

# The Future of the Past: A Survey of Graduates of Master's-Level Archival Education Programs in the United States

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## Abstract

The results of a survey of graduates of archival education programs in the United States present a profile of the next generation of archivists by focusing on a variety of demographic, economic, and professional issues. The findings indicate that the new generation of archivists is younger, predominantly female, and slightly better compensated than previous generations. Furthermore, interesting contrasts and comparisons can be made between graduates of history and graduates of library and/or information science-based programs, as well as between men and women in terms of employment sectors, salaries, and the length of the graduate programs. Understanding career trajectories is important in building a stronger archival profession in the United States, as well as in fostering professionalization among the younger generation.

## Introduction

The face of graduate archival education in the United States has changed greatly over the past decade.<sup>1</sup> First, the *Guidelines for the Development of a Curriculum for a Master of Archival Studies Degree*<sup>2</sup> raised the basic standards by which graduate archival education programs had been

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<sup>1</sup> Richard J. Cox, Elizabeth Yakel, David A. Wallace, Jeannette Bastian, and Jennifer Marshall, "Archival Education in North American Library and Information Science Schools: A Status Report." Forthcoming in *Library Quarterly* (April 2001). Our research indicates that in 1985 there were 9 full-time archival educators in LIS schools, in 1999 there were 20. This represents more than a 100% growth in 15 years.

<sup>2</sup> Society of American Archivists, *Guidelines for the Development of a Curriculum for a Master of Archival Studies Degree*, 1994. Available at: <<http://www.archivists.org/education/masguide.html>> (hereafter *MAS Guidelines*).

measured for over a decade. Second, more graduate programs have hired full-time, tenure-track faculty; with some programs adding a second archival faculty member. Third, anecdotal reports indicate that the number of students in graduate archival education programs is growing. It may just be the reality that “graduate archival education is the primary means of entry into the profession.”<sup>3</sup> Much research is needed in all areas of graduate archival education, including faculty, curricula, and students. This article reports the results of a survey of graduates of archival education programs in the United States. The goal was to profile the next generation of archivists and to focus on a variety of demographic, economic, and professional issues. Understanding career trajectories is important in building a stronger archival profession in the United States, as well as in fostering professionalization. If the record of the past is to have a future, our students are literally the future of our past.

The findings discussed in this article are from a survey of graduates in sixteen graduate archival education programs in the United States.<sup>4</sup> They indicate that the new generation of archivists is younger, predominantly female, and slightly better compensated than their predecessors. Furthermore, interesting contrasts and comparisons can be made between graduates of history and graduates of library and/or information science-based programs, as well as between men and women regarding employment sectors, salaries, and the length of the graduate programs.

### Literature Review

Much has been written about graduate archival education, particularly articles in the area of program development,<sup>5</sup> articles providing historical insights into the present or arguing for new approaches to teaching about archives,<sup>6</sup> and

<sup>3</sup> Society of American Archivists, *MAS Guidelines*. These guidelines state, “SAA believes that programs of the extent and nature outlined in these guidelines are the best form of pre-appointment professional education for archivists.”

<sup>4</sup> Participating programs were located in the following institutions: Auburn University, Dominican University (formerly Rosary College), Long Island University, Loyola University—Chicago, Northwestern, Simmons College, State University of New York—Albany, University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts—Boston, University of Michigan, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, University of Pittsburgh, University of Texas at Austin, University of Wisconsin—Madison, University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, and Western Washington University.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of the program development literature are: Richard J. Cox, “The Master’s of Archival Studies and American Education Standards: An Argument for the Continued Development of Graduate Archival Education in the United States,” *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993): 221–31; Terry Eastwood, “Nurturing Archival Education in the University,” *American Archivist* 51 (Summer 1988): 228–51; Jacqueline Goggin, “That We Shall Truly Deserve the Title of ‘Profession’: The Training and Education of Archivists, 1930–1960,” *American Archivist* 47 (Summer 1984): 243–54; and Robert Sidney Martin, “The Development of Professional Education for Librarians and Archivists in the United States: A Comparative Essay,” *American Archivist* 57 (Summer 1994): 544–58.

<sup>6</sup> For example see Paul Conway, “Archival Education and the Need for Full-Time Faculty,” *American Archivist* 51 (Summer 1988): 254–65 and James M. O’Toole, “Curriculum Developments in Archival Education: A Proposal,” *American Archivist* 53 (Summer 1990): 460–66.

studies of curricular content that largely analyze various curricular components or discuss appropriate subject matter.<sup>7</sup> More recently, a status report providing an overview of archival education as of 1999 has been drafted.<sup>8</sup> Despite the proliferation of articles on these educational topics, comparatively little research has been done regarding students. What work has been done consists of two surveys, only one of which has been published.

