

Development of Managerial Training for Archivists

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Abstract: Archivists have come to recognize the need for management training; but the profession has yet to reach a consensus regarding the most appropriate content, circumstances, or source of such training. This article examines the ways in which management is taught in the fields of business and library science. It evaluates how management skills have been transmitted within the archival profession and outlines ways in which such training might be promoted in the future. The role of the Society of American Archivists in terms of education guidelines and continuing education programs is discussed, as is the fellowship program sponsored by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

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MANAGEMENT HAS BECOME a very popular topic for discussion within the archival profession as archivists increasingly recognize the need to become better managers. The report of the Society of American Archivists's Task Force on Goals and Priorities underscores that point when it states that "few archivists receive any training in administration, planning, fundraising, or public relations." The report goes on to say that "if there is to be enlarged public support and financial resources, the training and skills of archivists as managers must be improved."¹ At the same time, the number of management-related sessions at SAA annual meetings has grown rapidly.² Archivists also have devoted a great deal of attention recently to archival education, as evidenced by the proliferation of educational programs and the revised and recently approved SAA "Guidelines for Graduate Archival Education Programs."³ Management training, the combination of these two interests, is thus a logical focus for archivists' attention.

Most archivists want to understand more fully management concepts and to be able to integrate those concepts into their archival operations. The question, therefore, is not *whether* management training is good and necessary, but rather *what* that training should cover and the circumstances under which that training should take place. In order to provide a context for analyzing archival management training, it is useful to examine how management is taught in two other disciplines, business and library science. Assessing management training in graduate business programs is appropriate in that business is the field in which management is deeply rooted. Library science, on the other hand, is the discipline in which

many archivists receive their training, and many archivists work in libraries.

One must first analyze the kinds of information relevant to archivists and the best means of disseminating that information. As professionals, archivists need different skills at different points in their careers. First, one must primarily learn to be an archivist. Along with that initial professional education should come an introduction to the theory and skills of management. Without that awareness, archivists cannot effectively promote their programs within the institutional environment. As one moves beyond the entry level, however, one's needs change. The responsibilities of a department head after ten years in the field will most likely differ from those of the newcomer and even of someone with a couple of years of professional experience. These various needs require differing sorts of training opportunities.

Other important questions relate to the logistics of providing management training. It is not clear whether management is something to learn in the classroom or whether the theory and skills can be absorbed better by archivists on the job, watching those above and around them. Another issue to be resolved is whether management is discipline-specific. Will archivists learn best from fellow archivists who understand the esoteric vocabulary and can translate "business-ese" into comprehensible situations and examples? Or are archivists merely reinventing the wheel by not relying upon existing expertise in the management field? Equally important is the distinction between management techniques and individuals as managers.

The terminology archivists have used to discuss management reflects a lack of clar-

¹*Planning for the Archival Profession: A Report of the SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1986), 18. See also Paul McCarthy, "The Management of Archives: A Research Agenda," *American Archivist* 51 (Winter and Spring 1988): 52-72.

²The program for SAA's 1987 annual meeting describes thirteen management-related sessions. Five management-related sessions were offered in 1986, four in 1985, and three in 1984.

³See pages 380-89 of this issue for the SAA "Guidelines for Graduate Archival Education Programs," approved by Council in February 1988.

ity in approach. Consider, specifically, the use of the term "management" versus "administration." Until recently, archivists referred to archival administration rather than archival management. While the word management has become the more popular term, the shift has not been a conscious one. There are, however, significant differences between the two terms, as thoroughly explained in a 1984 article by A. J. Anderson in the *Journal of Library Administration*. According to Anderson, administration refers to the establishment of policy, "the provision of an organizational framework within which management operates."⁴ No wonder so many archivists traditionally perceived administration as beyond their purview. Few archivists are truly in a policy-making position. According to Anderson, management is the "skilled handling," the "planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and supervising," of "any industrial or business project or activity with responsibility for results."⁵ With much broader connotations, management responsibility belongs to almost all archivists, making the need for management training all the more pressing.

Management training has always been a significant component of business education. Persons entering the business world gain their skills in much the same way as archivists. Some enter graduate programs and earn master's degrees, signifying a supposed level of competence in the subject matter. Others find jobs and gain expertise through practical experience. Both groups continue to learn on the job with and without the benefit of continuing education.

In a graduate business school curriculum leading to an M.B.A., management is a

very broad-based concept. As defined in one basic text, management is "the process of working with and through others to effectively achieve organizational objectives by efficiently using limited resources in a changing environment."⁶ According to that definition, almost everything is management. Business schools offer courses called "Human Resource Management," "Production and Operations Management," "Financial Management," "Marketing Management," and "Managing Organizational Behavior." Management is thus viewed as the overarching theme that guides all operations. In the catalogs produced by a number of major business schools, the term is used to describe their general program.⁷

The curriculum of a typical general management course, such as "Managing Organizational Behavior," revolves around a series of identifiable functions such as planning, decision making, organizing, staffing, communicating, motivating, leading, and controlling. Whether the pedagogic approach is theory or case method, one studies these topics in the context of the economic, social, and political environments within which an institution functions. By removing such functions and concerns from the "for-profit" sphere expected in a business school program, the actual concepts of such a course are not particularly foreign to archivists and would be both relevant and helpful to many.

