversial Collection Management Activities" (presentation, 2010 RLG Partnership European Meeting, "Moving the Past into the Future: Special Collections in a Digital Age," Oxford, England, October 12, 2010), 9.

23. Recent examples include Larry J. Hackman, ed., *Many Happy Returns: Advocacy and the Development of Archives* (Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2011); Richard Cox, Janet Alcalá, and Leanne Bowler, "Archival Document Packages: A Teaching Module in Advocacy Training Using the Papers of Governor Dick Thornburgh," *The American Archivist* 75 (Fall/Winter 2012): 371–92; Courtney Chartier and Sarah Quigley, "Evolving Advocacy: The Society of Georgia Archivists and the Georgia Archives Budget Crisis," *Provenance, Journal of the Society of Georgia Archivists* 31, no. 1 (2013): 38–50; Cheryl Oestreicher, comp., *SAA Sampler: Archival Advocacy* (Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2014); Bruce W. Dearstyne, *Leading the Historical Enterprise: Strategic Creativity, Planning, and Advocacy for the Digital Age* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, 2015).

24. Edie Hedlin, "What the Case Studies Tell Us," in *Many Happy Returns: Advocacy and the Development of Archives,* 301.