

## Case Studies

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# Case Studies in Archives Program Development

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**Abstract:** Three archivists describe the development of archival programs that they formerly directed: the Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston, the Utah State Archives, and the Yale University Archives. Each case study provides a description of program development and analyzes the institutional setting and the role of managerial planning, communication, internal and external alliances, and professional standards. The three case studies, which were first presented in a session at the fifty-second annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists in Atlanta in October 1988, are accompanied by an introduction and commentary.

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## Introduction and Commentary

Larry J. Hackman

In the United States, where archival activities are highly decentralized, the strengths and weaknesses of individual programs—rather than national policies and practices as in some countries, or the talents of individual archivists—are the best indicator of archival conditions at any given point in time. The three case studies that follow were prepared for a session entitled “Case Studies in Archival Program Development” at the 1988 annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists. The intent of the session was to increase interest in and understanding of important factors that shape individual archival programs.

Despite the key role played by individual programs, our archival literature provides few formal case studies of their development, either during a critical juncture or over a long period of time. Nor do other archival writings provide systematic or comparative analyses of archival programs. Archival writing has concentrated on theory and practice, focusing chiefly on treating materials and making them available to users; we have given less attention to ways to envision, create, advance, protect and sustain an archival program that supports the core archival functions. Given this paucity of published analysis on program development, the archives community may benefit from a case literature, both as reading for established professionals and as raw materials for educational programs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>There are signs of increasing interest in the archival program as a central entity in its own right. These include the work of the SAA Task Force On Institutional Evaluation, particularly its new *Archives Assessment and Planning Workbook*, edited by Paul McCarthy. The workbook has as a main purpose to help archivists develop plans to improve their programs overall. McCarthy has called elsewhere as well for a focus on “the organizational effectiveness of archival programs” through case studies, analytical profiles, and in other ways. See Paul H. McCarthy,

Case studies may be prepared and presented in a variety of ways. The approach here was largely dictated by resource considerations and the SAA annual meeting format. It departs substantially from the approach typically employed in schools of business and public administration, where cases are written by a “neutral” observer (often an academician or researcher in the field), provide detailed background information, and are left open-ended to encourage discussion. Here each case was written by a principal participant in the events described and the cases include a report on outcomes and an overall analysis of developments. Also in contrast to the typical style, the authors were asked to describe and assess program changes with particular reference to a list of specified issues. Although none of these departures from the norm prevents the cases that follow from being informative in their own right as well as useful for structured discussion, archivists may benefit from case materials prepared in a more traditional way.<sup>2</sup>

For each of these three cases, the author was asked to indicate important program

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“The Management of Archives: A Research Agenda,” *American Archivist* 51 (Winter and Spring 1988): especially 59-66. A case study of one program in a transition period has appeared since the 1988 case studies session. See Loretta Heffner, “The Change Masters: Organizational Development in a State Archives,” *American Archivist* 51 (Fall 1988): 440-454. This article discusses the same program and period as Liisa Fagerlund’s case study below. A strong program development focus is apparent throughout *Strengthening New York’s Historical Records Programs: A Self-Study Guide* (Albany: State Archives and Records Administration, State Education Department, 1988).

<sup>2</sup>The profession could make good use of two types of case study products. The first is a set of cases, prepared by independent investigator-writers, as a basis for discussion in educational programs. The second, for publication in a “reader” on archival program development, could be prepared by independent agents or by direct participants. Rather than being left open-ended, additional published evaluative comments by experienced archivists and by experts in organizational development might be provided to enrich the cases for the reader.

development by describing conditions before and after a period of substantial change. The changes were to be analyzed by considering four specified factors and then noting as well any others that seemed especially significant to the author of the case. The four factors explored to a greater or lesser degree in each case are: (1) the mission and corporate culture of the parent organization; (2) the impact of internal alliances or sponsorship, and of established internal systems, e.g., budget, reporting, planning; (3) external influences, including grants and granting agencies, professional (especially archival) standards and tools, and alliances and advocacy; (4) the role of formal written documents, especially on assessment, planning, and advocacy. These cases then reflect a kind of hybrid approach. We do not offer them as models, but will take great satisfaction if the cases provoke useful discussion about archival programs and about the need for additional case study materials and how this need might be addressed.

