

Special Issue on Archival Education

Introduction: Graduate Level Archival Education Comes of Age

Elizabeth Yakel, Issue Editor

This issue of the *American Archivist* focuses on graduate-level archival education. The papers were originally presented at the “Working Meeting of Graduate Archival Educators,” a one-day conference held during the 1999 Society of American Archivists’ annual meeting in Pittsburgh. The conference was jointly sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh School of Information Sciences and the Society of American Archivists. Funding for the conference was provided by the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation. Based on responses to their papers and discussions throughout the day, presenters revised their work, some substantially, for publication in this issue of the *American Archivist*. The theme of the conference was “Research In and Research About Graduate Level Archival Education.” As a whole, these papers demonstrate the state of archival research as well as discuss the different environmental, institutional, and curricular frameworks at play in archival education programs at the close of the twentieth century. In addition to the papers presented at the conference, a paper by the late Fredric Miller is also published here. This paper, originally presented at the 1983 Society of American Archivists’ annual meeting, provides historical background and also some prescient statements about the future of graduate level archival education.

Although there has been a steady stream of articles on archival education in the *American Archivist*, there has never been an entire issue devoted to general graduate-level archival education. Significant parts of issues have been devoted to archival education, however. For example, the April 1968 issue featured the famous debate between H.G. Jones and T.R. Schellenberg concerning the proper institutional placement and curriculum for archival education programs as well as several other articles on archival education. The summer 1988 issue of

the *American Archivist* also examined the state of archival education in academia as well as continuing education, and the CART curriculum issue in the summer of 1993 focused on electronic records education in all venues. The present issue is also well-timed because the SAA is revising the *Guidelines for the Development of a Curriculum for a Master of Archival Studies Degree* and archival organizations are discussing links between university-based, graduate-level educational programs and their continuing education programs. This issue should help to forward these processes and to give archivists more insight into the variety, concerns, and future directions of graduate-level archival education.

As noted above, this issue opens with an article by the late Fredric Miller. It is historical in that it is almost twenty years old and that it provides insight into how graduate-level archival education developed and developed in the particular ways it did through the early 1980s. Of particular note is Miller's discussion of the difficulty of accrediting programs. When this article is read in light of the articles by Terry Eastwood, Anne Gilliland-Swetland, and Peter Wosh, readers will see a definite development from scattered courses to coherent multi-course programs. Furthermore, these latter three articles demonstrate that there is variety in graduate level archival curricula and that diverse curricula can be equally strong. This diversity may be preferable as academic programs take advantage of local resources and talent.

Luciana Duranti's paper opened the conference with a discussion of the pending revision of the *Guidelines*. She emphasized the educational focus of the new SAA strategic plan as well as the need to expand our thinking about graduate level archival education beyond the master's level and to work towards the development of a curriculum for doctoral education. Her words are calm and considered, yet just ten years ago, thinking about doctoral education for archivists would have seemed revolutionary and the number of archival dissertations could have been counted on one hand.

David Wallace's paper and my paper both concentrate on research about graduate-level archival education. Taken together, these two papers form the largest body of information available on graduates of archival education programs. These two studies are also complementary. Wallace surveyed students currently enrolled in archival education programs about their backgrounds and expectations for archival employment; I surveyed graduates of archival education programs. These two studies found students with either increasingly high salary expectations or starting salaries. Another similar finding concerns the dearth of students interested in entering or finding employment in governmental or corporate archives. This merits further research to verify that the most talented and educated entry-level archivists are not interested in two critical sectors in need of archival and records expertise.

The papers by Eric Ketelaar, Sue McKemmish, and Angelika Menne-Haritz provide an international perspective on archival education in North America.

While each author discusses archival education in his or her own country—the Netherlands, Australia, and Germany, respectively—each proceeds to focus on a unique aspect of archival education or the archival program. Ketelaar redefines basic archival terms and argues that a new paradigm drawn from foundational concepts is essential for all archival education. For Ketelaar, this new paradigm is characterized by increased attention to social and cultural “archivistics” and the “archivalization” of records. What this means is that archivists must focus on the context, structure, and form determined by the recordkeeping processes and not the records themselves. Furthermore they must not only study but also take an active role in determining the processes that lead to the creation of records. Ketelaar examines these ideas and discusses ways in which they could be integrated into the curriculum and the research agenda. In closing, Ketelaar examines how the research of conference participants fits into the new paradigm as well as into traditional archival functions. Angelika Menne-Haritz takes another approach. She begins by discussing not only the importance of archives for memory, but also the need to consciously think about the act of forgetting. She notes that “archivists are the specialists who manage the transition from present to past;” we make decisions concerning memory and oblivion. Within this theoretical framework, she places the three interrelated components of archival education at the Marburg Archives School: pre-employment education, continuing training, and archival research. McKemmish primarily describes research programs associated with the archival education program at Monash University. Her paper shows the incredible amount of interactions and collaborative electronic records research between the business and records community in Australia, similar to what one would find between a business school faculty and corporations in the United States. McKemmish’s description of the variety of these research programs and their impact is enlightening.

The final two papers by Richard Cox and Terry Cook summarize the other papers and the conference discussions. Cook also reflects on an SAA session that summarized the conference events and the comments and debate among participants at that session. While Duranti sees increasing interest in graduate-level archival education on the part of the SAA, Cox sees growing tension between university-based archival education programs and professional organizations. He argues that educators must control and be involved in their own destinies and that they should be the major arbiters of archival education programs. Cook focuses more generally on the gulf between archivists in academia and those in the workplace. He points out that archival research is not the exclusive domain of educators even though a healthy academic environment needs archival faculty creating research streams. Taking the opposite view from Cox, Cook notes, “That the archival profession needs . . . to explore what educators are doing, carefully and critically, and that educators equally need to

state their goals and assumptions, openly and transparently, seems self-evident. Discussion about archival education, then, is not about educators talking to one another while the “real work” goes on back at the archives.” Cook proceeds to argue for more inclusion and broader thinking from the larger archival profession, as well as on the part of archival educators. His advice is to continue discussions, however uncomfortable, such as the one at the SAA session, and to work towards a better understanding between educators and archivists in the workplace, one that contains “more nuanced shades of gray.” This seems to be a proper note on which to end the issue.

This issue of the *American Archivist* documents the state of archival education. Still, many of the articles challenge us to think about the basic structure, terminology, and assumptions we have about graduate-level archival education. In the words of Terry Cook, “It is important for the profession to remember that the opposite of practical is impractical, not theoretical.” While many of these papers have core theoretical arguments, each of the authors ties these theoretical arguments into the practicalities of administering or teaching in an archival education program. I have learned much from reading these papers in various stages, and it has been a pleasure to see these papers develop over the past year. I hope that readers of this issue will find it as interesting as I have during the editing process.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the authors for their hard work and patience. They kindly answered all of my questions and carefully considered my comments before either graciously accepting or rejecting them. I would also like to thank Thomas Teper, my graduate student assistant at the University of Pittsburgh, who read and reread these papers, polished and checked footnotes, and, in the case of the Miller article, reconstructed and deciphered footnotes.