

Research and Reality Checks: Change and Continuity in NYU's Archival Management Program

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Abstract

Research occupies a central place in any graduate program and needs to be integrated across the archival curriculum, from the earliest courses through completion of the degree. This article traces the origins and development of New York University's Program in Archival Management and Historical Editing in order to explore its changing conceptualizations of research, and to examine the ways in which all archival educators can strengthen this programmatic component. As one of the oldest and most successful graduate training programs in North America, NYU's history-based curriculum provides an important case study and offers some significant lessons for archival educators.

Research occupies a critical place in any graduate curriculum and archival educators have an especially important obligation to foster a culture of research and publication among all students in their programs. Archival work, after all, remains fundamentally research-oriented, and contemporary workplace trends only underscore this fact. The proliferation of data and the exponential increase in available informational resources means that archivists today cannot simply recall and pass along undigested and unfiltered documentation in most organizations. Increasingly, they must analyze, synthesize, and draw conclusions as well. Archivists have become drawn into the world of, for lack of a better term, "knowledge producers." Their job responsibilities have shifted in many organizations from being passive curators to serving as active information experts. This calls upon them to cultivate a uniquely sophisticated set of skills and a highly nuanced understanding of the research process, and argues persuasively for the need to incorporate research into the training of all archivists. Effective graduate education should prepare students to frame archival questions, to carefully assess the strengths and limitations of various methodological choices, and to analyze data in a rigorous, intelligent, and

understandable manner. Further, graduate educators must communicate the message that archivists need to share their research with colleagues, to publish the results of projects that they undertake within their own institutional settings, and to help build a healthier profession by constructively contributing to wide-ranging archival conversations.

Most classic archival functions require exposure to a broad range of research techniques. Serving the reference needs of both academic and institutional researchers, for example, presumes that archivists can effectively mediate between users and collections. Similarly, regardless of how archivists approach the complexities surrounding appraisal, a thorough foundation in diverse research methods must be factored into the process. Archivists who lack knowledge of contemporary social science techniques, humanities scholarship, and cultural theory cannot really make sense of their holdings and will operate at a distinct disadvantage, both in their dealings with researchers and in building collections that effectively meet basic evidential requirements. Historical training occupies a critical niche here, partly because historians borrow freely from a host of theoretical breakthroughs in other disciplines. Historians typically weave theories and techniques common to political science, sociology, cultural anthropology, material culture studies, and literary criticism into their methods courses. A working familiarity with such disciplines should be part of every archivist's conceptual toolkit. Only a graduate education that elucidates the key debates within these overlapping discourses can provide the breadth, flexibility, and range necessary for students to function as informed generalists within their institutions.

Anne Gilliland-Swetland's article in this issue carefully and thoroughly articulates the specific types of research methods and applications ideally taught in graduate archival education programs. Students cannot master all of these techniques, and no individual program can completely incorporate all of these methodologies into a coherent curriculum. Historical training, however, should compel students to critically grapple with the interdisciplinary methods described above. It also offers some uniquely useful research perspectives for future archivists. History-based graduate training, after all, fundamentally involves the actual *use* of archives. This experience provides an invaluable insight into archives from a consumer's point of view and sensitizes future archivists to strengths and weaknesses both in the documentary record generally and in the reference process specifically. Students should be encouraged to conduct research within collections, rather than simply engage in studies about archives. This helps them to question the nature of information, to make links and draw comparisons between different types of documentary resources, to better evaluate metadata and standard archival descriptive techniques, and to view their profession from the other side of the desk. History-based programs, however, must do much more than merely approach archives from a historian's perspective. History students especially need a broader conception of

the user community, a thorough grounding in information science methods and principles, an exposure to multiple methodologies, and a notion of how archival questions differ from historical ones. Archival educators working in a history setting need to remain cognizant of the fact that history-trained students tend to view archival materials solely as historical resources, and they should work to broaden this perception.¹