Megan Sniffin-Marinoff completed an initial survey in 1992. She polled 212 students who had taken the introductory archives management class at Simmons College between 1981 and 1991. She described the typical student as a single, white female, working full-time, taking classes part-time, after commuting from between half an hour to one hour to class. This student's initial attachment to archives was more of an interest than a firm commitment, and the student expected to work in a college or university archives.<sup>9</sup>

Although there have been multiple salary surveys and analyses,<sup>10</sup> Anne Gilliland-Swetland's survey was the first to specifically examine salaries of archival education program graduates on a nation-wide scale. This research was initially presented at a conference on graduate archival education in San Diego in 1996.<sup>11</sup> In a much expanded and reworked version of this paper, Gilliland-Swetland argues that examinations of archival education must take a more systemic approach and examine students, educational institutions, and employers. While this suggestion is important, the scope of the research would be enormous. As it is, our understanding of students' experiences in graduate programs and their entrance into the profession is incomplete and spotty. As a result, the ability of the profession to mentor these students, incorporate them into the community of scholars, and establish viable continuing education programs for them suffers.

<sup>7</sup> Among these studies are: Luciana Duranti, "The Archival Body of Knowledge: Archival Theory, Method, and Practice," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 34 (Winter 1993): 8–24; James M. O'Toole, "The Archival Curriculum: Where Are We Now?" *Archival Issues* 22, no. 2 (1997): 103–13; J. Michael Pemberton and Christine R. Nugent, "Information Studies: Emergent Field, Convergent Curriculum," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 36 (Spring 1995): 126–38; and Tyler O. Walters, "Rediscovering the Theoretical Base of Records Management and Its Implications for Graduate Education," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 36 (Spring 1995): 139–54.

<sup>8</sup> Cox, et al., "Archival Education in North American Library and Information Science Schools."

<sup>9</sup> Megan Sniffin-Marinoff, "Looking Back: Student Populations in Graduate Archival Education Programs, 1982–1992," unpublished paper originally presented at the Society of American Archivists annual meeting, Montreal, Canada, 1992. Paper in possession of the author.

<sup>10</sup> Salary surveys include the ARMA International, *1998 Salary and Compensation Survey*, (Prairie Village, Kan: ARMA International, October 1998) and the Society of American Archivists, *Society of American Archivists 1996 Salary Survey* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1996). An analysis by Richard Cox of entry-level job advertisements also yielded some salary information. Richard J. Cox, "Employing Records Professionals in the Information Age: A Research Study," *Information Management Journal* 34 (January 2000): 18–33.

<sup>11</sup> Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, "Trends in the Placement of Graduates of Archival Education Programs," paper presented at the Conference of Graduate Archival Educators and Researchers, San Diego, California August 27, 1996, revised and published as "Graduate Archival Education and the Professional Market: Perspectives on Data and Data Gathering," *Archival Issues* 23, no.2 (1998): 91–115.

## Methodology

To learn more about the graduates of archival education programs, a survey methodology was selected for several reasons. First, a broad-based survey involving multiple graduate-level archival education programs would provide a large and comprehensive set of baseline data from which future research could build. Second, a large number of cross-sectional responses would create a valid-size data set for descriptive purposes in order to create a profile. Finally, a larger number of responses might make it possible to detect current trends.

The survey instrument took advantage of the previous work of Gilliland-Swetland and Sniffin-Marino. Several questions from each of their questionnaires were replicated. This was done in order to compare results and measure changes over time. In addition, questions on salary, continuing education, and demographics were added. This resulted in a fairly lengthy five-page survey, although it was designed to be able to be filled out fairly quickly (except for a couple of questions, such as publication history, which were largely left unanswered). (See Appendix A for a copy of the survey form.) Once developed, a pilot survey was administered to several students at the University of Pittsburgh to test for problems and to help estimate the time needed to complete it. It was then revised and sent in the spring of 1998 to all University of Pittsburgh graduates in the archives track from 1988–1997. Responses were examined and the instrument was further refined prior to expanding the study to other graduate archival education programs. The revised survey was sent to graduates of other archival education programs between October 1998 and July 1999.

## Survey Administration

In expanding the survey, letters were sent to all archival educators in the Society of American Archivists' *Directory of Archival Education Programs*. An announcement was also posted on the Archival Education Roundtable listserv. Fourteen archival educators volunteered to participate, representing sixteen institutions.<sup>12</sup> Most schools sent us addresses, and we mailed the surveys directly to their graduates. Some institutions did not want to provide us with the names and addresses of former students to send the surveys to, despite assurances that they would be used for this purpose alone. In these cases, survey packets were created and sent to an educator who then sent the surveys to his or her students. In one case, the institution contacted students and asked them if they would agree to be surveyed. If they said yes, their addresses were forwarded to us, and we mailed surveys to them.

<sup>12</sup> This discrepancy in numbers was unintentional. Dominican University (formerly Rosary College), outside Chicago, has a dual Master's program with Loyola University and Patrick Quinn, an instructor at Dominican, also teaches at Northwestern.