### Commentary on the Cases

These three cases offer insight into factors important to the advancement of archival programs. They demonstrate especially the value of being able to analyze and conceptualize an archival program in terms not only of its present condition, but also its setting and the possibilities it offers for moving the archives toward a stronger position. All of the cases illustrate the importance of matching program development to the environment and setting priorities and adopting strategies accordingly. Based on such analysis and planning, archivists may then address archival program goals by seizing—and shaping—the opportunities available.

Perhaps equally important, these cases offer us examples of archival administrators seemingly confident in their ability to carry out such analysis and then to act upon it toward meaningful archival ends in co-

operation with other key parties. To these archival program developers, substantial progress seems less a question of if, than when and how. While a number of theoretical frameworks from organizational analysis might be applied to such cases, these two basic points,<sup>3</sup> the importance of seeing the program as a whole and a willingness to act upon the implications of analysis, are as basic to successful archival program development as in other fields.<sup>4</sup> Beyond confirming these central points, the three cases illustrate several others.

The cases demonstrate the critical importance of “stakeholder analysis,” of identifying key individuals or offices within the larger setting, who are either potential important supporters or strong competitors or antagonists, of understanding their attitudes and interests, and of acting upon this understanding. The cases also show that ordinarily no one actor has exclusive or enduring influence, but that in most settings, influential actors arrive and depart relatively frequently. The archival program developer need not be paralyzed by the past views or policies of the people in positions of authority; in fact, there are seemingly

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<sup>3</sup>Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal, for example, describe four major schools of thought about the management of organizations, each with well-defended concepts and assumptions. These include the rational systems theory, which emphasizes organizational goals, roles, and technology; the human resources theory, which stresses the interdependence between people and organizations; the political theorists who see power, conflict, and the distribution of scarce resources as primary; and finally the symbolic theorists who focus on problems of meaning and on the limits of power and rational design. See Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Modern Approaches to Understanding and Managing Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Limited, 1986).

<sup>4</sup>Susan Davis has called our attention recently to these skills in assessing programs and promoting their needs within her broader discussion of the importance of leadership within archival programs. See Susan E. Davis, “Development of Managerial Training for Archivists,” *American Archivist* 51 (Summer 1988): 281-282. In general, the archival literature has given little attention to leadership of archival programs and the profession little direct recognition of it.

quite a few opportunities to influence those views or otherwise to change present policy. It seems especially useful to act when the situation is fluid as it usually is when a new player arrives, e.g., a chancellor, archbishop, provost, or vice president for finance. Even a broad new institution-wide initiative, such as the Governor's Utah Systems Plan, can be seized upon if it has been broadly accepted or is identified with an especially influential resource allocator.

These cases also demonstrate the critical role that can be played by non-archivists as catalysts for or sponsors of important, positive changes, even prior to the involvement of a highly competent archival manager. This was especially the case in Utah (the Governor's "Systems Plan" in conjunction with agency managers who, embracing it, decided to recruit new archival leadership) and in the Archdiocese (a historical-minded chancellor who initiated the search for external funding and then used the resources to hire a highly regarded professional). This does not detract from the importance of the archival administrator, once on the scene. It does suggest that archival programs could benefit if professional archival associations, existing archival programs, and funding and monitoring agencies, were more actively to identify important settings in which archival evaluation, consciousness raising, or technical assistance might affect the establishment or enhancement of an archival program.

Each of the cases shows the importance of increasing the visibility of, and thereby understanding, respect, and support for the archives from key constituents within the larger institutional setting and beyond. This was achieved in several different ways: via the diocesan newspaper and grass roots public programs in Boston, through the records survey and training program for offices at Yale, and through conscious projection of the "New Archives" image in Utah. Such activities, while usually leading to even broader support, often also signal

the achievement of an initial threshold of respect from key internal administrators, the institution's respect for the competence of the archival manager and support for enhancement of the image as well as the performance of the program.

