Leadership Skills for Archivists

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Abstract

This group of essays examines four aspects of archival leadership: how archivists can cultivate leadership skills; how leadership strengthens institutional infrastructure and creates sustainable archival programs; how leadership contributes to accountability and improves responsiveness to technological change; and how leadership can be integrated into graduate and continuing education programs. Leadership is needed at the repository level, in the parent institution, and at the level of national professional activities and public policy.

Introduction

George Mariz

In an environment where change—legal, technological, and administrative—is the order of the day and is certain to be so in the future, archival leadership at all levels, whether in the repository and the parent institution, in the profession, or in local, state, and national policy-setting arenas, is growing in importance. Leadership, however, is both elusive and multifaceted, and, as A. Bartlett Giamatti argues, it is more a moral act than a managerial one.[1] Above all, it is not a single "entity" requiring only one set of skills, and it does not manifest itself in the same way in every venue. It is one thing to demonstrate leadership in a technical area and quite another to work in a legislative setting. The consequences of failing to lead are significant, and if archivists do not assume a substantive leadership role, they will be led by others. This will place them at the mercy of individuals, institutional policies, and legislation that may well be inimical to sound practice and the long-term welfare of archives and their users.

[1] Noted by Bruce Bruemmer in "Introduction to President Elizabeth Adkins," *American Archivist* 71 (Spring/Summer 2008): 20.

The topic, as it is presented here, is addressed from a number of different perspectives: from a library, a university archives and records management center; from federal and state archives; and from a university educational program.[2] Each perspective represents an experience central to issues of leadership and each explores leadership from a specific point of view, yet they all explore a common set of issues. Donna E. McCrea, who holds an MLIS with an emphasis in archives administration, heads a university archives. She emphasizes the need to identify traits that lead to success in such a setting and to learn to cultivate them. Larry J. Hackman reflects on his experiences in the federal service and as archivist of the State of New York. Tony Kurtz, who heads a university records center and archives program that operates within the framework of state law, demonstrates how technological change provides opportunities to improve both the services and the status of his program. Finally, Randall C. Jimerson, who leads an archival education program, discusses leadership issues not only from a theoretical point of view but also in terms of educating students for leadership.

All deal or have dealt with critical issues of leadership on an almost daily basis. While they may not have all the answers, in their separate professional lives and as a group, they have seen a wide range of problems and are able to help point the way to effective, successful leadership in archives. This article comprises a group of essays connected by a number of operational threads and demonstrates that however and in whatever venue leadership manifests itself, it shares some common traits. The authors argue that while leadership may not be one "thing," it manifests itself in clear and direct ways. Leadership

- is active rather than reactive;
- seeks always to see the bigger picture, to see how the archives fits in the broader scheme of things, and to see how to lead in both the local repository and larger systems;
- makes its relevance known to a wider constituency;
- is collaborative rather than directive or managerial;
- assumes responsibility rather than waiting for responsibility to be imposed;
- works to build bridges with and to its allies; and finally,
- is creative and able to see a way forward where others see only chaos.

[2] This joint paper derives from a 2007 SAA session. The authors have made minor adjustments to their papers as presented, but have deliberately retained as much as possible of the informality of the original oral presentations.

Learning to Lead: Cultivating Leadership Skills

Donna E. McCrea

Leaders are not born, but develop out of opportunity and experience. My own interest in the characteristics of effective leaders started several years ago when I first served on committees and boards of archival organizations and wanted to do the best possible job. My interest grew stronger when I started a tenure-track position that included both management responsibilities and new leadership opportunities. Over the last decade, I've read dozens of books and articles about leadership,[3] attended a leadership institute for librarians, and participated in the first Archives Leadership Institute in 2008. Still, I am no expert in leadership theory. This essay is simply a synthesis of ideas I've come across (often in multiple venues) that resonate with me. My goal in sharing them is to encourage fellow archivists to cultivate skills that may help them become better advocates for themselves, their repositories, and the profession as a whole. I also hope to encourage current leaders—not just those in the director's office, but those who have willing followers and are recognized as leaders by their peers—to facilitate the ideas, energy, enthusiasm, and potential of the next generation of leaders.

While it may seem that focusing on leadership is only practical for those already at the top, it is possible to "lead from the middle." Everyone reports to someone—whether a direct supervisor, a board of directors, or a friends group. The goal is to be as effective as possible in every interaction. As Edie Hedlin notes,

> We archivists know what we do and why we do it. We understand the logic of our ways, and the reasons for our methods and approaches. We understand the intended outcomes of our labor. We know the value of the records we preserve, and the products we create. What we often seem *not* to know is how unclear this all is to nonarchivists.[4]

[3] The business literature includes tens of thousands of books and articles about leadership. For a good overview of leadership theories and research, see Gary Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2010). Only a handful of publications focus on developing leadership skills in the archival profession. The two best books are both edited by Bruce W. Dearstyne: *Leadership and Administration of Successful Archival Programs* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001) and *Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs: Strategies for Success* (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2008). Michael Kurtz devotes a chapter to leadership in *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004). Susan E. Davis reports on leadership patterns within the profession in the Society of American Archivists in "A*Census: Report on Archival Leadership," *American Archivist* (Fall/Winter 2006): 406–18. A number of monographs and articles have been written for archivists that address aspects of leadership including advocacy, public relations, and management, for example, in addition to the Dearstyne and Kurtz volumes listed above, see *Many Happy Returns: Advocacy and the Development of Archives*, edited by Larry Hackman (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011).

[4] Edie Hedlin, "Meeting Leadership Challenges: Lessons from Experience," in *Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs: Strategies for Success*, 166.