## Population

Identifying the population to be surveyed was problematic. The question of who constitutes an archives student arose. For example, in the University of Pittsburgh survey, an archives student was defined as anyone who had taken three of the four archival courses offered— (1) Archives and Manuscripts Management, (2) Records and Information Resources Management, (3) Archival Appraisal, and (4) Arrangement, Description, and Reference. To identify this group, old class lists were examined and analyzed. Most of the other schools applied a similar definition to isolate a core group of archives students. However, this was not the case for all schools. In two cases, only graduates who were still in the profession were surveyed. In another case, archival students were identified as those who had completed theses on archival topics. Admittedly, this selection method raises questions about both the external validity of these data as well as the reliability, and as a profession with little research in this area, it is important for us to understand the potential problems in data collection. It is sincerely hoped that this study is replicated and that the data collection problems can be overcome. In the meantime, the collected data were used because each selection method represents the best means of identifying graduate students in archives at the various schools.

## Findings

### General Response Information

The total number of surveys distributed was 912. These elicited 392 responses, or a return rate of approximately 49%. The return rate ranged from 82% to 41% among the participating schools. This is in line with other mail surveys and provides a decent number from which to draw conclusions. Of the respondents, 258, or 65%, stated that they were currently working as archivists or that at least some archival functions were a part of their formal job responsibilities. Except when specifically stated, the findings reported here pertain to this sample of 258 individuals. Of those graduates who remain in the archival profession, 210 were from predominantly library and information science programs and 48 from predominantly history programs.

An examination of the survey responses by institution reveals some of the same response rates and variance among schools that was reported by David Wallace in his survey of archives and records management graduate students.<sup>13</sup> As in the Wallace survey, Simmons graduates comprised the highest percentage of responses with 19%. However, the rates of response are fairly well distributed so that one school does not dominate the results.

<sup>13</sup> David A. Wallace, "Survey of Archives and Records Management Graduate Students at Ten Universities in the United States and Canada," in this issue of the *American Archivist*.

**Table I** Response Rate by School

School	Number of Surveys Sent	Number of Surveys Returned	Percentage of Total Responses by School
Simmons College	207	73	19%
University of Maryland	150	44	11%
State University of New York - Albany	83	43	11%
University of Michigan	71	39	10%
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee	37	26	7%
University of Pittsburgh	49	28	7%
Auburn University	49	22	6%
Western Washington University	46	24	6%
Long Island University	59	21	5%
University of Texas - Austin	56	21	5%
University of Massachusetts - Boston	37	17	4%
Northwestern, Dominican, Loyola Universities	30	14	4%
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill	29	12	3%
University of Wisconsin - Madison	9	8	2%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100%</b>

### *Length of Time Since Graduation*

In order to assess archival experience of individuals in the survey sample, respondents were asked to indicate the year in which they graduated. From this information, the length of time in the profession can be derived. Among the archivists surveyed, the mean number of years since graduation was 6, the median was 4.5 years. History department graduates had more professional experience (mean of 9 years, median of 8 years) than library and information science graduates (mean of five 5 years and median of 4 years). Survey responses, though, ranged from 0 years to 33.

### *Age at Time of Graduation*

There seems to be an overall impression among educators that students are getting younger. The following data stand as a means of testing this assumption and establishing some baseline data on age at graduation. The survey does indicate that entry-level professionals are youthful; 45% of the sample was 30 or younger at the time of graduation. This trend is most pronounced in library and information science programs, where individuals 25 and under make up 20% of that group. In contrast, in history programs 56% of the respondents were 35 years old or more.

The youthful age of many graduates indicates that these individuals are selecting archives as a first career. This contrasts with their senior colleagues

who fell into archives in the 1960s and 1970s. While these recent graduates may not have entered master's programs straight from an undergraduate degree, and may have some work experience, this is usually not in a professional capacity. Analyses of individual schools may also reveal further insights into archival students. In comparing the University of Pittsburgh archives students to the entire population of its Department of Library and Information Sciences, several factors distinguish the archival students from their peers, including that a larger percentage of archival students (41%) begin the master's program before the age of 25, compared with 21% of the general MLIS population.

### *In-State versus Out-of-State Residency*

Many of the schools surveyed show some preferential treatment, i.e., lower tuition rates, to in-state students. Since many library schools draw a very substantial proportion of in-state students, examining whether this was also true for students in the archival track is important because of the impact it has on tuition revenues. For example if archival programs draw a larger percentage of out-of-state students, their potential for revenue generation in a department or school may be greater than a track with more students who are in-state. In the present survey, 71% of the archivists attended a graduate school in their home state. In history programs, 80% of the students were in-state, and in LIS programs 69% were in-state residents.

As in the Sniffin-Marinoﬀ survey of Simmons graduates, all programs draw students primarily (in some cases almost exclusively) from a "local," i.e. in-state, audience. Part of this can be attributed to lower tuition rates. However, it is important to note that achieving state residency varies greatly among surveyed archival programs. In Pennsylvania, becoming a resident is comparatively easy, as opposed to other states, such as Michigan, a reality that may contaminate this measure.<sup>14</sup>

The local draw of our programs should inform recruitment efforts. However, there might be individual differences in individual programs. For example, the University of Pittsburgh data indicates that the archives students, although primarily in-state students, are less likely to be drawn from Pennsylvania than regular LIS students.