Graduate archival educators also need to cultivate these varied research skills within a real-world context. Nearly twenty years ago, Frank Burke effectively captured the fundamental tension that too often divides archival theoreticians and practitioners when he criticized graduate archival educators for “producing a large corps of parish priests when no one has bothered to devise a theology under whose standard they can act.”² Theory and practice should complement, reinforce, and engage each other. Many potentially exciting collaborative ventures can link archivists in academia with the workaday world. Archival theoreticians most effectively act as agents of change within the profession when they ground both feet in archival reality. They further need to send the message that research does not constitute an isolated activity that only archival professors and Ph.D. candidates are deemed competent to pursue. Rather, it should be introduced during the earliest courses in an archival management program and remain an important component throughout. Such an emphasis will create a healthier profession in the long run, and should help to strengthen the critical link between academic and working archivists.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as formal training programs increased in size and scope, a relatively small corps of archival educators grappled with such issues as the place of research in the curriculum, the inherent multidisciplinary nature of archival training, and the need to link academic theory with workplace reality. American archival education remains a work-in-progress, but its recent history offers some instructive lessons nonetheless. Charting the development of individual programs provides one way to obtain some needed historical perspective on archival education. It also illustrates the ways in which important professional debates have persisted and subtly shaped archival training over the past twenty years. New York University's Archival Management and Historical Editing Program offers an especially interesting case study, owing to its longevity, its institutional affiliation, and its location within New York City's rich professional milieu. Various program directors have tested, refined, and

¹ Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, “Archival Research: A ‘New’ Issue for Graduate Education,” published in this issue of the *American Archivist*. An eloquent argument outlining the continuing relevance of historical training in archival work can be found in F. Gerald Ham, Frank Boles, Gregory S. Hunter, and James M. O’Toole, “Is The Past Still Prologue?: History and Archival Education,” *American Archivist* 56 (Fall 1993): 718–29. Regardless of an archival education program's bureaucratic base, these authors correctly stress the importance of training individuals who “think like archivists.”

² Frank G. Burke, “The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States,” *American Archivist* 44 (Winter 1981): 45.

implemented curriculum revisions in response to consultant reports, student input, alumni commentary, and changes within the profession. The resulting program offers students a solid grounding in research techniques, attempts to incorporate both historical and current information perspectives within its coursework, and emphasizes the link between academic training and the larger archival universe. A brief foray into the program's history and structure illustrates some of the ways in which NYU has successfully managed change and incorporated a distinctive research component into the curriculum.³

Graduate archival training at NYU dates back to 1945, when the prominent business historian Thomas C. Cochran introduced a course labeled "Business Archival Internship" into the business administration curriculum. Emmett J. Leahy, the noted records management theorist, built upon this innovation and taught an expanded two-course sequence throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s. His classes remained on the books through 1958, when formal graduate archives courses apparently disappeared from the business school. NYU's current program owes its genesis to a planning grant that the History Department received from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in 1975. The mid-1970s constituted a period of both extraordinary ferment within the historical profession and relatively limited graduate educational opportunities for archivists. Some might claim that declining job placements for historians fueled NYU's interest in archival management; and, in fact, a 1975 survey of history graduate students revealed that 53 of 178 respondents expressed interest in archival training, while 70 desired course work in historical society and museum administration. Still, the History Department's concerns proved much broader. Professional historians in the late 1970s appeared peculiarly disconnected from an extraordinary popular revival of interest in history, stimulated by such developments as the bicentennial of the United States and Alex Haley's *Roots*, among many other events. Serious scholars began raising questions concerning the role of "public intellectuals," the interaction between academia and broader audiences, and the need for historians to recognize that history happens in a variety of venues. The desire to connect the concerns of the academy with the culture of the streets was integral to the program from its inception.⁴

³ A good overview of the program's history, crafted by former director Michael Lutzker, is available at: <<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/history/programs/archival>>. Marilyn Pettit and Michael Lutzker, both of whom directed the NYU program for many years, developed and implemented virtually all of the important concepts discussed in this article. As archival educational visionaries, their commitment to advancing professional training throughout the 1980s and 1990s deserves more widespread recognition than it has received.

⁴ Bayrd Still, "Early Archival Training," Archival Management Program File, New York University Archives. "Proposal for an NEH 'Planning Grant' for an Archives and Historical Editing Training Program," Bayrd Still Papers, Box 15, Folder J-8, New York University Archives. Similar considerations to those described above also prompted NYU to create a parallel "Public History Program" in 1981. See Rachel Bernstein and Paul H. Mattingly, "The Pedagogy of Public History," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18 (Fall 1998): 77–92. Thomas Bender, first director of the NYU program, has written extensively on issues concerning public intellectuals, most notably in *New York Intellect: A History of Intellectual Life in New York City, 1750 to the Beginnings of Our Own Time* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987).