Leaders have learned how to articulate their ideas, engage their audience, convey passion and optimism, and achieve results. "Leadership is the art and science of getting things done through people."[5]

Although good leadership and good management are both important in moving the archival profession forward, the literature distinguishes between them. In *Learning to Lead*, Warren Bennis and Joan Goldsmith state, "Managing is about efficiency; leadership is about effectiveness. Managing is about how. Leadership is about what and why."[6] Bruce Dearstyne, in *Leadership and Administration of Successful Archival Programs*, provides one of the best descriptions of the difference between leadership and management:

> Managers are well organized, focus on the work at hand, are performance and outcome oriented by nature, and pride themselves on getting the work done.... Leaders are change agents; they envision a better future for their programs, articulate goals, inspire employees, represent needs clearly, advocate passionately, and have a flair for program building.... [Leaders] have a sense of destiny.[7]

What are the characteristics of leaders? This list is drawn primarily from *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development*,[8] an excellent source of practical information about both the "whys" and "hows" of leadership, but almost all the sources I've read have these elements in common:

> First, leaders are *self-aware*. They make a conscious effort to understand their own strengths and weaknesses. They seek out and are open to honest feedback from a variety of sources.
>
> Second, they are able to *take a broad, systemic view*. They can see an issue or problem from a number of different perspectives but remain focused on the big picture. They understand how to handle ambiguity, complexity, and change while designing long-term strategies.
>
> Third, leaders are able to *think creatively*, or, in other words, to think outside the box. They find connections between disparate ideas, reframe the way people think about an issue, invite new collaborations, and are willing to experiment and take risks.
>
> Fourth, they *work effectively in social systems*. Leaders know how to create teams, delegate work, manage conflict, and motivate others. They understand how

[5] Thomas A. Stewart, "Vision, Frame, Action," *Harvard Business Review* 85 (December 2007): 10.

[6] Warren Bennis and Joan Goldsmith, *Learning to Lead: A Workbook on Becoming a Leader* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1997), 4.

[7] Dearstyne, ed., *Leadership and Administration of Successful Archival Programs*, 112–13.

[8] Cynthia D. McCauley, Russ S. Moxley, and Ellen Van Velsor, eds., *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).

to build and use power and influence—in the positive, not cynical, meanings of those words. They are able to develop a rich diversity of relationships and inspire trust through integrity and competence.

Fifth, leaders *learn*. They gather and absorb information from a variety of sources including observation, feedback, and, most especially, experience.

Finally, leaders *communicate effectively*—up, down and sidewise.

Today, archivists work in a world of unprecedented technology-driven change. Leaders help us ask *and* answer questions such as: Who are we? What business are we in? Who are our customers? Where are we headed in the long term? What are the priorities for the short term? With whom should we network? How do we measure success? No one person can possibly have all the knowledge and all the answers. Successfully navigating both the challenges and the opportunities in our field requires innovation, communication, and collaboration. In the words of internationally recognized executive and futurist John Naisbitt, "The new leader is a facilitator, not an order giver."[9]

Developing leadership skills takes practice, patience, and perseverance. Individuals should consciously look for opportunities to "lean into their discomfort." Presenting a paper at a professional meeting, managing a project, facilitating a team, running for office, and volunteering for "stretch assignments" can all result in relevant experience. Improving self-knowledge and self-awareness, seeking feedback from trusted individuals, practicing active listening, and becoming a better communicator are also ways to strengthen leadership skills.

The archival profession needs effective leaders. According to the 2004 A*Census survey, 28 percent of all archivists and 33 percent of all managers expect to retire by 2013, and 51 percent of all archivists and 63 percent of managers plan to retire by 2023.[10] Although our challenging economic climate may have caused some people to rethink their departure date, it is reasonable to assume that both managerial and leadership opportunities are ahead for those who are prepared to take them.

Leadership can and often should be a shared process. Today's archival leaders have a responsibility to make opportunities available to the next generation to sustain and strengthen our profession. Great energy and enthusiasm are coming into the profession now, and those new to the field provide a diversity of experiences, opinions, and backgrounds to tap into as models for managing and providing access to records are revised or completely redesigned. By allowing vision to emerge at all levels of an organization or program; by being open

[9] John Naisbitt, *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives* (New York: Warner Books, 1982), 188.

[10] Victoria Irons Walch et al., "A*Census (Archival Census and Education Needs Survey in the United States)," *American Archivist* 69 (Fall/Winter 2006): 363.

to new ideas and new ways of doing things; by creating conditions in which others feel empowered; by making it safe for them to grow, take chances, and even learn from mistakes; by preparing the next generation to assume the responsibilities of leadership, the leaders of today lay the groundwork for the future.

The capacity for leadership exists at all levels of the archival profession. Ultimately, it is important for our profession, and perhaps even for our society, that we, as archivists, take responsibility for developing our leadership potential. If we cultivate our leadership skills, we will be better advocates for ourselves, for our repositories, for the people who work with us, and for the values in which we believe.

Leadership and Infrastructure in Archival Programs

Larry J. Hackman

Moving beyond a theoretical overview, let us now briefly consider two frameworks critical to operational leadership of an archival organization. Archival leadership requires, and can best be assessed, against these two frameworks.[11]

The first leadership framework is the overall "infrastructure" of the archives, very broadly defined. Leadership requires understanding and taking responsibility for acting to strengthen all of the elements of the "infrastructure" of the archives as an organization. By infrastructure I mean factors, attitudes, policies, and processes likely to have impact on the ongoing success of an archives. The second leadership framework considers the well-being of the archives across time and seeks to provide for success into the future—so that a successful archival organization becomes, to the degree possible, "a thing that goes of itself." Even with a deep bow toward the changing nature of the information world and the unsettled place of the archival function and archival programs in it, these two frameworks are likely to remain valid and useful in thinking about archival leadership and assessing archival leaders.