Management theory in library schools is not as all-encompassing as it appears to be in M.B.A. programs. But library schools increasingly have begun to incorporate many of the same concepts into the graduate curriculum. Most library science graduate pro-

⁴A. J. Anderson, "'Management' and/or 'Administration,'" *Journal of Library Administration* 5 (Summer 1984): 7.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Robert Kreitner, *Management* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), 8.

⁷*The Official Guide to MBA Programs, Admissions, and Careers* (Princeton: Graduate Management Admission Council, 1984) contains descriptions written by the schools. The entry for the Johnson Graduate School of Management, Cornell University states that the program aims to "provide an educational foundation for men and women who plan to pursue management careers in the private sector" (p. 147). According to the 1987-1988 catalog of Harvard University's Graduate School of Business Administration, the school's goal is to "develop excellent general managers" (p. 5).

grams offer at least one course labeled "Library Administration" or "Management of Libraries and Information Centers." The objectives of "Introduction to Library Administration" at Columbia University's School of Library Service are as follows:

- to understand the governance of libraries, their organizational patterns; staffing and personnel; their financial basis; communications and public relations; management of the physical layout.

- to become aware of the changes that technologies are making in the structure and operation of libraries.

- to become conversant with changing management trends such as generalism versus specialization; incremental planning; and output measurement.

- to learn to read an organizational chart of a complex institution; distinguish among a variety of budgeting techniques; and be able to understand a number of milestone charts.⁸

The library profession also has become increasingly active in providing continuing education programs for its members, many of whom attended library school before the burgeoning interest in management and many of whose jobs have changed over the years to require such expertise. The Office

of Management Studies of the Association of Research Libraries, for example, offers a series of highly regarded workshops and publications focusing on management skills.⁹

Library literature over the past decade also reflects this growing enthusiasm for management-related information. There are a variety of monographs with such titles as *Management for Librarians*, *Managing the Public Library*, *Library Management*, *Managing the Special Library*, and *Management Strategies for Librarians*.¹⁰ Journals such as the *Journal of Library Administration*, *College and Research Libraries*, *Library Trends*, *Library Journal*, and the newer *Library Administration and Management* contain numerous articles on topics ranging from participatory management and strategic planning to the relative merits of theory versus practice in library management.¹¹ In addition, management training programs for librarians often rely on business literature. A recent Advanced Management Skills Institute sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries used a number of excellent readings from the *Harvard Business Review*.¹² One could easily apply many of the titles and topics in both business and library programs and literature to an archival setting.

One specific topic, covered in both fields, but particularly salient for archivists, is the focus on the individual as leader or manager. The goal is to recognize, understand,

⁸Kathleen Molz, "Introduction to Library Administration" (LS 6015), Syllabus, Spring 1987, Columbia University School of Library Service.

⁹The A.R.L. Office of Management Studies (OMS) offers a variety of public and sponsored workshops on both basic and advanced management techniques. In addition, OMS works with institutions to develop training modules tailored to their specific needs. OMS serves as a clearinghouse by publishing a series of kits containing selected documentation on a variety of topics. These SPEC (Systems and Procedures Exchange) kits are available singly and by subscription. For further information, contact A.R.L. Office of Management Studies, 1527 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

¹⁰John Rizzo, *Management for Librarians* (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1980); Donald Sager, *Managing the Public Library* (White Plains, N.J.: Knowledge Industry Publications, 1984); Robert D. Stuart and John T. Eastlick, *Library Management* (Littleton, Col.: Libraries Unlimited, 1980); Herbert S. White, *Managing the Special Library* (White Plains, N.J.: Knowledge Industry Publications, 1984); and Beverly P. Lynch, *Management Strategies for Librarians* (New York, N.Y.: Neal-Schuman, 1985).

¹¹A survey of these titles over the past two years revealed that most issues contained at least one management-related article. *Library Journal* includes a frequent column entitled "How Do You Manage?"