The cases also suggest the value of inheriting or establishing a "the world is watching us" atmosphere in the minds of key institutional players. Perhaps this applies especially in these three cases; each of the three archives is part of a larger institution having a more than ordinary sense of a special mission in the world and of excellence as a general criterion. Archival program developers need to identify and draw on such aspects of the culture of their institution or system. In fact, there is almost always a way to identify the archival program with some broader organizational desire to succeed, whether through an appeal to tradition or reference to the views of peer organizations, leading clients, government oversight bodies or some other "higher" body.

External funding support was a useful lever for program development at the Archdiocese and at Yale. This was not primarily based on the level of financial resources obtained; each of the institutions in these cases would appear fully able to sponsor a professionally administered archival program from its own funds. The importance of external funds here, as in many other cases, relates chiefly to their impact on several of the factors referred to above, e.g., the grants helped increase the visibility of the archival function, conveyed a sense that an important external audience was monitoring progress and had high expectations, and set a base line requirement that its administration be placed in the hands of an experienced professional archivist. In the case of Boston and Yale, these factors were enhanced by the NHPRC's proactive stance in its dialogue with the applicants during the proposal stage and through conditions placed on the grants awarded.



These same factors may not be equally important to the development of every archival program. However, the consideration of these and other relevant factors should

help archivists strengthen their programs so that records of enduring value may be identified, retained, and made available to those who need them.

## The Archdiocese of Boston

James M. O'Toole

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston instituted a formal archives program at the beginning of 1978. Organized Catholicism in the Boston area could trace its origins to 1789, but the church there had never mounted a sustained effort to care for its permanently valuable records. Some historical work in the 1930s had preserved a great deal of documentary material, and various archdiocesan employees had held the title of archivist over the years. By the 1970s, there was only vague interest in the archives and an equally vague sense that "something should be done." The archival program thus began with nearly two hundred years of backlog, but within three years of its founding, the archdiocesan archives developed into a permanent and active department of church administration. Financial support came at first from outside sources (principally the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, but from other, local granting agencies as well); by the middle of 1980 the archdiocese had committed itself to the ongoing maintenance through regular internal funding of a staff of two professional archivists and one clerical assistant. This level of support, achieved during a time when other offices were absorbing a 25 percent budget cut-back in response to a large institutional debt, continues today.

The organizational culture of the archdiocese contributed two critical features to this program development. The first came from the church's leadership. At the outset, the archives faced the usual range of administrative interest: there was some skepticism, little outright hostility, and plenty

of indifference. Still, the archives had two key supporters in the archbishop (Cardinal Humberto Medeiros) and the chancellor (Bishop Thomas Daily), the chief administrative officer of the archdiocese. Bishop Daily was particularly helpful. He was a genealogist and local history enthusiast, but more importantly a man who instinctively asked historical questions of current-day management problems. This support from the top was essential, though the archives recognized the fragility of relying too much on the interest of specific individuals, no matter how highly placed or well disposed.

The second structural factor affecting the archives involved the balance between historical and administrative concerns. The motive for establishing the archives was distinctly historical. The inclinations of archdiocesan leaders and an impending anniversary celebration may in part explain this emphasis. Just as important was the role of history in an organization, like the Catholic church, that values tradition. In an institution accustomed to a reliance on tradition, the historical usefulness of the archives was a valid and sufficient justification for the program. That circumstance challenges the common assumptions that historical and practical concerns are necessarily opposed to one another and that it is administrative usefulness rather than historical insight that most reliably "sells" archival programs. The archdiocesan archives did eventually take on some records management responsibilities, but these efforts always had a marginal impact. The staff often found themselves making such arguments to administrators who clearly would not have thought of them on their own and, even at that, did not seem particularly impressed by them. At an early presentation to de-

partment heads, the archivist made an extended case for the efficiency that would result from systematic scheduling of current records. The first question that followed his presentation was: "What's the oldest document you have in the archives?"