First, infrastructure. Leaders of archival programs must accept, and ideally should relish, responsibility for all elements of program infrastructure. While they cannot control all elements, leaders work to shape and influence all of them so that each element contributes in maximum degree to archival program sufficiency. Infrastructure consists of several clusters of program elements—clusters and elements that can be grouped and categorized in many

[11] My section of this article reflects my personal views based on experience and observation, chiefly from the 1970s through the 1990s. In preparing the 2007 SAA Annual Meeting presentation—and then revising it for publication—I have made no attempt to review the literature of leadership or organizational development.

ways. Although some of these program elements are obvious to archivists, they often appear not to recognize other key elements when describing their own programs or the responsibilities of leadership.[12] The key point is that leaders cannot limit their concerns to the archives budget, staff, facility, holdings, and methods; providing for additional, less obvious, perhaps less immediately tangible program elements is critical to successful leadership of an archives.

The first of the obvious infrastructure elements for leadership is professionalism—to ensure that the program has a high degree of archives expertise, applies sound archives methodology, and respects archival purpose, values, and ethics. A second obvious element is human resources, especially archival staff, which means adequate financial resources but, as important, sufficient control of recruitment and advancement as well as adequate support for both continuing education and outside consultation and evaluation. Leaders are responsible for a third basic infrastructural element that covers adequate facilities, equipment, supplies, and such. Fourth are the guidelines, regulations, or other requirements promulgated within the larger organization (issued upon the recommendation of the archives, we hope) that relate to practices within the larger organization that affect records and archives. These apply especially, of course, to institutional archives, which are likely to become ever more important to archival adequacy across society.

A fifth infrastructure element consists of the formal systems and relationships within the larger organization or governance structure in which the archives operates. This includes the placement of the archives (which ought not to be taken as a given), its authority, its reporting requirements, and the planning, budgeting, personnel, and communication systems in which it participates. Archival leadership implies making sure these arrangements all work to benefit the archives to the maximum feasible degree. Often the leadership of the archives will need to seek substantial changes, both formal and informal.

A sixth critical element of infrastructure, one that requires action by the leaders of every archives, includes the development of allies, supporters, advisers, and partners, both formal and informal, and both inside and outside the organization of which the archives is a part. Archives leaders must secure and apply influence—the single ingredient most vitally needed by archives and the one most often missing. Building influence and using it actively and wisely

[12] I am guilty of inconsistency in several publications in listing and describing the elements of the infrastructure of an archives. Discussion of these elements is best integrated into a broader view of leadership of archives in my chapter, "Ways and Means: Thinking and Acting to Strengthen the Infrastructure of Archival Programs," in Dearstyne, ed., *Leadership and Administration of Successful Archival Programs.*

can help obtain almost everything else needed in the way of infrastructure. Players with influence, not only archival expertise, are essential for archives.[13]

A seventh component of infrastructure is the "culture" of the archives as reflected in part by the views and attitudes of its leadership and staff, for example, their expectations for their own performance and for the future of the organization, and their willingness to reach out to acquire influential allies and supporters. These attitudes require, and often start with, the commitment of the archival leadership.

Finally, and drawing on all of the above, the program's vision, agenda, and main goals (and its strategies for addressing this agenda) are always a vital part of program infrastructure.

In summary, leaders of archival programs need to be active and effective in building a broad program infrastructure, however it is categorized. They must be preoccupied with that challenge and must not take any of it as a given, as beyond further change useful to the archival function. Strong leadership, in concert with the archives internal and external family, wants to set a high bar, and then to raise it again.

Beyond infrastructure, a second construct is to create "a thing that goes of itself," something approaching a perpetual motion machine, a self-winding device that just keeps on ticking and, if you will, keeps on telling good time. A main task—really the main goal—of leadership, then, is to create a dynamic infrastructure that contains self-renewing and self-correcting forces that provide energy and good direction into the future. Although nothing can ensure satisfactory future conditions, sound systems for planning and evaluation, for example, linked to excellent staff and influential allies, all with high expectations, can help propel, guide, and strengthen the infrastructure of an archives through at least the next period of its development. This approach implies first, that the leadership of an archives needs a long-term perspective for the program and leadership's role in it. And, second, the measure of a program and its leadership is never merely the present status, no matter how impressive, but the condition of the pieces that need to be in place so that program adequacy, and hopefully excellence, can be sustained. Strong and wise archival leaders understand that their own performance should be judged in part on the condition of the archives well after their own direction has ended. And good leaders act on this understanding.

[13] Advocacy for archives, especially on behalf of individual archives, is the subject of *Many Happy Returns: Advocacy and the Development of Archives*, which I edited.

Leadership, Accountability, and Technological Change

Tony Kurtz

When accountability and technological change are added to leadership, all three elements become more tangible and more immediate but not necessarily more complicated. Leadership in this context combines both technical expertise and the ability to communicate with a wide variety of clients inside and outside the archival and records management fields. It also requires tact and intelligence.

The words *accountability* and *technological change* seem pretty straightforward because one hears them so often, but together they represent profound challenges. But they are also reasons for the archivist's existence. Records professionals see their profile raised as information sources become more complex, and the need for comprehending them becomes a shared responsibility. This heightened profile illustrates the need for records professionals to exhibit leadership on many levels: in the profession, in their organizations, and in society. The following observations situate these issues from the perspective of a mid-career archivist who has recently taken a lead archives/records management position within a multipurpose institution.