Obviously, the curriculum has changed considerably over the past twenty-something years, and successful efforts have been made to place the program in general conformity with the Society of American Archivists' Master of Archival Studies (M.A.S.) guidelines. The concern to foster cooperative activity between NYU and working archivists, however, has remained an important constant over the past two decades. A few words about the current structure of the program will illustrate the broader point. Students at New York University combine either an M.A. in history or a Ph.D. in history with a New York State Certificate in Archival Management and Historical Editing. This certificate, it should be noted, indicates that the program has been registered with, and approved by, the New York State Board of Regents, and is not related to the Academy of Certified Archivists' individual certification program. For full-time M.A. students, the program generally takes two years to complete. Students are required to select twenty-four credits in history, including a research seminar, and twenty credits in archival management. The twenty-four history credits also include a series of courses that are peculiarly relevant to archivists, such as: "Introduction to Historical Editing," "Oral History," "History and Public Policy," "Media and History," "Local and Community History," and similar offerings that have been crafted in conjunction with the Public History Program at NYU.

Historical research seminars focus on very general topics that afford students maximum flexibility, and some examine issues that contain special relevance for prospective archivists, such as "Memory and Identity in American History." From its inception, the program also contained a strong multidisciplinary component designed to maximize student exposure to a wide range of research methods. The initial NEH proposal, for example, emphasized cross-listings with New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, the Anthropology Department, the School of Education, and the Graduate School of Public Administration. Students drew upon relevant courses within all of these venues in order to gain a solid grasp of research methods from a variety of disciplines. This emphasis continues today, although the faculty is drawn more heavily from the library and information fields, taking advantage especially of the outstanding resources provided by Bobst Library at NYU.

The purely archival courses include a two-semester, eight-credit introductory overview of the profession, which contains a strong practicum/internship component. A series of electives that address more purely archival issues round out the program and include: "The Archivist and the Visual Record;" "Automated Descriptive Techniques," with a heavy emphasis on the USMARC format; "HTML, SGML, XML, and EAD;" "Preservation Management;" and "Reference and Bibliographic Resources." Further, a series of floating and flexible topical courses have been designed to explore such contemporary professional issues as electronic records, administrative trends, and the preservation of non-print resources. Finally, several individually directed research courses are arranged with appropriate faculty.

Each of these archival courses contains a strong hands-on practical component. Indeed, practicum/internship experiences constituted one of the key elements in the 1975 NEH planning proposal. They remain thoroughly integrated into the coursework twenty-five years later, albeit in very different ways. Initially, the program core involved three sequential semester-long courses. The introductory offering focused on archival theory, the second course provided a practicum experience in three NYU special collections, and the third involved a 170-hour internship at an external, professionally staffed repository in the New York City area.

A 1978 evaluation of NYU's program by outside consultant F. Gerald Ham praised faculty efforts to link graduate training with the "growing and diverse number of archival establishments in the metropolitan area," but also suggested some conceptual improvements. Clearly, a single-semester introductory course could not adequately introduce students to a rapidly changing profession. Further, practicum/internship experiences might be expanded in order to explore a broader range of archival issues than arrangement and description. Finally, historical editing, which initially had been considered within the basic archives course and practicum, really constituted its own separate discipline and required a distinct course. Accordingly, the program directors modified and revamped the curriculum. Students now move through a two-semester introductory overview that incorporates both classroom work and a 120-hour practicum. Each student interns at a professionally staffed repository, and every effort is made to match student research interests with specific archival settings. Blending theory and practice in this way produces lively and informative discussions, forces students to immediately measure archival principles against their own experiences, and brings into the classroom the varied practices of fifteen different professional venues each academic year. Arrangement and description usually constitutes the core practicum project, but students utilize their placement settings in other ways as well. They analyze institutional collection policies, select a collection or series and write an appraisal report, often attend professional staff meetings, and maintain a journal that seeks to balance the archival literature and class discussions against their own experiences.