Within this organizational culture, several key elements influenced the development of the archives program. Some were entirely beyond the control of the archives itself. Funding, for example, was an uncertainty, especially as the archives faced the transition from grant support to regular internal budgeting. That transition was in fact successfully made, but the result could as easily have been otherwise. NHPRC was helpful here by requiring from the archdiocese an on-paper commitment to continue the archives after the grant period. All involved recognized, however, that NHPRC had little sanction if the archdiocese found itself unable to do so. The archives also profited from a continuity of archdiocesan leadership: its key supporters remained in their positions until well after the program had been accepted as a permanent feature of church administration.

Other factors beyond the control of the archives presented their own opportunities for promotion. The staff was actively involved in planning for the visit to Boston of Pope John Paul II in the fall of 1979, for instance. Officials preparing for this event, including the Secret Service agents in charge of security, used records from the archives in their planning. The local news media also relied on the historical records and expertise concentrated in the archives. The sudden death of Cardinal Medeiros in the fall of 1983 and the arrival of a successor the following spring also provided the chance for archival publicity. On both occasions, the staff spent a great deal of time working with local television and radio stations, providing interviews and background material for their coverage of the funeral and subsequent installation.

If there were factors in its own development the archives could not control, there were also several factors it could. Foremost of these was the archives' own sense of professionalism. From the very beginning, the staff made the case, both explicitly and subliminally, that they were professionals every bit as much as the archdiocesan accountants and lawyers, and that they deserved to be treated and accepted as such. The message was that, even if the boss did not understand the details of the profession, he did recognize it as such and accepted the notion that he needed archival professionals to do an archival job. Participation in regional and national archival associations was especially helpful here: archdiocesan administrators liked to see that their archivists were active in a professional world in which the other significant figures came from government, major universities, and prestigious cultural institutions. It may be an exaggeration to say that the appearance of professionalism was at least as important as professionalism itself, but the archives staff clearly benefitted from acting like the professionals they all were.

The archives could also set its own priorities, seizing the opportunity to choose those that would prove most beneficial in promoting development of the program. In the archdiocese, use of the collection was always the first priority. Acquisitions efforts were directed with use in mind: the goal was to bring into the archives as quickly as possible those collections that would receive immediate, substantial, and sustained use. These included materials of historical and genealogical interest (local parish records of all kinds, for example) as well as those of administrative usefulness (such as property deeds and building blueprints). This effort paid off, and use of the archives grew from about 1,000 reference inquiries in 1978 to more than 3,000 by 1983, a level it has since exceeded. Other archival priorities were adjusted accordingly. Records management was important mainly insofar as it

led directly to the acquisition of useful collections. By design, processing remained a relatively low priority: the archives was generally content to achieve an aggregate level of intellectual control over its holdings, best symbolized by the series descriptions in the 1982 *Guide to the Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston*.<sup>1</sup> A little arrangement and description was made to go a long way. Creation of a large pool of satisfied customers, accustomed to turning to the archives for information and answers, was more important than a collection of finding aids that were works of archival art.

Finally, publicity and outreach were also critical in this case. From the beginning, the archives was a deliberately and relentlessly visible operation. Through a regular column on the op-ed page of the archdiocesan newspaper, exhibits in public places (including a store window in the heart of the Boston shopping district), talks to parish historians and genealogical groups, and educational programs in local Catholic high schools, the archives defined its target audience more broadly than merely church administrators or academic historians. The popularly written archives annual report was sent to every parish and church-related institution. Even the published *Guide* had public relations value. At least once a month (and usually more often than that), people who might themselves never use the archives encountered the word *archives* in one way or another. This was a steady drumbeat that eventually led to acceptance. "You've taken a program of the diocese

that no one ever thought about and made it *visible*," one old chancery hand enthused. More important, the archives' bosses were regularly reminded of the program and its benefits. Gradually but certainly, they got to the point where they could not think of archdiocesan administration without an archives.