In mid-2006, I assumed the position of manager of the University Archives and Records Center (UARC) at Western Washington University (WWU). The position reports directly to the dean of libraries and has a tiny budget and no other full-time staff. The program has a history of strong records management[14]—including a full-service records center—although, like many institutional archives and records programs, it emerged from decades of evolution with an infrastructure designed for managing paper records[15] and is now challenged to ensure its relevance in an age of technological change. How does the program assert its relevance not only with respect to the past but to the present and future? How does the program overcome barriers of institutional placement, resources, and infrastructure to help ensure the institution's accountability to its stakeholders, to legal mandates, and to history? An enhanced records management presence and a formally mandated archival function will both be necessary to meet ongoing and emerging accountability and technological issues.

Due to its historically strong records management function, my program's institutional role and visibility are solidly and increasingly aligned with record-keeping and disclosure, whether through public disclosure requests or during

[14] Since WWU is a public university, state law mandates the records management function. See Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 40.14.040.

[15] For a classic source that describes much of the program's records management and records center practices, see Patricia Bartkowski, "Records Management and the Walking Archivist," in *A Modern Archives Reader*, ed. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch (National Archives and Records Service, U.S. General Services Administration: Washington, D.C., 1984), 38–45.

litigation. This focus on public records accountability is a manifestation of locally and nationally prominent issues[16] that have loomed larger and been promoted more broadly since the federal rules of civil procedure were amended in December 2006 to address the discovery of "electronically stored information."[17] The federal rules of civil procedure govern the conduct of civil actions brought in federal courts, and while they do not apply in other courts, other court rules are often modeled on them, and their influence on recordkeeping is notable even where this is not the case. For example, Washington's Public Records Act, which governs public records disclosure, imposes a different standard than do the federal rules, but the Attorney General's Model Rules on implementing that act nonetheless includes a special section advising agencies to anticipate the potential relevance of court rules on the discovery of electronically stored information.[18]

As archivists and records managers, we may see fertile ground to assert our relevance, but we also may find challenges to asserting the important relationship between records management and archives. While complicating both archives and records management, technological change affirms the importance of recordkeeping and accountability outside of our profession, particularly among legal professionals. Coinciding with the new rules—and perhaps acknowledging their impact—the Washington Attorney General's Office has been active on multiple fronts related to management of public records. State agencies and public records groups sponsored a wave of workshops and seminars related to topics such as litigation holds, email retention, and electronic discovery, all reinforcing the importance of records management. This attention may justify familiar precepts of archives and records management programs, but it could also be a double-edged sword if concerns over litigation exposure gain too much influence over archival appraisal, selection, and access in our effort to ensure a full and accountable documentary record. Leadership and advocacy on the part of archives and records professionals are essential in this regard.

[16] Local issues include Washington's Public Records Act, RCW 42.56. Passed in 1972 by citizen initiative, the law mandates disclosure of public records upon citizen request. National issues include major legislation, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, and court rulings having to do with electronic recordkeeping, one of the most cited being Zubulake v. UBS Warburg LLC, especially the five landmark opinions issued in that case in 2003 and 2004 by United States District Court Judge Shira A. Scheindlin. See opinions in Zubulake v. UBS Warburg, 216 F.R.D. 280 (S.D.N.Y. 2003); Zubulake v. UBS Warburg, 217 F.R.D. 309 (S.D.N.Y. 2003); Zubulake v. UBS Warburg, 220 F.R.D. 212 (S.D.N.Y. 2003); and Zubulake v. UBS Warburg, 229 F.R.D. 422 (S.D.N.Y. 2004).

[17] United States Supreme Court, *Federal Rules of Civil Procedure* (2009), complete text published online by Cornell University Law School, at http://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/frcp/, accessed 18 January 2010. In particular, see Rules 26 and 34.

[18] Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 44-14-05000, "Relationship of Public Records Act to court rules on discovery of 'electronically stored information.'"

Within Western Washington University, this complicated trend manifests itself in familiar ways, such as office personnel innocently wanting to remove a records series from a retention schedule because "it's all electronic now." Resolving such office-level issues is a matter of education at a point where the archivist still has a measure of control, at least in my case. More difficult from an archivist's perspective—and more indicative of my position's need to develop leadership skills—is the problem of influencing basic policy and procedure and educating leaders at the institutional level. This is especially acute in the case of technological change, since electronic records management and preservation require a significant institutional commitment and additional financial resources. Educating administrators about the relationship among accountability, recordkeeping, and archives may bring a payoff for the program in the long run but is not easy in the short term.

When I took the job, my goals were to enhance the program's records management role and to gain a mandate for its archival role. I determined that the most effective approach for my situation would be to proceed through multiple steps. According to Bruce Dearstyne, this process involves "creating a climate for change, engaging and enabling the whole organization, implementation, and then sustaining the change."[19] In assessing my program, I understand that I am primarily engaged in the first two steps. To build awareness and create an intellectual infrastructure for change, I endeavor to sustain the excellence of my predecessors, expand the amount and type of training I give to university employees, develop strong relationships with allied units within the institution, promote compliance with laws and regulations affecting recordkeeping, formalize my program's archival mandate, and align my program goals with the institutional mission through a strategic plan.[20]

Identifying what the program did well was easy. My predecessor administered a program that delivered quality results consistently, professionally, and with responsiveness and honesty. Someone in my position can take that residue of goodwill and professional competence to the bank, but only as long as that level of service and professionalism continue. Being responsive to individual needs asserts the relevance of the program on a personal level, and repeated several times a day, maintains and continues to develop a positive reputation. My first priority is to sustain this record of integrity and to impart it as a service

[19] Bruce W. Dearstyne, "Leading Archives and Records Programs: Perspectives and Insights," in *Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs: Strategies for Success*, 303. Dearstyne elaborates upon an idea promoted by John P. Kotter.