Interestingly, some archival educators in the 1990s take a dimmer view of the traditional practicum. James M. O'Toole, in a recent survey of archival training programs, complains that "internships and practica still play a disproportionate role" in training the next generation. O'Toole finds some cause for optimism in the "decreasing use of the hands-on practical project," hailing this trend as a "positive development in introductory archives classes." Arguing that an emphasis on processing perpetuates "the 'workshop mentality' in archival education," O'Toole envisions a day when archival educators will abandon this emphasis on "shuffling the papers." He remains secure in his belief that the profession would benefit "if the processing project were to evolve away entirely in our introductory courses." Graduate students, perhaps a bit closer to the

marketplace, appear considerably less enthusiastic about overthrowing the practicum. A recent longitudinal study of the University of British Columbia Master of Archival Studies Program concluded that sixty-nine of seventy-eight students who completed a practicum rated it as "essential" or "very useful." They peppered their responses with such qualitative comments as "a much-needed reality check," "an invaluable forum to apply theoretical principles to the real world," and "a solid base on which to proceed."⁵

As the University of British Columbia graduates obviously realize, a well-structured practicum constitutes much more than mere paper-shuffling. Further, an archival arrangement and description project introduces students to the types of research issues and problems that they will inevitably confront throughout their professional lives. Processing should raise questions concerning the contextualization of documents within a broader informational environment, the primary and secondary uses of historical documentation, the application of theoretical archival principles to a real collection, appraisal methods and concerns, and the ways in which one standardizes descriptive information, to cite just a few obvious examples. Similar to original library cataloging, arrangement and description constitutes an important intellectual task that remains fundamentally research-based. A solid practicum also introduces students to larger organizational cultures within individual repositories, provides important insight into institution-wide functions, and often offers an opportunity for the intern to assume other archival roles as well. Other practicum-related assignments can also foster research-consciousness. The act of maintaining a narrative journal, for example, usefully introduces students to basic qualitative research methods. They learn to take effective field notes, systematically record data, and use archival concepts as an analytical framework for interpreting their internship experiences. Educators can use journals to cultivate a culture of inquiry among future archivists. Rather than distracting graduate students from conducting research, the practicum should be the place where the theoretical rubber first hits the road.⁶

⁵ On the importance of the practicum/internship to the overall NYU program, see "Career Training Offered by NYU Archival Management/Historical Editing Program," *American Historical Association Newsletter* (April 1980): 12–13. F. Gerald Ham, "Evaluation of the New York University Program in Archives, Historical Editing, and Historical Society Training," Bayrd Still Papers, Box 15, File Folder J-18, New York University Archives. Similar evaluations were conducted by Francis Blouin and Linda Edgerly. James M. O'Toole, "The Archival Curriculum: Where Are We Now," *Archival Issues* 22, no.2 (1997): 106, 110; Evelyn Peters, "Measures of Success: Evaluating University of British Columbia's Master of Archival Studies Program," *Archivaria* 45 (Spring 1998): 88–89. Peters' work confirms my own course evaluations, which consistently rate the practicum/internship component of the course as essential.

⁶ The NYU Program has benefited, of course, from excellent cooperative relationships with a number of institutions that provide excellent mentoring and provide students with these types of research opportunities. In the Fall 1999 semester, for example, the following archival institutions provided practicum experiences: Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, American Express Archives, National Archive of Gay and Lesbian History, New-York Historical Society, New York Public Library Archives, New York Public Library Manuscripts Division, Prospect Park Alliance, National Park Service (Ellis Island-Statue of Liberty Archives), New York City Department of Records and Information Services, Brooklyn Museum of Art Archives, New York Presbyterian Hospital-Weill Cornell Medical Archives, and the Oskar Diethelm Library at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University. This extraordinary diversity is also critical as students bring their experiences back to class and begin to make important comparative connections.