### *Time to Complete Program*

The length of time needed to complete a graduate program can indicate many things, such as other work or family commitments, financial obligations

<sup>14</sup> Pennsylvania requires minimal documentation concerning residency while Michigan requires not only that one has been in the state for a given amount of time, but that one did not move to the state to attend a university. Applicants for in-state status are regularly asked to produce copies of job offers from employers, receipts or other proof of paychecks to prove continuous residency, and other sundry items.



both inside and outside the program, length of time of the program, and a thesis requirement. Time to completion is also a determinant in how soon students enter the job market as professional archivists. Overall, 54% of the archivists attended graduate school on a full-time basis and 38% part-time. This percentage compares favorably with the overall respondents in history-based programs, only 31% of the students were full-time, as opposed to 40% of the LIS students.

This difference is even more pronounced when the length of time it took to finish the degree is analyzed. Only 16% of the respondents finished the degree within 3 terms, 35% had finished in 4 terms, and 57% in 5 terms or less. However, 38% of master's students were enrolled for 6 terms or longer. These numbers specifically exclude Ph.D. students.

From the University of Pittsburgh data, some distinct differences between men and women emerged in the length of time needed to complete a graduate program. In the Pittsburgh data, women took significantly longer to complete the program than men did. In the larger study, there were no differences between the two sexes.

However, there were significant differences between history master's students and LIS students in this area; 65% of the history graduate students took over 2 years to complete the graduate program, whereas approximately 60% of the LIS students completed the master's degree in 5 terms or less. Table 2 indicates the length of time needed by participants in each type of program.

The length of time to complete a program can be viewed several different ways. It can be seen as an economic reality that forces many students to hold one or more jobs or as a means by which students gain valuable paraprofessional experience while pursuing a graduate degree. This issue requires more study.

There are several problems with this measure. First, the question asked pertained to full-time study. Full-time at Pittsburgh is 9 credits or 3 classes per semester. The master's degree is a 36-credit-hour course of study generally consisting of 12 classes. The degree can be done in one calendar year (e.g., 3 terms with 4 classes each term). In our survey, therefore, one could technically be a full-time student and yet not finish in one year.

Several factors may explain why it takes history graduates so much longer to finish. First, thesis requirements are more prevalent in history programs and can also slow people down. However, some individuals may obtain a professional position without finishing the thesis and then work on the thesis while on the job.

**Table 2** Length of Time to Finish Degree (Percentage of History and LIS)

	History	LIS
<b>3 Terms</b>	14%	17%
<b>4 Terms</b>	9%	22%
<b>5 Terms</b>	9%	25%
<b>6+ Terms</b>	64%	33%
<b>Number</b>	45	200



Another complicating factor may be that history programs do not offer the full array of courses offered during the summer term that most LIS programs do.

### *Feminization of the Profession*

Over the years, surveys have documented a trend towards more women entering the archival profession. Also, some of the major differences in areas such as salary and professional participation have been attributed to gender. A 1989 Society of American Archivists survey reported that the organization was 54.3% female.<sup>15</sup> This figure had remained relatively stable since surveys in 1982 and 1979 found the percentage of women to be 54.2% and 51.5%, respectively. The most recent SAA figures reporting on the gender distribution of its members are from the *Society of American Archivists 1996 Salary Survey*. The *Salary Survey* respondents were 69% female and 30% male.<sup>16</sup>

As noted above, the survey was administered in two ways: surveys were sent directly by the surveyor or schools administered the survey themselves. Of the 362 surveys administered by the author 132 were sent to men and 230 to women. In other words, this sample of survey recipients was 36% male and 64% female. Overall respondents to the current survey were 67% female and 33% male, and this percentage is closely aligned with the percentage of survey respondents currently working in archives (66% female and 33% male). In terms of graduate program affiliation, men outnumber women in history-based programs, while women outnumber men in LIS programs. However, women comprise 46% of history program participants, while men only comprise 28% of archival students in LIS programs.

One can surmise from these data that the profession has rapidly feminized in the 1990s and will become increasingly feminized in the future. These data confirm the *1996 Salary Survey* findings that demonstrated a marked feminization in the profession since the last major survey in 1989. The overall effects that this change in the make-up of the profession will have on salaries, the number of jobs, and job status should be monitored closely in the coming years.

**Table 3** Percentages of Male and Female Respondents in History and LIS-Based Archival Programs

Gender	History Departments		LIS Schools		Total Percent by Gender
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
<b>Male</b>	24	56%	55	28%	33%
<b>Female</b>	19	44%	144	72%	67%
<b>Totals</b>	43	100%	199	100%	100%

<sup>15</sup> Paul Conway, "Membership Survey Results," *Archival Outlook* (January 1992): 3.