[20] Many of the concepts underlying the following discussion, and their relationship to leadership in archives, are more fully expressed in Dearstyne, ed., *Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs*; Dearstyne, ed., *Leadership and Administration of Successful Archival Programs*; William J. Maher, *The Management of College and University Archives* (Metuchen, N.J.: Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, 1992); and Michael J. Kurtz, *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004).

model to my student employees, who represent the program throughout campus as they carry out records center functions.

To enhance the training program, I am partnering with the institution's public records officer, who oversees compliance with the state's public disclosure law, to develop an ongoing training curriculum. Under the umbrella of public records accountability, we are developing a training presentation that can be tailored to meet different audiences from executives to frontline workers.[21] We keep the training updated with references to current technology and laws, including examples taken from the university's own IT environment. We are also working to integrate records accountability language into new employee orientation material offered by the Human Resources Department. Although these training examples focus mostly on issues related to active records, the training provides a prime opportunity to create awareness of the archival program and its relationship to accountability. Given the focus of the training, I consider it a success if trainees simply learn that the archives exists and what it does.

I have worked to recognize additional partnerships vital to my program's success. The university's legal counsel promoted the idea of integrating public records training and is a valuable ally in our effort to do so. She also included my position as a core member of a public records working group that she formed in 2006 to discuss public records issues related to disclosure, records management, and legal compliance. The group includes the institution's chief information officer, internal auditor, and key records custodians and professional and technical staff. The group represents an important kind of collaboration that crosses departmental barriers, and my participation partially compensates for my program's relatively low placement within the institutional hierarchy. Since 2007, I have participated with group members in rewriting the institution's public records procedures in the Washington Administrative Code,[22] cocompiled and implemented an institutional protocol for the preservation and production of electronic records that are subject to legal proceedings or public disclosure requests, and given formal presentations to the group on records management, electronic records, and metadata. The group's members all have an interest in the mission my program carries out, and their programs, in turn, can support mine. In this way, I can "build and work through networks to deliver services and gain influence," as Bruce Dearstyne suggests.[23]

[21] The format for this training program integrating public disclosure and records management was inspired by the successful model practiced by our counterparts at the University of Washington, Barbara Benson and Eliza A. Saunders.

[22] See WAC, chapter 516-09.

[23] Dearstyne, ed., *Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs*, 303. For a good example of the benefits of this type of collaboration, see Philip Bantin, "The Indiana University Electronic Records Project: Lessons Learned," *Information Management Journal* 35 (January 2001): 16–24.

In practice, almost all activities I undertake—even archival activities—are linked to promoting compliance with laws and regulations affecting recordkeeping. While sometimes overwhelming in scope, these mandates nonetheless provide a fundamental acknowledgment of our professional necessity and role. Even records programs in private institutions will find strong support for their efficacy in legal or regulatory compliance. Federal recordkeeping requirements are linked to grant funds, student records, and a range of activities from health to environment. Protecting intellectual property also requires protecting records. As a public institution, WWU is subject to state laws that not only mandate my records management role[24] but also have significant impact on the management of digital images[25] and the preservation of electronic records.[26]

I included the latter set of state laws as supporting documentation in an institution-wide policy I submitted for approval through the university's official policy-setting process. This policy identifies the role and authority of the archivist and the existence and function of the archives as the official repository for the institution's archival records.[27] It specifies the archival authority with respect to all record formats and across all institutional settings. It provides my own program at last with clear authority to take custody of archival records. In response to questions during the review process regarding how records are deemed "archival," I took the opportunity to develop a general appraisal guide that now supports the policy and further educates stakeholders.

Finally, but not least, I have worked to align my program goals with the institutional mission through my parent program's strategic planning process. To express what I felt were the most critical needs for my program and for the institution, I volunteered to work on the library's strategic planning work group for digital assets. I strove to emphasize the libraries' (the WWU library system comprises of a number of units) role not only in managing their own digital assets but in helping to manage those created throughout the institution. This role would serve the institution, bolster the libraries, and help my program. The resulting strategic plan states that the university's and libraries' digital assets include born-digital public records and that stewardship of them is an institution-wide obligation, founded in law, and necessitating cross-campus partnerships, perhaps even external partnerships. Our task group also identified an attainable, short-term goal—included in the strategic plan—of surveying the

[24] RCW 40.14.010, "Records Officers—Designation—Powers and duties."

[25] WAC, chapter 434-663, "Imaging systems, standards for accuracy and durability."

[26] WAC, chapter 434-662, "Preservation of electronic public records."

[27] Western Washington University Policy No. POL-4901.01, "Management of University Archival Records" (approved 5 April 2010), http://www.wwu.edu/policies/docs/2000-4000%20Academic%20Affairs/POL-U4910.01%20Managing%20University%20Archival%20Records.pdf, accessed 31 January 2011.

institution's current digital landscape to identify existing resources, potential projects, and services.

How effective these measures will be in advancing my program depends upon how well I recognize the opportunities they afford to capitalize upon them in meaningful ways. The foundation they provide, however, is critical to transforming my program and addressing the electronic records issues affecting it. These steps establish the cornerstones of the kind of self-sustaining program characterized above as something "that goes of itself," and, when crafted well, can also be a mechanism by which to gain the resources to match an unfunded mandate.