Archival educators also need to construct a pedagogical environment where research and theory matter. At NYU, we attempt to accomplish this in several ways. Instruction in all classes (archival and historical) is based on a seminar-style approach. Classes are intentionally small. The graduate history program itself, in an effort to more responsibly reflect marketplace realities and to provide a superior learning environment for its students, has considerably altered its admissions policies and procedures in recent years. It now aims for an incoming class of approximately twenty-five graduate students annually (including Ph.D. students, general M.A. students, archival management students, and public history students). We enroll approximately six or seven students per year into the archives program, and class sizes never exceed fifteen individuals. This means, of course, that highly individualized instruction takes place from the point of entry. It also maximizes interaction between students and faculty, and permits a very personalized approach to instruction. Further, since students proceed through the program as a cohort, considerable opportunity exists for collaborative projects. Philosophically, the program emphasizes this type of interactive team-oriented approach to the research process. Academics too often view research as an isolated activity, undertaken by a single individual seeking to make a unique contribution to scholarship. In fact, collaborative skills prove much more important both within the workplace and society generally, as most corporations and nonprofits now realize. Every effort is made to have students work in groups, develop cooperative projects, and collaborate throughout their graduate school careers.

One aspect of the program that especially enhances the opportunity for collaborative activity and also enriches student research possibilities involves its physical location in New York City. An extraordinary array of public, corporate, nonprofit, cultural, and academic archives exist throughout the city, and all sorts of collaborative possibilities attract both students and faculty. Some specific recent examples illustrate this point. In fall 1997, the director of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Library at the College of Insurance contacted me concerning a planned digitization project at that institution. The college, which serves as a major informational resource for the insurance industry, maintains a comprehensive special library that extensively documents the history and practice of insurance. After discussing institutional needs, we framed a project whereby two advanced M.A. students in the archives program worked under my supervision to prepare a digitization feasibility study for the college's board of trustees. This two-semester project allowed the students to examine the available academic literature, to compile brief case studies of comparable digitization projects elsewhere, to contact various vendors and confront administrative realities, to physically analyze the college's holdings in detail, and to prepare a cost-benefit analysis. The students gained valuable administrative experience, honed their research skills, learned how to apply theory to a real-life situation, and also gained experience in constructing an administrative

document suitable for senior management. They received academic credit for a directed research course, and also created a policy document that served both as a blueprint for grant proposals and a model for developing an ongoing project at the college.

Similarly, St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery Episcopal Church sought some archival assistance during the past year in conjunction with that congregation's two-hundredth anniversary celebration. Although the church attracted some of New York's wealthiest communicants throughout the nineteenth century, its recent history has focused much more on social activism, an innovative poetry and performing arts program, and a very inclusive ministry that welcomes communicants of all ethnic groups, racial backgrounds, and sexual orientations. Again, we structured a research project for a student whereby she worked with the church's anniversary committee over the course of two semesters in order to survey the extensive archival holdings, write an administrative consulting report on preserving historical resources, and prepare a series of anniversary exhibits/programs that appropriately celebrated the history of this diverse and interesting neighborhood congregation. Throughout the process, the student necessarily blended archival theory, historical research, and administrative considerations together in a program that helped bring history alive for the congregation. Similar cooperative projects have been undertaken by the archival management program over the years with a variety of other venerable New York institutions.

My purpose in citing and describing these programs is two-fold. First, archival educators need to take an entrepreneurial approach to their surroundings. The most useful research projects for students are those that result in contributions to some specific problem or program. A broad range of collaborative opportunities exist with a wide range of local institutions and organizations. Archival educators can move beyond basic arrangement and description projects in order to develop such research endeavors for more advanced graduate students. These possibilities exist and should be explored. Second, there is a need to reach out beyond the immediate institution. We have structured other research projects within NYU, using ongoing programs in the University Archives and the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. Still, it is important to move beyond academia and operate outside our immediate sponsoring institutions in order to provide students with a sense of the diversity and breadth of archival possibilities that exist. Such experiences, of course, should be carefully structured in order to make sure that students are not viewed as clerical labor by institutional partners that do not share our educational mission. Smaller programs that can closely supervise internships and research seminars have an advantage here, but these programs do require lots of work, close on-site coordination between educators and institutional administrators, and careful monitoring of student progress. The effort, however, is worth it and perhaps constitutes the most valuable component of archival training.