¹²Robert L. Katz, "Skills of an Effective Administrator," *Harvard Business Review* 50 (September/October 1974): 90-102; Henry Mintzberg, "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact," *Harvard Business Review* 53 (July/August 1975): 420-23.

and maximize one's own leadership style from the perspective of the relevant areas of activity, such as organization, strategic planning, communication, and resource allocation. In a 1974 article in the *Harvard Business Review*, Robert Katz discussed three basic developable administrative skills: technical, human, and conceptual. Technical skills "imply an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity, particularly one involving methods, processes, procedures or techniques." This is an area archivists can comprehend and communicate quite well because it encompasses the activities representing the bread and butter of archival work—appraisal, arrangement and description, and access. The second skill area, "human skills," represents "the executive's ability to work effectively as a group member to build cooperative effort within the team he leads." This area is not taught in archival education programs, but lends itself more effectively to on-the-job training. SAA, with its network of committees and activities, is one way archivists have worked successfully towards common goals. The third area, conceptual skills, "involves the ability to see the enterprise as a whole; it includes recognizing how the various functions of the organization depend on one another, and how changes in any one part affect all the others; and it extends to visualizing the relationship of the individual business to the industry, the community, and the political, social, and economic forces of the nation as a whole."¹³ It would be well for archivists to concentrate on this last area, as it touches the crux of archivists' inability to assess successfully their programs and promote their needs to resource allocators and others in authority.

In many respects, the education of managers in library science and business programs is a simpler task than the education of archival managers. The graduate programs for both library science and business

are well established, and the career paths understood. Both fields support multi-course programs with full-time faculty, leading to clear and recognizable graduate degrees. And finally, both have a sizeable body of literature to support and amplify these programs. In contrast, the academic training of archivists generally has consisted of a few courses tacked onto a degree program in a separate but related field, taught by adjunct faculty. As a result, archivists operate under a handicap, as do the archival educators who must try to cover a great deal of information in a fairly short time period. In addition, archivists traditionally have aligned themselves with historians. While this link will always be vital for fundamental reasons, most historians seem remarkably disinterested in management practices.

Furthermore, management is by nature humanistic and conceptual; it is not a technical endeavor. In contrast, archival training has, by and large, focused on the more pragmatic and technical aspects of day-to-day archival work. Management also is generally taught within an institutional framework in terms of the policy and goals of the organization. Archives generally comprise units within a larger organization whose mission is not archival. To complicate matters further, archivists are in a diverse array of institutions, ranging from corporations to colleges, from libraries to local governments. The placement of the archives within each organization and the relationship of the archives to the larger organization differ widely.

Given the status of archival training in general and the framework of management training in related disciplines, archivists must now determine how best to integrate the necessary elements of management skills into archival education. This entails an examination of how management has been taught in archival education programs and, more importantly, how, when, where, and

¹³Katz, "Skills of an Effective Administrator," 91, 93.

by whom it should be taught. What should the profession advocate and promote in terms of academic programs, practical on-the-job training, and continuing education offerings?

As noted above, academic education programs for archivists usually form a segment of a graduate library science or history department. These programs range from single course offerings; to the increasingly standard three-course sequence of introductory course, practicum, and seminar; to a few programs in which that sequence is complemented by a variety of electives. The place of management within such curricula has been vague. Most introductory courses are organized topically: collection development, appraisal, arrangement and description, reference and access, automation. This organization unfortunately leads to an emphasis on the day-to-day performance of specific activities at the expense of overall planning of archival programs. Management, if taught at all, is usually relegated to a lecture called "administration," which covers topics such as organization, planning, staffing, coordinating, budgeting, reporting, and perhaps even outreach.¹⁴

There is historic precedent for this organization. The SAA's 1977 education guidelines included the administration of archival repositories as a final section, after four sections dealing with the nature, acquisition, processing, and use of archives.¹⁵ The explanatory matter for each section detailing content was quite brief. Neither administration nor management appears as part of SAA's 1979 practicum guidelines.¹⁶ One should not focus too much blame on the archival educators for this lapse, considering the amount of material to be condensed into each semester.

Experience also indicates that most archival students, especially recent under-

graduates, have little knowledge of or interest in the corporate world. Management is viewed somewhat like classical Greek; students know it exists but do not understand its relevance to them. It is difficult to appreciate the value of management skills until one has been working within an institutional environment for a while.

This does not mean that management should be omitted from graduate archival education programs. Educators must stress from the outset that archival work is more than a series of separate activities. Perhaps, however, rather than treating the topic as a discrete activity or technique, educators could follow the example of business school colleagues and integrate concepts like planning, staffing, budgeting, and evaluating into classes and courses on the customary topics. Instead of focusing an appraisal lecture solely on the various characteristics and values of records, for example, educators also might talk about planning and evaluating appraisal projects, as well as the institutional context of such activity. It also would be useful for archival educators to identify relevant graduate management courses as possible electives for archival students or sources of guest lectures and supplementary readings.

The newly revised SAA "Guidelines for Graduate Archival Education Programs" view the management section in a different light than did the 1977 edition. Although management is separated once again from the other generally recognized archival activities, it is not listed as a "basic archival function." Instead, an entire, much expanded section is devoted to "managerial functions," with descriptions and explanations of subjects such as organizational theory and practice, program planning, human resource management, resource development, information resource

¹⁴The SAA office maintains a collection of syllabi for most archival education programs as part of the data-gathering for the education directory.