Teaching Leadership

Randall C. Jimerson

The increasing complexity of challenges facing archival institutions and archivists in the twenty-first century requires creative and innovative responses. Archivists cannot work in quiet isolation. We must respond to rapid technological change, political and institutional pressures, citizens' demands for access to records, and public controversy. Public and media scrutiny of recordkeeping issues—such as Watergate, government secrecy, and the Enron/Arthur Andersen scandal—have forced archivists into the arena of public policy debates.[28] More than ever, it is essential for us to assert leadership, not only within our institutions but also in the wider public arena.

Looking at the challenges facing leaders in the archival profession, it is important to recognize that archival leadership occurs on at least four key levels:

- in the archival repository;
- in the larger institutional setting;
- in the archival profession, at local, regional, and national levels; and
- in our public interactions with society.

Each of us, not only archival managers, can assume leadership within our area of daily responsibilities. As Tony Kurtz demonstrates above, leadership may include thinking of creative solutions to recurrent problems or situations, providing effective service to archival users and clients, or recommending policies or procedures to improve archival programs and services. Archival managers assume responsibility for leadership in a somewhat broader venue, the parent institution of which the archival repository often constitutes only a small unit.

[28] See, for example, Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace, eds., *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society* (Westport, Conn.: Quorum Books, 2002); Margaret Procter, Michael Cook, and Caroline Williams, eds., *Political Pressure and the Archival Record* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005); and Verne Harris, *Archives and Justice: A South African Perspective* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2007).

By communicating the purposes, benefits, and services provided by the archives and its staff, the manager assumes leadership responsibilities. At this level, as Larry Hackman illustrates in his contribution, archival leaders may also find opportunities to apply their professional expertise to address the institution's needs, even beyond the archival context. For example, the archival leader can demonstrate how archival principles can improve institutional decision making, accountability, and documentation to demonstrate its service to a wider public. Archivists also need to exert leadership skills within the broader archival profession, as Donna McCrea explains above. At the local, state, regional, and national levels, the archival profession needs dedicated and effective leaders who can articulate a vision for the profession, find common solutions to complex problems, and coordinate the work of volunteers in assisting professional associations. This essay focuses on the fourth level of archival leadership: interactions with the public.

To lead our institutions effectively into the future, archivists need to learn the latest principles, theories, and methods of organizational leadership. We also increasingly recognize and accept our broader responsibilities to society.[29] Before examining the public sector needs for archival leadership, I begin by looking at how we can develop leadership skills and teach some of the secrets of successful leadership—both in graduate study courses and in continuing professional education.

Management and leadership have become increasingly important components in graduate archival education. The SAA "Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies" lists "Management and Administration" as one of the essential knowledge areas of archival functions. It requires "thorough understanding of organizational management, systems analysis, program planning, budgeting, fundraising, grantsmanship, human resources, and the management of buildings, facilities, and equipment." However, leadership is grouped under "Management" as part of the necessary "Interdisciplinary Knowledge" for archival education, including "fundamental principles related to organizational management, strategic planning, administrative leadership," and other management topics.[30] In the years since the SAA Council approved these guidelines, leadership has emerged as an increasingly vital area of knowledge for archivists, particularly as issues such as advocacy, public policy, accountability, and societal responsibility gain greater recognition as concerns for archivists.

Because of the importance of leadership and management skills for those entering the archival profession, the graduate studies program in Archives and

[29] This is one of the main themes developed in my recent book, *Archives Power: Memory, Accountability, and Social Justice* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009).

[30] Society of American Archivists, "Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies," http://www.archivists.org/prof-education/ed_guidelines.asp, accessed 17 December 2009. As of February 2011, these guidelines were being reviewed for revision.

Records Management (ARM) at Western Washington University incorporates a significant introduction to basic principles of business management. Although based in the Department of History, the ARM program combines historical theory and perspectives with technical methodology and managerial theory. The ARM program also requires both an intensive internship and a research-based master's thesis.

Most of us sooner or later find ourselves faced with managerial responsibilities. In addition, archival professional work requires an understanding of organizational structures and systems, so that archivists can provide proper records appraisal, retention scheduling, and support services to our own institutions—even if we work for a county historical society. Western Washington's ARM program therefore includes a major emphasis on management theory and practice, particularly in the Advanced Seminar in Archives and Records Management. Readings include business literature such as Peter Drucker on managing nonprofit organizations, current works on re-engineering or knowledge management, and management skills for information professionals.[31] Michael Kurtz's *Managing Archival and Manuscripts Repositories* in the Archival Fundamentals Series II and *Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs: Strategies for Success*, edited by Bruce Dearstyne, are among the few books that examine management and leadership in an archival context, although a growing body of professional articles offer valuable contributions.[32] Historical perspectives on management and leadership provide an additional lens through which to understand these important aspects of archives and recordkeeping.[33]

Some of the key topics discussed in the advanced seminar include:

- Managing electronic records
- Identifying mission, goals, and planning

[31] Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Drucker, *Managing the Non-profit Organization* (New York: Harper, 1990); James Champy, *Reengineering Management: The Mandate for New Leadership* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1995); G. Edward Evans, P. Ward, and B. Rugass, *Management Basics for Information Professionals*, (New York: Neal-Schumann, 2000); Thomas H. Davenport and Laurence Prusak, *Working Knowledge: How Organizations Manage What They Know* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1998).

[32] Kurtz, *Managing Archival and Manuscripts Repositories*; Dearstyne, ed., *Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs: Strategies for Success*; Dearstyne, ed., *Effective Approaches for Managing Electronic Records and Archives* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002); William Saffady, *Records and Information Management: Fundamentals of Professional Practice* (Lenexa, Kans.: ARMA, 2004).