<sup>16</sup> Society of American Archivists, *Society of American Archivists 1996 Salary Survey*, (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1996).

These data also provide another difference between archival students and the general LIS population. For example, at the University of Pittsburgh, the ratio of men to women is visibly different among archival students than in the general MLIS population. The male-to-female ratio is 45%–55% in the archives area. In the general MLIS population, men only make up 23% of the students.

### **Retention in the Profession**

Building a stronger and better-educated profession depends on the retention of graduates of archival education programs within the profession. Overall, the students surveyed had a 66% retention rate in the profession at the time of the survey. Among the individual programs, however, retention rates ranged from 35% to 84%. There were no differences between men and women in the retention rate.

Among survey respondents, the mean number of years in the profession was 6, the median was 5. However, history-based archivists had more experience. The average number of years since graduation for history-based graduates was 9 (median 8,  $n = 40$ ), as opposed to a mean of 5 years professional experience for LIS graduates (median 4,  $n = 190$ ).

In the survey comments, the most frequently cited reason for leaving the archival profession was a poor salary. Another was the lack of archival jobs in the geographic area in which the respondents were living. One of the questions asked attempted to get at retention and job satisfaction issues. This question asked why people selected the job they did, offering location, salary, work hours, and “other” as response options. This was one of two questions that received few responses. This is unfortunate because I have long suspected that some individuals took a specific job with a lower salary because they were geographically bound to a specific area.

An overall a retention rate of 66% seems satisfactory. However, the number of respondents commenting on the fact that the lack of compensation forced them to leave the archival profession should give us pause. Are we losing some of our best young archivists to related professions because of salary discrepancies? Should we view this as a spreading of archival concepts to other fields or as a loss of valuable talent needed to reinvent our profession in the twenty-first century?

### **Diversity in the Student Population**

The recent emphasis on diversity in the profession and the report of SAA’s Task Force on Diversity provided the impetus to profile minorities in graduate programs. In her 1995 presidential address, Brenda Banks cited the *Workforce*

2000 report, predicting that by the year 2000, 29% of new entrants to the workforce would be minorities.<sup>17</sup> In her article on African-Americans in SAA, Kathryn Neal reports that there has been little recruitment, and many individuals discovered the archival profession later in their academic careers or as they began other careers.<sup>18</sup> Among respondents to the present survey, 20 individuals identified themselves as minorities. This breaks down to 6 Hispanics, 7 Asians, and 7 African-Americans. This amounts to 5% overall, although the individual school totals varied greatly from 0% to 9%. If this appears to be an abysmal number, the numbers of these individuals who remained in the profession are worse, totaling 14 or 66%. Three Hispanics, 6 Asians, and 5 African-Americans reported that they still worked as archivists. This means that only 5% of the respondents in the profession are minorities.<sup>19</sup> This compares with the data from the *1996 SAA Salary Survey* to which 8% of the respondents represented various minority groups,<sup>20</sup> although it should not be surmised from these data that the numbers are decreasing. The overall number of minority respondents to both of these surveys is too small to draw any firm conclusions. Because the number of minorities within the profession is so small, other qualitative research methods would provide better data on retention as well as other issues of concern to these minority groups.

Despite their small size, however, these data still indicate that diversity continues to be an issue in the archival profession. Although the percentage of minorities remaining in the profession (66%) is equal to the percentage of Caucasians who remain, the fact is that few minority members are being recruited into the profession in the first place. These data suggest that retention is not the problem, per se, but that recruitment is where the greater emphases should lie. Admittedly, we are doing little recruiting overall for our programs. However, a massive effort is needed to literally change the face of the profession.

### **Second Master's Degrees**

Possession of a second master's degree or a Ph.D. degree can affect salary, mobility, and professional retention. Overall, as well as of those still in the archival profession, 26% of survey respondents had two advanced degrees. Among history graduates still in the profession, 16% possessed an M.L.S.; among L.I.S. graduates, 23% possessed a second master's degree, many of these being history subject master's degrees. Overall, 36% of the history graduates

<sup>17</sup> Brenda Banks, "SAA Beyond the Year 2000," *Archival Outlook* (November 1995): 3.

<sup>18</sup> Kathryn M. Neal, "The Importance of Being Diverse: The Archival Profession and Minority Recruitment," *Archival Issues* 21, no. 2 (1996): 145–58.

<sup>19</sup> David Bearman reported in the 1982 Survey that 2.8 of the respondents identified themselves as other than white. While this does represent a 100% increase in 18 years, it is still a poor record. David Bearman, "1982 Survey of the Archival Profession," *American Archivist* 46 (Spring 1983): 238..