The successful development of the archival program in the Archdiocese of Boston offers three lessons for other archivists. One is the value of publicity and the cumulative effect of constant repetition. An archives must become a standard and expected part of the mental universe of those who determine its future, and regular publicity is the way to accomplish this goal. The second lesson concerns the value of the self-perception and self-presentation of archivists as professionals; those who decide on the future of archives need some sense that a larger professional world is watching them. Finally, in order to accomplish both of those goals, archival priorities may have to be rearranged in what seem at first glance to be non-archival directions: shuffling the papers is a lower priority than speaking to a special interest group or talking to a newspaper reporter. The processing backlog may grow as a result, but that is an acceptable trade-off. "The papers you will always have with you," if a paraphrase of Scripture may be permitted. Because you will not always have the opportunity to convince someone new that what you do is interesting and valuable, you must always seize that chance.

## The Utah State Archives

Liisa Fagerlund

In 1982, when the governor of the State of Utah published the Utah Systems Plan,

the twenty-year-old Utah State Archives was a program primarily devoted to the micro-filming and storage of inactive records. The Utah Systems Plan was the result of several years of study of information systems and requirements in state government during which the various functions were analyzed like a business: identifying the enterprises,

<sup>1</sup>James M. O'Toole, *Guide to the Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston* (New York: Garland, 1982).

the information systems that supported them, and the categories of information in each system. The governor was committed to improving the management of information, recognizing it as a valuable resource to be managed effectively and shared as appropriate. The plan called for a more active role for the State Archives in information management.

In the period of 1983 to 1986 covered by this case study, the State Archives undertook massive changes in mission orientation, services, budget allocation, and staff resources and practices in order to carry out this mandate. In those three years, the State Archives changed from an all-expenses paid microfilming service to a balanced archives and records management program. Inventorying and retention scheduling services jumped from an average of 100 destruction approvals per year to a rate of more than 2,000 fully scheduled and described series submitted for clearance to a galvanized State Records Committee. For the first time the scheduling included machine-readable records.

Records management training was inaugurated, and within two years 50 percent of state and local government records personnel had participated in a records management workshop at either the State Archives or at various regional sites. A newly established local government program, staffed by a professional archivist and microfilm technicians, visited all counties and many municipal governments.

A new archives research program began to produce finding aids, moved the reading room from an industrial park warehouse to the state capitol, and equipped it with computers, a fresh, bright environment, and professional staffing. The State Archives, in partnership with information system planners and policy makers, data processing professionals, and state librarians developed and nurtured an information resources management (IRM) network in state government.

The State Archives openly advertised promotion opportunities and began an active program of tuition support, career counseling, and staff training. In order to be appointed to a professional position, staff members had to meet commonly accepted minimum qualifications in the archives and records community—a university degree. Staff members became participants and officers at the regional or national level in such organizations as the Society of American Archivists, the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators, the Conference of Inter-Mountain Archivists, the Institute of Certified Records Managers, and the Association of Records Managers and Administrators.

Soon after the beginning of this period, the image of the division changed dramatically to one characterized by the slogan: the New Archives. To the state government community the New Archives meant a responsiveness to the demands of an information age; to the professional archives and records management community the New Archives meant an innovative, progressive, professionally respected program; and to the members of the New Archives it meant dynamism, change, pride, hope for the future, and sometimes, extreme discomfort at the nature and rapidity of the change.

The active sponsorship of state government administration was a key factor in the development of the Utah State Archives. The success of the archives was linked directly to the achievement of broader goals of the administration. Since the new state archivist would, as a division director, be part of the departmental management team, department administrators sought to recruit not only an information management oriented archivist to fulfill the Utah Systems Plan, but also a manager who would support departmental priorities in participative management, strategic planning, and use of computers. As a supportive member of the management team, the new state archivist

had strong budgetary support and was allowed to reallocate resources freely among budget areas such as equipment, supplies, personnel, travel, and training. Short-term savings in unfilled positions were used for modern equipment, and long-term savings in microfilm stock were used to upgrade qualifications and salaries. By their selection of a new state archivist, departmental administrators had an investment in the success of the State Archives and provided support accordingly.