[33] There is an extensive literature on the history of archives and recordkeeping, much of which provides valuable perspectives on leadership and management of archives. See, for example, Ernst Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972); M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993); Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); JoAnne Yates, *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Eric Ketelaar, " 'Control through Communication' in a Comparative Perspective," *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005): 71–89; Peter J. Horsman, "A French Legacy: The Transition from Collegiate to Bureaucratic Record-keeping in a Dutch Town, 1800–1900," *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005).

- Leadership skills
- Managing resources
- Organizational structures and recordkeeping
- Advocacy, public policy, and accountability

In addition to readings and classroom discussions, leadership can be learned during the required archival internship, when students are encouraged to observe, ask questions, and learn from their supervisors and colleagues. We can learn much of what we need to know about leadership through such observation and emulation.

Archivists already working in the field also need access to information about leadership skills and methods. Even with the growing number and sophistication of graduate archival education programs, rapid changes in the profession and its perspectives require careful attention to continuing professional education. The National Forum on Archival Continuing Education (NFACE) in 2000[34] identified as one of its top three "Action Agenda" goals to: "Create a diverse and well-educated next generation of archival leadership."[35]

The 2004 A*CENSUS showed that "Although continuing education will still be needed at a basic level, more advanced or specialized training will be needed in the future, as individuals enter the profession with greater knowledge and skills acquired from graduate education."[36] The A*CENSUS also identified "lack of courses relevant to meet their needs" as one of the significant barriers to continuing education for those who manage archival programs, particularly for archivists over age forty.[37] Unfortunately, leadership is not yet listed as a priority for the SAA professional and continuing education program. The "Guidelines for Archival Continuing Education," revised and approved by Council in November 2006, identify "Managing Archival Programs" as one topic of emphasis. However, the description of this topic does not mention leadership: "The principle and practices that archivists use to facilitate all aspects of archival work through careful planning and administration of the repository and its institutional resources."[38]

SAA should expand its continuing education focus to include leadership skills, to prepare archivists for leadership roles both within their institutions, within the profession, and in society. For archival professional and continuing education, key issues for leadership skills training include:

[34] National Forum on Archival Continuing Education (NFACE), Council of State Historical Records Coordinators (COSHRC), *Final Report* (Dover, Del.: COSHRC, 2002).

[35] NFACE, *Final Report*, 5.

[36] Nancy Zimmelman, "A*CENSUS Report on Continuing Education," *American Archivist* 69 (Fall/Winter 2006): 369.

[37] Zimmelman, *Report on Continuing Education*, 382.

[38] SAA, "Guidelines for Archival Continuing Education."

- The stages of development of organizations, and leadership roles needed in each;
- Strengthening the infrastructure of archives programs;
- Advocacy;
- Marketing, public relations, and communications;
- Strategic thinking and strategic planning;
- Acquiring and using external resources: grants, professional standards, advisory boards, friends groups, and so on;
- "Out-of-the-box" strategies to reinvent or revolutionize archives;
- Leading an archives in the information age of electronic records and technology; and
- Collaborative leadership across the organization.

The NHPRC/University of Wisconsin Archives Leadership Institute, held for the first time in 2008, helps to fill this gap in archival continuing education. This institute provides mid-career archivists with instruction designed to strengthen the leadership skills and knowledge that archivists need in all aspects of their work, careers, and public service.[39] In coming years, it may enable entire generations of archival leaders to build support networks that could revolutionize the profession. However, SAA and regional archival associations also need to develop other short-term workshops and learning opportunities focusing on leadership.

What will archivists do with these skills, with new awareness of the importance of leadership? We can start by improving the internal operations of archival repositories: exerting leadership within our parent institutions and in the archival profession itself. But we should also strive to exert leadership beyond our institutional and professional boundaries, applying archival knowledge and values within social and political contexts. This begins with advocacy.

The previous essays posit many definitions of leadership. Among the central attributes of leadership are vision, understanding, and communicating the essential purposes for which action must be taken. A good leader helps people see the broader vistas before them, the ultimate goals, and how each individual can contribute and make a difference. Effective leaders embody moral courage to do what is right, to strive for something beyond their easy grasp, to connect the daily responsibilities and activities people need to fulfill with the personal, institutional, and societal benefits these actions can achieve. The essence of leadership is a sense of purpose, vision, and creativity about what we do—and *why*. In one respect, at least, a good leader resembles a two-year-old child: both always asking *Why?* As archivists, we need to understand why we do each daily activity or special project. Why do we choose one option over another, or

[39] See Archives Leadership Institute Web page at http://www.slis.wisc.edu/continueed-ali.htm, accessed 31 January 2011.

prioritize certain decisions and activities? What is the ultimate goal or purpose?

We must take a broad view of the profession and our responsibilities. What business are we in? Traditional views suggest that archives represent "old stuff"—or history, or memory, or meeting legal and administrative needs of our institutions. These concepts are true, but they are no longer sufficient. We need to reconceptualize archives if we are to remain relevant and useful in modern society.

The archival profession needs a new focus, a new sense of mission and purpose within the community, state, and nation. As we seek to demonstrate the importance of archives in society, several vital issues require our attention:

- First, we should focus more attention on user needs—on identifying and providing information that is useful and necessary for people from all segments of society.[40]
- Documentation and accountability are critical needs for protecting the public's rights and ensuring that political, economic, and academic leaders are accountable to their constituencies. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act, for example, specifies recordkeeping essentials to lessen the chances for more scandals such as Enron.[41]
- Open government and access to vital information are critical in a democratic society. Archivists should be advocates for open access to public records, while recognizing the need for some privacy and national security protections.[42]
- Archivists should embrace diversity to represent all voices in society—not just the political, economic, social, and intellectual elites.[43]

[40] For example, see Elsie Freeman Finch, "In the Eye of the Beholder: Archives Administration from the User's Point of View," *American Archivist* 47 (Spring 1984): 111–23; Harris, *Archives and Justice*.