<sup>20</sup> Society of American Archivists, 1996 Salary Survey, Exhibit II, 5.

possess a second advanced degree. Men are also more likely than women (32% to 23%) to possess a second advanced degree. These figures are significantly lower than those reported by Wallace, who found that 33% of the graduate students possessed a second master's degree.<sup>21</sup>

### *Employment of Graduates*

The survey asked graduates to identify the sector that best described their current employment situation. The results are presented in Table 4. These data confirm other research demonstrating the strength of the educational sector, particularly colleges and universities, as the primary place of employment for archival graduates.<sup>22</sup> Thirty-five percent of the LIS graduates and a quarter of the history graduate students secured employment in colleges and universities. There are some interesting differences, however, between the history and LIS graduates. Most saliently, the percentage of history graduates that enter the governmental sector is three times that of the percent of LIS graduates. At 46%, almost one in two history graduates entered the governmental sector. The governmental sector is a combined total of federal, state, local, and tribal governments.

Data for other sectors demonstrate some activity, but they are based on relatively low numbers, and firm conclusions cannot be drawn at this time. The low number of graduates working in the corporate sector, however, confirms Wallace's findings concerning the low number of individuals interested in entering this particular sector. These data also contradict Wallace's findings on employment preferences or should create some concern among graduate students desiring to enter the cultural heritage / fine arts area. Only 7% of the respondents to this survey gained employment in museums. This low percentage could be interpreted as reflecting a very weak employment sector for archivists.

### *Salaries*

Salary compensation was the most difficult aspect to analyze. Salary data figures were all converted to 1998 dollars in order to compare entry-level salaries over the years. However, the lowest salary that could be reported on the survey was "under 25,000," and this proved to be inadequate for capturing accurate salary figures prior to 1980. Therefore, respondents who indicated that they made under \$25,000 and accepted their first archives position before 1980 were dropped from this analysis. Working with the data was also difficult because the survey asked for

<sup>21</sup> Wallace, "Survey of Archives and Records Management Graduate Students."

<sup>22</sup> In the Society of American Archivists, *1996 Salary Survey* 33% of respondents were college and university archivists. (Exhibit II, 1). In "Employing Records Professionals in the Information Age," Cox also reports that one in two of the 1996–97 job advertisements for archivists were in the college and university environment (28). Given the preliminary results of the 1998 ARL survey of special collections reported by H. Thomas Hickerson in *Archival Outlook* (November–December 1999), it appears that colleges and universities will remain a strong sector for archival employment for the next few years.

**Table 4** Employing Institutions (by Sector)

Governmental	College & University	Corporate	Hospital	Non-Profit	Historical Society	Religious	Museum	Totals
57	85	27	3	22	17	16	16	243
23%	35%	11%	1%	9%	7%	7%	7%	Total Percent
21	12	3	1	2	1	1	3	History Total
37%	14%	11%	33%	9%	6%	6%	19%	History% of Total
46%	26%	7%	2%	4%	2%	2%	7%	History% of History Total
36	73	24	2	20	16	15	13	LIS Totals
15%	30%	10%	8%	8%	7%	6%	5%	LIS% of Total
17%	35%	11%	1%	10%	8%	7%	6%	LIS% of LIS Total

salary ranges, rather than exact salary figures (something I would suggest for future surveys). Therefore, I compensated for this problem by taking the mid-point of the salary ranges in order to rationalize the salaries. For the lower and upper ends of the scale, I took the figures \$20,000 and \$45,000 (\$5,000 below and above the salary cut-off point). Because there were a large number of respondents, but relatively few of them were in the upper and lower categories, this approach worked. But the method should be refined in future investigations..

Salary compensation for entry-level archival professionals is not good, but these data show some slight improvement over the past few years. Overall, annual salaries for the first professional position throughout the years, when converted to the 1998 figures, average \$33,068. David Bearman's findings in the 1982 survey indicated that the average salary for individuals with less than three years experience was \$17,029 (\$29,812 in 1998 dollars).<sup>23</sup> This demonstrates a slight gain in entry-level salaries over the years and challenges Cox's earlier findings of an actual decline in entry-level salaries between the 1970s and the 1990s.<sup>24</sup> Cox's figures align with both the *1996 SAA Salary Survey*, which reported a median salary of \$26,000 (\$27,235 in 1998 dollars) for the assistant archivist level (which was characterized as entry-level), and Gilliland-Swetland's 1995 Internet-based survey, which found an average entry-level salary of \$25,680 (\$27,572 in 1998 dollars). The current survey, however, found an average entry-level salary of \$33,068 for all respondents and \$32,769 for those who remained in the profession. These figures show some improvement over earlier reports. The discrepancy between the figures reported in this study and those of the 1996 SAA Salary Survey may be explained by the fact that the SAA survey cov-

<sup>23</sup> Bearman, "1982 Survey of the Archival Profession." Comparing the salary data from this survey of graduates with other salary surveys, particularly those in the past, is difficult. Bearman did not measure the starting salary of a first job, as done here. He measured archivists with less than three years of experience. The results of a 1989 membership survey are reported by Paul Conway, "Membership Survey Results," *SAA Newsletter* (January 1992): 3. Conway only reported the average salary of all respondents, which was \$31,967 (\$44,764 in 1998 dollars).