Other important areas of collaboration introduce questions of funding, resources, technology, and faculty. Virtually all of the graduate funding at NYU is distributed to full-time Ph.D. matriculants, although some money exists for master's students in the archives program. Arrangements with Bobst Library have proven especially productive here. Each year, one incoming student receives a two-year fellowship to the program, and is required to work twenty hours per week in the University Archives in exchange for full tuition and an annual stipend. The combination of coursework and experience has proven extraordinarily beneficial. Four of the past five fellowship recipients currently work as archivists at the following diverse professional venues: Edwin Schlossberg, Inc.; Rutgers University Department of Special Collections; American Civil Liberties Union; and Duke University (as an NHPRC Mellon Fellow). The fifth recipient is currently completing her doctoral studies. Clearly, this fellowship illustrates the way in which cooperative funding projects can have important professional implications.

Similarly, NYU recently entered into a multi-year arrangement with the New-York Historical Society, funded through a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, whereby the Bobst Library has been helping to coordinate a retrospective cataloguing project for the New-York Historical Society's print and visual resources. Summer fellowships for archives students have been built into that grant, and an additional fellowship (similar to the Bobst Fellowship described above) has been made available for a student to work on a visual materials cataloguing/digitization project at the New-York Historical Society. Again, these types of partnerships have proven critical from both a purely educational and a practical standpoint. Fellowship recipients bring strong backgrounds and diverse archival skills into the classroom, thus enriching the learning environment and advancing the general academic discourse. The collaboration with the historical society has proven a fruitful partnership for the program in another area as well. Janet Murray, an experienced visual materials archivist working at the Society under the grant, most recently taught NYU's visual record course during the Spring 1999 semester. The New-York Historical Society generously agreed to host the course at its print room on Central Park West, thus transforming its marvelously rich collection into a graduate research laboratory where students gained a new appreciation for the complexity and unique problems involving nontextual materials and structured semester-long research projects around visual issues. Building and nurturing such links has been critical for the program's success.

Archival program instructors have been drawn almost exclusively from New York University, with a judicious use of adjuncts. One example of the way in which the program draws upon NYU-based faculty in order to enhance course offerings is evident in the program's historical editing component. Esther Katz, who teaches the historical editing course, also serves as full-time editor for the Papers of Margaret Sanger, an ongoing project at NYU that has

received substantial NEH, NHPRC, and private funding. The project is involved in producing print, microform, and electronic editions of the Sanger Papers, and students taking this course conduct collaborative research projects that result in the creation of "mini-editions." As part of this process, they receive considerable exposure to the complexities of historical editing, questions concerning authenticity and interpretive stance, and the technological and intellectual issues involved in reformatting and selecting documents for electronic publication.

Archival courses also draw upon administrators and faculty who incorporate their own specializations and transform their own archives into productive learning environments. Nancy Cricco, NYU's university archivist, for example, teaches an EAD, SGML, and HTML course. She involves students in considering broad administrative and implementation issues, as well as in the technical process of marking up archival finding aids for placement on the NYU Archives' website. In addition, several students have been involved in researching and creating exhibits on her site, including "Around the Square," an examination of Washington Square Park in history and myth, and a photographic essay concerning student protest at New York University in the 1960s.⁷ For these types of projects, students engage in historical research, familiarize themselves with digitization issues, research technological considerations, and grapple with exhibit design problems and questions of audience. Other examples abound, but the general point should be clear. The NYU program seeks to take advantage of New York City's unique archival environment as an educational laboratory, and to work constructively with its extraordinary professional community in order to enhance the learning environment and provide a full range of student research opportunities.

One question that has emerged within the ranks of archival educators in recent years, and that served as a driving force behind the "Working Meeting of Graduate Archival Educators" held in conjunction with the Society of American Archivists' annual meeting in Pittsburgh in August 1999, concerns the notion of an archival doctorate. Luciana Duranti and Anne Gilliland-Swetland have eloquently argued here and elsewhere that a critical need does exist for archival doctoral education.⁸ Archival management already has been recognized as a very appropriate field of concentration in a range of doctoral fields, such as those in history and information science, and it now serves precisely that purpose in a number of the most extensive graduate programs. In NYU's case, five doctoral students are currently progressing through the Ph.D. process and using archives as a minor field. Although their actual degrees will

⁷ For the exhibit on student protest in the 1960s see: <<http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/collections/exhibits/arch/Homepg/Index.html>>.