¹⁵"Archives Education Guidelines," *SAA Newsletter*, May 1977, 4-5.

¹⁶"Program Standard for Archival Education: The Practicum," *American Archivist* 43 (Summer 1980): 420-23.

management, and facilities management. These topics cut across all areas of archival activity.¹⁷ Perhaps acceptance of these guidelines will enable archival educators to broaden the way management is incorporated into academic programs.

Graduate programs are only one way to increase the opportunities for management training within the profession. Practicing archivists must rely on daily experience combined with continuing education. Recognizing this need, informal internship programs and other postgraduate initiatives have been developed in an attempt to fill the gap. One of the most important of these is the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) Fellowship Program, begun in 1985.¹⁸ The guidelines for these fellowships stipulate that the "training program would provide exposure to and participation in a broad range of archival administration practices. Included may be aspects of appraisal, budget preparation, collection development, external affairs, long-range planning, personnel administration, and training supervision."¹⁹ The remarkably broad-based projects proposed by the various participating institutions have ranged from strategic planning and space planning to assessing internal collection files and compiling annual reports. Not surprisingly, in their applications each institution and each fellow has defined administration differently, ranging from supervising general archival operations to managerial planning and budgeting functions. There was little consensus in terminology or agreement on the level at which administrative decisions are made.

This is not a criticism of either the NHPRC program or the individual institutions and fellows. Rather, the experiences of these fellows confirm the nebulous status of managerial thought within the archival profession. Ideally, such individually

planned training programs should be an excellent opportunity for an archivist to fill in the gaps left by academic programs and to put into practice the ideas gleaned in the classroom. These programs also should offer the sponsoring institution the incentive to reassess its own activity in order to articulate and implement the fellow's program. Frequently, however, those supervising the institutional projects have lacked managerial expertise, and there is disagreement regarding the optimal scope and evaluation of projects. This has hindered effectiveness for both the individuals and the entire fellowship program.

In many respects, continuing education represents the best means for promoting management training for archivists, as it allows for the range of programs necessary to meet the diverse needs of the profession. Continuing education programs can and should be offered by SAA, by the regional archival organizations, by related professional groups, and by existing archival education programs. Archivists might also take advantage of established workshops sponsored by organizations such as the Association of Research Libraries and the American Association for State and Local History. The SAA Education Office could serve as a clearinghouse for information about these programs, and these organizations should be encouraged to include archivists on their mailing lists.

Continuing education programs should vary in duration, level, geographic location, and timing, depending on the subject matter and intended audience. Shorter and/or more basic programs might be best suited for preconference offerings at SAA and regional meetings. Longer workshops or institutes stand better alone. A recent survey conducted by the SAA Management Roundtable indicates that archivists are willing to devote both time and money to

¹⁷SAA "Guidelines for Graduate Archival Education Programs," pp. 380-89 in this issue.

¹⁸See article by Judith Endelman and Joel Wurl, pp. 286-97 in this issue.

¹⁹NHPRC Institutional Host Application Guidelines, revd., November 1986.

management training. The majority of respondents would spend up to \$500 and would consider attending a ten- to fifteen-day advanced management institute.²⁰ Varying the content, format, and timing of these offerings would also make it easier to take advantage of local, nonarchival talent. It is naive to think that archivists have all the necessary expertise; much of management is not specific only to archives.

The most difficult task is to determine the appropriate topics for educational offerings. As explained initially, archivists' need for management training grows and changes as their careers progress. Introductory management and program planning would benefit a wide range of archivists. Supervisory skills and budgeting would appeal to entry level managers, while marketing skills are more appropriate at a higher level. Recently, a Committee on Goals and Priorities Planning Group on Management Training met to develop a structured plan for providing management training to the archival community. The final report fo-

cuses on continuing education for four different levels of management responsibility, with recommendations for specific topics at each level.²¹ It addresses the logistical problems of identifying existing programs that can be publicized and perhaps adapted to archival concerns. This report sets a thoughtful and well-structured agenda to be implemented by the profession. Continuing education clearly represents the best mechanism for archivists to keep up with their changing management training needs.

The archival profession already has embarked upon a number of initiatives aimed at addressing the dual issues of education and management. These efforts must be combined to better address the areas of management training. In addition, the projects being developed by SAA, the regionals, and the various graduate education programs and institutes need to be coordinated. Only then will archivists be able to take advantage of their talents and energies to benefit the profession as a whole, by preparing future generations of archival managers.

²⁰Survey conducted by SAA Archives Management Roundtable, 1987.

²¹CGAP Planning Group on Management Training, Final Report, February 1988.