A strategic plan, developed with staff participation, was a second key factor in carrying out the transformation of the Utah State Archives. Based on a successful planning experience in Portland, Oregon, city government, the new state archivist was convinced that a systematic planning process would help to determine the future development of the State Archives. Departmental administration's mandate for change had set out some general directions—modernization, information management, equal opportunity—but not the specific activities. An analysis and plan of action were needed.

The planning process was equally important as a means of actively involving staff. A systematic planning process ensured that environmental factors would be assessed in reviewing or developing the mission of the State Archives. In the Utah experience, a team of archives staff members and colleagues in related programs inside and outside of state government developed preliminary proposals that they then presented to the archives staff. The planning group was facilitated by the deputy director and administrative officer of the parent Department of Administrative Services. With facilitators for the strategic planning process, the state archivist was free to participate fully in the discussion rather than having to keep the process moving and on target. An added benefit was the briefing of departmental management in archival goals and strategies so that they could help when opportunities arose.

The planning group identified research projects to test the preliminary proposals and develop statistical information, and they encouraged archives staff members to volunteer for the various projects. Archives staff involvement was important for a number of reasons. They had valuable ideas and experience that contributed to the relevance, effectiveness, and feasibility of the plan. Participating in the evaluation and research gave staff an understanding of why things had to change and an acceptance that change was inevitable. Involvement gave archives staff members a sense of ownership of the new plan that was essential for implementation.

The final report of the planning process served as a plan of action and as a shared future vision for archives staff. It also served as a public announcement that the State Archives had a changed view of its role and mission.

Archival leadership and standards were important in State Archives development. The new state archivist and key managers were experienced professional archivists with an open management style and a positive, optimistic outlook. The strategic plan provided the road map, but the ability of the new management to enlist others in pursuit of a shared vision and the belief that the New Archives would succeed made its success more likely.

The planning group expressed the determination that the Utah program be based on professionally recognized guidelines for archives and records management. Throughout the development of the State Archives, managers called on archival and records management literature and professional experience to guide the development of Utah State Archives procedures and products. While recognizing the importance of flexibility to customer needs and the need to encourage staff autonomy, archival management based decisions on sound archival principles, whether it was in records series descriptions, appraisal criteria, or privacy versus access issues.



Meeting professional guidelines for educational qualifications became one of the most problematic areas. Despite constant pressure from archives staff members who lacked educational qualifications, management insisted on the minimum qualification of a university degree for professional posts. This was important for upgrading the breadth and skills of archives staff members and for demonstrating fairness and impartiality in promotion and appointments.

While most of the key actors in the development of the State Archives were within the division or the parent department, outside intervention was important. A consultant in organization development facilitated adaptation to change, especially in terms of management style, conflict resolution, and team building. The organization development process greatly improved communications within the division and provided a constant source of feedback and support for the new state archivist. The director of personnel and various personnel analysts provided counseling in reorganization within a civil service merit system, development of a career ladder, and support in employee complaints.

While many of the elements in this case study, such as the development of the Utah Systems Plan and the availability of an organization development consultant in the Division of Personnel, are specific to the time and place, there are certain lessons that may be transferable to other archival environments. The first is matching the program to the environment. Studying the priorities of the sponsor will enable the archivist to link the archives program to the

needs of the sponsor. If the success of the archives is a part of the success of the larger organization or community there is a greater likelihood of support. Program development should emerge from a study of the environment, the resources, and the priorities.

Seeking help makes sense. The Utah State Archives needed personnel consultants and planning facilitators. In another environment budget skills or building planning might be needed. The lesson is that there is no need to demonstrate that the archival leader can do everything. It does not weaken a manager to seek the assistance of specialists; delegating and sharing responsibility with staff members are essential to their development.

Finally, planning works. A planning process ensures that there will be a study of the environment and resources. The written plan creates a future vision that can unify and focus activity. It communicates to sponsors in an effective way and enables them to evaluate progress and provide support when needed, including the seizing of opportunities of which archival management may be unaware. Participation in the development of the plan stimulates the creativity and involvement of staff members and encourages a sense of ownership and commitment to carry it out.