[41] Cox and Wallace, *Archives and the Public Good*; "Who's Accountable? Inside the Growing Enron Scandal: How Evidence Was Shredded and Top Executives Fished for a Bailout as the Company Imploded," *Time*, 13 January 2002, http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/headlines02/0113-02.htm, accessed 12 May 2007; Patrice Davis, "Some Much Deserved Respect: The Impact of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act from a Records Management Perspective Focusing on Small Businesses," master's thesis (Western Washington University, 2006).

[42] OpenTheGovernment.org, "Secrecy Report Card 2007: Report Finds Expanded Federal Government Secrecy in 2006," press release (1 September 2007), http://www.openthegovernment.org/article/articleview/275/1/68/?TopicID=, accessed 17 December 2009; Tom Connors, "The Bush Administration and 'Information Lockdown,'" in *Political Pressure and the Archival Record*, 195–208; Bruce P. Montgomery, "Presidential Materials: Politics and the Presidential Records Act," *American Archivist* 66 (Spring/Summer 2003): 102–38.

[43] For perspectives on diversity in archives and the archival profession see, for example, Kathryn M. Neal, "The Importance of Being Diverse: The Archival Profession and Minority Recruitment," *Archival Issues* (1996): 145–58; Elizabeth W. Adkins, "Our Journey toward Diversity—and a Call to (More) Action," *American Archivist* 71 (Spring/Summer 2008): 21–49; Jeannette A. Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History* (Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2003). See also "Educating for the Archival Multiverse" in this issue of *American Archivist*.

- Archivists can serve the interests of promoting a more just and equitable society. Numerous examples of the ways in which archives contribute to the public interest can be found in recent books on archives and the public good, political pressure and the archival record, and archives for justice.[44]
- We should consider adding social responsibility—including moral responses to the call for social justice—to our concept of professional ethics.[45]

Archivists' engagement with the public begins with advocacy. Advocacy engages archivists with efforts to bring archival concerns to public attention, to address public policy issues affecting archival and recordkeeping concerns, and to meet the societal obligations that any profession assumes by its very existence.[46] Previous "Archives Week" celebrations and the new national focus on American Archives Month provide useful means of reaching public attention.

Advocacy for recordkeeping values is consistent with our professional responsibility. Since archives are inescapably sites of power, we must abandon the illusion of neutrality. But we still need to maintain our professional standards and objectivity, to remain true to our obligation to protect both evidence of human activity and the public interest. It remains essential to observe professional obligations even when seeking to ensure adequate documentation for underrepresented societal groups, to foster diversity both in the archival record and in the composition of the archival profession, or to strengthen concepts such as accountability, public access to records, and open government. Objectivity is not the same as neutrality.[47] We can take positions on social principles and public policies without forsaking our professional values.

As we consider the relationship between archives and society, these values take center stage. For the profession to engage in public discourse, leadership is necessary. Taking public positions on such matters, as we have begun to do, may help to ensure that society values the contributions of archives and archivists. This requires effective advocacy, creative approaches to demonstrating how archives benefit society. Above all, leadership requires vision, creativity, and

[44] Cox and Wallace, *Archives and the Public Good*; Procter, Cook, and Williams, eds., *Political Pressure and the Archival Record*; Harris, *Archives and Justice*. See also essays in Francis X. Blouin, Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2006).

[45] Extensive discussion of these issues can be found in the proceedings of the November 2007 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Conference on Archival Ethics and the May 2008 conference, Archives and the Ethics of Memory Construction, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Links to information about both conferences is available at http://www.memoryethics.org, accessed 17 December 2009.

[46] For discussion of advocacy concerns for archivists, see Elsie Finch, ed., *Advocating Archives: An Introduction to Public Relations for Archivists* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1994).

[47] See Thomas L. Haskell, *Objectivity Is Not Neutrality: Explanatory Schemes in History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998)

courage. We must be willing to take risks. We need to challenge ourselves, our colleagues, our resource allocators, and our public and private constituencies. We should accept the challenge of using the power of archives for the public interest. This is a central responsibility for any profession.

Conclusion

George Mariz

Leadership is not a single thing, and it can originate in many places and wear a number of different faces. It is not an abstraction but a characteristic lodged in individuals who are themselves the sources of its vitalizing energy and direction. Leadership can come from different directions and exist in various forms and at a number of levels. Despite this multiplicity, it is clear that leadership involves a number of traits common to those who lead. It possesses a collaborative spirit, and it demands that those who exercise it must have full knowledge of the structure, practices, personnel, and wider environment of the entities they lead. Leaders are self-aware and self-critical, always seeking to refine and improve what exists. They are running constantly, but never running backward, always forward.

These essays present a contemporary view and represent ideas and practices of the early twenty-first century. A comparable set of ideas prior to 1960 would be different, emphasizing hierarchical practices and structures. A comparable set of ideas from the next generation may differ from those presented here, but future leaders will resemble those described here more than those of the previous generation. Leaders of today and tomorrow, not only in archives but in most other fields, should note that it is necessary to live with change and to understand that change—human, organizational, and technical—is the leading characteristic of our time. The prospect of leading in an era of change is both daunting and exciting, and it is clear that those who are well equipped to work with others, prepared to look critically at what they and their organizations do and the clients they serve, and able to grasp what is occurring around them will be capable of leading their organizations forward into the future.