<sup>24</sup> Cox "Employing Records Professionals in the Information Age," 25.

**Table 5** Entry-Level Salaries

Category	Average Salary of First Job
All	\$33,068
In Profession	\$32,769
Left Profession	\$31,936
History Graduates In Profession	\$34,796
LIS Graduates In Profession	\$31,900
Men (All)	\$33,276
Women (All)	\$32,274

ered all entry-level archivists and the present survey concerns only graduates of archival education programs. There just may be an educational advantage emerging that is reflected in salaries. These entry-level salaries also fall within the range (albeit the lower end of the range) reported by Wallace of the salary expectations of archives and records management students. Wallace found that 53% of these students expected to earn between \$31,000 and \$40,000 after graduation.<sup>25</sup> Additional and longitudinal studies are needed to examine whether the trend toward higher salaries continues.

Overall, the average entry-level salary for graduates of history programs exceeds that of LIS program graduates. However, in an examination of those who graduated from both LIS and history programs since 1990 and who are still in the profession, starting salaries for LIS graduates average \$31,346 and those of history graduates average \$30,180. This may be the result of the dramatic strengthening of archival programs within LIS programs through the increase in courses and full-time faculty over the past decade.

Although there were a number of comments on the surveys indicating that the reason people left the profession was poor salaries, these findings indicate that the average starting salary of those who left the profession was only slightly different from those who remained in the profession. Comparative average salaries of survey respondents appear in Table 5.

The salary differences between history and LIS program graduates are also reflected in current salaries outlined in Table 6 below. Higher current salaries may be explained by the larger number of years that history-based archival graduates have been in the profession. The higher salaries of history graduates are particularly intriguing given that 50% of the history graduates enter governmental jobs on some level. Constance Schulz's examination of entry-level salaries in state archives found that the average entry-level salary in the mid-1980s was \$16,349 (\$23,718 in 1998 dollars).<sup>26</sup> In any case, this trend requires greater study and analysis as well as on-going data collection.

<sup>25</sup> Wallace, "Survey of Archives and Records Management Graduate Students."

<sup>26</sup> Constance B. Schulz, "Analysis of the Marketplace for Educated Archivists: State Archives as a Case Study," *American Archivist* 51 (Summer 1988): 324.

**Table 6** Current Salary Level by Program Affiliation

Annual Salary Level	History	LIS
Less than \$25,000 per Year	13%	17%
\$25,000–30,000	7%	24%
\$31,000–35,000	16%	17%
\$36,000–40,000	13%	20%
Over \$40,000 / Year	49%	20%
Percent Total	100%	100%
Total Number of Respondents	45	166

**Table 7** Current Salary Ranges by Sex

Salary Range	Men	Women
Less than \$25,000 / Year	14%	18%
\$25,000–30,000	10%	25%
\$31,000–35,000	15%	17%
\$36,000–40,000	20%	16%
Over \$40,000	37%	21%

Current salaries also diverge depending on the sex of archivists. Traditionally, SAA salary surveys have found distinct differences in compensation between men and women.<sup>27</sup> The *1996 SAA Salary Survey* reports that women make less at the associate, senior, supervisory, and managerial levels, but no data is reported at the assistant archivist level because of a low number of responses.<sup>28</sup> Table 7 presents salary ranges for men and women.

There may also be clear differences among programs. In an initial analysis of the University of Pittsburgh data, 75% of the women made under \$25,000, as opposed to 25% of the men.<sup>29</sup> In the entire data set, women appear to begin their archival careers receiving equitable salaries (or better) to their male peers. Interestingly female graduates of history programs outperform their male peers in entry-level salaries (\$34,607 to \$34,001). In LIS programs, this situation is reversed. On average, men receive \$32,954 as an entry-level salary, while women receive only \$31,341. This may be explained by the fact that men are more likely to have attained a second master's degree.

<sup>27</sup> Bearman, "1982 Survey," 238.

<sup>28</sup> Society of American Archivists, *1996 Salary Survey*, 11, 19, 35, 43.

<sup>29</sup> Individual schools may find the salary data interesting. For example, the University of Wisconsin—Madison notes in a report on placement of its 1997 graduates, that "The median salary for females was: \$29,400. The median salary for males: \$29,007. The overall average salary was: \$29,225, a 5% increase over the average salary in 1996, which was \$27,991." accessed 11/30/00 at: <<http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/slis/beyond/report.html>>. This survey found a slightly higher average salary for those Wisconsin graduates employed as archivists, at \$30,055.



However, the gender differential in salaries appears to merge over time. Still, as reported in the *1996 SAA Salary Survey* the lower number of women in the highest salary categories may be due to the fact that women are underrepresented in the higher job categories.<sup>30</sup>

### **Professional Memberships**

Professional membership demonstrates allegiance and interest in the broader profession. Among the survey respondents, the Society of American Archivists is the most prevalent professional membership. This is followed by a couple of the regional archival organizations (particularly the Midwest Archives Conference and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference), and then by the American Library Association. Graduates also have memberships in a number of specialized archival-related organizations ranging from the Association of Moving Image Archivists to the Oral History Association.