Meeting the expectations laid out for the Utah State Archives in the governor's report required dramatic changes and development. The combination of people, processes, and programs outlined in the case study made it possible for the State Archives to transform itself and assume a vital new role in state government.

## The Yale University Archives

John Dojka

In 1980 Yale University Library's Department of Manuscripts and Archives received university funding to establish the institution's first systematic archives/rec-

ords management program with full-time staff and an operating budget. The establishment of this program was the culmination of years of effort by Manuscripts and Archives staff members to persuade the university to deal effectively with its chronic record-keeping problems. The purpose of

this case study is to examine how this change came about and to identify the key agents of change.

Despite its long history and sense of tradition, Yale was rather slow to address the problem of preserving its records of enduring value. With one exception (Ezra Stiles, 1727-95), no Yale president from 1701 to 1900 left his papers to the college. It was not until 1939, following the founding of the Harvard University archives earlier in the year, that an act of the Yale Corporation established a university archives as part of the library. But the Yale Memorabilia Room, as the archives was called, was more concerned with storing the classbooks, mementos, and artifacts of undergraduate life, than with seeking out and accessioning those records documenting the institution's history. Much material, especially the records of the professional schools and academic departments as well as faculty papers, was relegated to basements and attics where it was subject to water, insect and fire damage, or outright destruction during periodic "housecleanings." The records that did find their way to the archives were poorly appraised and received only cursory, if any, arrangement, description, or preservation treatment.

The appointment in 1968 of a professional archivist, Herman Kahn (former director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library), as head of the newly created Department of Manuscripts and Archives was a major turning point for the fortunes of manuscripts and archives at Yale. With strong support from the university librarian and several influential members of the history faculty, Kahn initially focused his energy on rationalizing and consolidating the library's manuscript collections. However, just prior to his illness and premature death in 1975, he turned his attention to the archives and began planning for a records management program.

Lawrence Dowler, who was appointed university archivist and head of the De-

partment of Manuscripts and Archives in late 1975, was quick to pick up Kahn's initiative. Dowler was convinced that the quantities of records moldering in university attics and basements had immense research value, and like Kahn, he quickly decided that some sort of records management program would have to be initiated if the archives was to cope effectively with the huge volume of paperwork being generated by the university's five hundred departments and administrative units. He made an additional decision that was to have far-reaching consequences for the department's future. Like many of the department's staff, Dowler had received his archival training in apprenticeship fashion while working under Kahn. But he decided to begin recruiting professionally trained graduates of the archival administration programs at Wayne State University, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of Michigan to fill staff vacancies. The resulting mix of veteran archivists familiar with institutional idiosyncrasies and new graduates created a highly effective and energetic team.

During 1976, under Dowler's leadership, the department began a systematic campaign to organize a joint archives and records management program. Having enlisted the support of the university librarian and members of the history faculty, the first priority was increased records storage space. In the summer of 1977, after a period of sleuthing in university buildings and lengthy negotiations, the department acquired additional space with shelving for 16,000 cubic feet of records.

With the space issue resolved, the next objective was to gain support for a university-wide records survey. The data gathered by the survey would be used to argue the case for university support of an archives/records management program. The survey was envisioned as a multifaceted study, a means to reexamine internal procedures and the department's role within

the university, as well as the traditional components of a records survey. Unable to obtain financial support for the survey within the university, in 1978 the department obtained a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission that generated matching funds from the university provost, secretary, and librarian.