⁸ Luciana Duranti and Anne Gilliland-Swetland, "Archival Doctoral Education: An Issue and a Challenge for the Archival Profession," *Archival Outlook* (July/August 1999): 23. Anne Gilliland-Swetland's contribution to this issue reiterates and elaborates on many of these points.

be in history, clearly archival coursework and skills inform their work in important ways. Indeed, one of the strengths of the archives field is its inherent multidisciplinary nature. The Society of American Archivists' Master's of Archival Studies guidelines implicitly acknowledge this in their wide-ranging discussion of contextual knowledge necessary for archival education programs. The research methods used by archival students and theorists do not seem to me specifically "archival" in any meaningful sense. Rather, archivists borrow established methodological techniques from a broad range of academic disciplines (historical, ethnographic, sociological, social science, information science, etc.), and apply them in order to resolve archival questions.

A doctorate in archives raises intriguing possibilities and deserves further study. Does a substantial body of theoretical literature now exist to support such a program? Although our literature has grown in quantity and sophistication in recent years, do we still focus too much on applied and practical technique? On purely practical grounds, does a need for another Ph.D. degree exist? One growing trend within many colleges and universities involves the creation of highly focused master's programs that combine academic theory, a substantial research component, and professional training. The master's degree has emerged as a useful entry-level requirement for most archival positions advertised in professional journals, and I wonder whether this model might not work best for archivists. Clearly, there has been some expansion in the archival educator ranks during recent years, thus arguing for the viability of Ph.D. work. Does this truly represent a trend, however, or is it merely an idiosyncratic development? The answer may not become obvious for several more years. At present, virtually all archival educators bring substantial administrative and work experience into the classroom setting. This strikes me as a strength of our professional training, and it has helped archival educators overcome the social isolation that often handicaps some academics' ability to connect with a broader public. The overwhelming majority of our graduates will continue to pursue employment in non-teaching positions. They will confront a workplace that is rapidly changing, owing to both technological imperatives and shifting managerial roles. Educators need to immerse themselves in workplace and organizational realities. The most effective type of research involves collaborative endeavors between the academic and public/corporate/nonprofit sectors. In sum, I favor a cautionary approach. We need to recognize and celebrate the multidisciplinary character of archival training, as well as remain sensitive to the fact that some of the best archival research occurs in non-academic institutions and responds to immediate business pressures. It is important not to move too fast in trying to create a pure archives Ph.D. track when alternative models for archival concentrations within other Ph.D. programs already exist.

New York University's long track record with archival education suggests several conclusions. It can certainly point to many significant accomplishments. The program has produced several full-time archival educators among its

graduates, fostered the development and growth of numerous records programs within a broad range of corporate and cultural organizations in New York City, witnessed revolutionary change within the profession, and successfully placed its graduates in diverse institutional settings throughout the United States.⁹ History departments therefore can provide effective archival training when they make the commitment to cooperate with archival professionals, remain current with technological and managerial trends, and recognize that historical research remains one central skill among several that archivists need to master. History-based programs especially need to build strong information technology and library components into their curriculum, drawing on other faculty and resources throughout their institutions and remaining cognizant of rapidly-changing professional trends. Managing an archival training program does not constitute a part-time occupation. Smaller-sized programs at large research institutions offer students the benefit of careful mentorship, coupled with an extensive institutional support structure. A consistent program philosophy that provides continuity over time, while remaining responsive to change, offers the best hope for training future archivists. Perhaps most important of all, graduate educators need to immerse themselves in the archival world, building links, emphasizing collaboration, and exploring partnerships that benefit the profession in its broadest sense. Archival educators face the sometimes daunting challenge of overcoming the traditional dichotomies that separate theory/reality, research/practice, and academia/marketplace. As both *archivists* and *educators*, however, they have the unique and pleasant opportunity to live with the best of both worlds.

⁹ Past and present full-time archival educators who have graduated from the NYU program include Gregory S. Hunter, Marilyn H. Pettit, Megan Sniffin-Marinoff, and the author. Some indication of placement can be found on the program web site <<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/history/programs/archival>>, but a more comprehensive alumni survey is currently being developed.