The eighteen-month survey was completed in March 1980 and the data collected was used to draft a report that sought the support of the university administration for the establishment of a joint archives/records management program. The report described the survey findings and made recommendations, but was essentially didactic, a short course for administrators and faculty on both the problems posed by contemporary documentation and the application of archival and records management principles. Rather than emphasize cost-avoidance figures and statistics, the report stressed the increased efficiency and better utilization of existing facilities that would result from an archives/records management program. The report made recommendations, in the form of archives/records management program components, to address each of the seven principal problem areas uncovered by the survey: use of office and storage space, records disposition, information retrieval and storage, automation, use of microforms, vital records security, and instruction and information on records management policies and procedures.<sup>1</sup>

The department presented the report to the university administration in June 1980 and funding for the new program was authorized in August. The program budget

provided for two positions, a university archivist/records management officer and an assistant archivist, and a modest amount for student labor and supplies. Funds for a three-quarter-time archives assistant were provided from the Manuscripts and Archives budget. These resources enabled the department to reorganize its archival program entirely. New services and activities included a mid-scale records management program consisting of records inventorying and scheduling, training sessions for university clerical staff, production and dissemination of records management literature, and inactive records storage. Systematic appraisal and accessioning procedures for archival records were developed and a collection policy statement was written. An arrangement, description, and preservation program, based on nationally accepted standards, was implemented and new internal information and management systems were established.

Six principal factors were crucial to successful program development at Yale and may apply to other institutions. The first is outstanding managerial and professional leadership for which, despite its being a truism, there is simply no substitute. Herman Kahn's years of service at the National Archives and the Roosevelt Library, his national reputation, and his relationship with scholars such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and John Blum substantially enhanced the prestige and authority and hence the effectiveness of the department that he led. Lawrence Dowler's political acuity and his vision of what he wanted to achieve were vital to the project's success. Both Kahn and Dowler stressed professionalism and the importance of archival training and standards. Dowler's managerial style was well matched to the context; he delegated responsibility readily, encouraged staff to take initiative, and treated subordinates collegially. The result was a highly motivated, professionally committed staff that functioned as a well-balanced team.

<sup>1</sup>For details of the records survey and its report, see John Dojka and Sheila Conneen, "Records Management as an Appraisal Tool in College and University Archives," in Nancy E. Peace, ed., *Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1984), 19-59.

The second factor was rigorous planning and effective project management, the key aspects of which were the development of concrete plans, goals, and timelines; flexibility in tactics used to achieve goals; the commitment of working with and through existing programs and structures whenever possible; and a keen awareness of the importance of interpersonal skills. The entire project staff was engaged in the planning process. But input into the process was not limited to Yale staff. Planning was preceded by a thorough review of the pertinent professional literature and during the project colleagues in federal, state, and college and university repositories throughout the country were consulted and ideas borrowed freely.

The third important factor was effective communication—the ability to speak effectively to different audiences, be they clerical staff, faculty, or administrators, in their language and shaping the message to reflect their values and goals. For example, project publicity materials were individually tailored to fit each of these three groups, all of whom had potentially different interests in records management. Clerical staff, who had immediate responsibility for record keeping, received materials that stressed the use of records management techniques to simplify their activities and make them less frustrating. Materials sent to administrators focused on information management and those sent to the faculty emphasized the role of records management in effectively documenting the university's history.

The fourth crucial factor was the value of external alliances. Financial support of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission was vital. The fact that an outside agency was interested in

Yale's record-keeping practices served to galvanize support for the project within the institution.

Coalition building within the university was the fifth factor. The organizational context was one of shifting alliances within an essentially fixed hierarchy. Hence an astute assessment of university politics was especially essential, since at Yale the centers of power—the ability to get things done—are not always readily apparent. Much effort was expended in obtaining the support of key administrators, but because Yale's faculty is highly influential in governing the institution, support of a coalition of faculty members was equally significant. The benefits of an archives/records management program were linked with the broader goals of the administration, especially those of a new vice-president for finance and administration who was interested in efficient management and to faculty sensitive to the historical value of the institution's archival records.

The sixth and last factor relates to professional methods, values, and standards. The department's staff was committed to the idea that all activities and products would be performed or produced in accordance with nationally accepted professional standards. Equally important, staff hired for program positions had to possess appropriate professional credentials and experience.

The effective service provided to the Yale Archives' users—including faculty, staff, administrators, visiting scholars, journalists, and genealogists—in the decade since the archives/records management program was initiated offers testimony to the program's value and underscores the importance of the factors responsible for its successful implementation.