The high percentage of SAA members is encouraging. This demonstrates interest in and support of the larger profession. The number of graduates of archival education programs who are SAA members could also be a higher percentage than that of other groups of archivists. The high number of SAA members is in stark contrast to ARMA members. Few of the graduates appear to be ARMA members, and in fact ten times more graduates claimed ALA membership. This seems problematic and requires more study. Is this solely a cost issue, a reflection of the fact that few of our graduates are strictly records managers, or does it reflect programmatic benefits of ALA or the institutional affiliations of graduates? SAA should think about how to harness this increasingly large constituency and its energy.

### **Conclusions**

#### **Recordkeeping and Independence**

The concluding section of an article generally focuses on findings; however, several methodological factors deserve commentary at this point. Surveys like this are difficult to conduct because it is hard to define who is an “archives student.” Even once that task has been accomplished, it is difficult to locate addresses for those individuals. What this indicates is that archival educators have to be administrators as well, unlike our colleagues in library, information science, or history departments. This is made more difficult by the fact that in most LIS schools, for example, the recordkeeping systems are not designed to keep track of archives students (nor those in other specializations). Part of the

<sup>30</sup> Society of American Archivists, *1996 Salary Survey*, 35, 43.

tracking problem comes from what I will call a “specialization mentality” in schools of library and information science. Specializations are loosely formed and often incoherent groups of courses that cluster around some topic (e.g., information systems and technology, school media, academic libraries, etc.). Those faculty concerned with a particular area frequently create separate recordkeeping systems to monitor their students’ progress. When a faculty member leaves, that individually maintained recordkeeping system is not always passed along to the next person. As long as recordkeeping systems are tied to individuals and not institutions, this will be a problem and a factor that undermines archival education. As archivists, we must ask ourselves this question: when we cannot keep track of our own graduates, how can we adequately educate, socialize, and mentor the next generation of archivists?

As noted at the beginning of this article, the survey was long. These are selected findings on variables that have traditionally been the focus of previous surveys of the archival profession. Many conclusions as well as interpretations can be drawn from these data. Several of the methodological problems have been pointed out in order to help future survey researchers and current readers to assess these data. The present and traditional means of comparing and contrasting parts of the profession (male/female; history/LIS) may also not be the most appropriate for the future. Particularly in this survey, the number of LIS versus history-based archival graduates was unbalanced and the overall number of history-based graduates too small from which to draw firm conclusions.

The overall approach taken was not to compare individual programs, although I did point to some areas where one individual school deviated from the norm. There are definitely more of these “local” factors that need to be explored and that individual schools should be aware of in order to recruit and better educate their own students.

The face of the archival profession is also changing. First, these data add evidence that the profession has feminized, and the trend indicates that it will continue to do so. Second, although diversity is low, it is an important issue; recruitment in this area requires greater attention. Third, the young professionals surveyed are entering archives as a first career and in a very purposeful manner. Finally, professional affiliation with SAA is high, indicating that younger archivists are looking towards their national organization to fulfill their professional needs.

Graduates of archival education programs represent the future of the profession. Their insights, attitudes, skills, and knowledge must sustain the profession in the twenty-first century. Graduate programs are only a first step for many; however, our programs appear to be a stable base on which most are building careers and becoming members of the larger profession.



14. How long did it take from beginning your job search to being offered the position you finally accepted?  
1–3 months    4–6 months    7–9 months    10–12 months  
13+ months
15. What was your starting salary (in US dollars) for your first professional position?  
Below \$25,000/year    \$25,000–30,000    \$31,000–35,000  
\$36,000–40,000    Over \$40,000/year
16. Was your first position (circle all that apply):  
Permanent    Temporary    Grant-funded    Volunteer  
Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
17. Was your first position:    Full-time    Part-time
18. Was the first position you took the kind of job you wanted?  
Yes    No
19. If no, did you take it for other reasons such as (circle all that apply):  
Location    Salary    Work hours    Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
20. How many archival positions have you had since graduation?
21. What is your most current salary?  
Below \$25,000/year    \$25,000–30,000    \$31,000–35,000  
\$36,000–40,000    Over \$40,000/year
22. Which setting best describes the type of institution in which you work?  
Federal Government    State Government  
Local Government    Historical Society  
College or University    Religious Organization  
For-profit Corporation    Non-profit Organization  
Hospital    Museum  
Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
23. Do you supervise other professionals, paraprofessionals, or students?  
Yes    No
24. Do you have non-supervisory administrative responsibilities in such areas as planning, financial management, or policy development?  
Yes    No

**If not employed?**

25. If you are not currently employed, is this by choice?  
Yes    No
26. If no, how long have you been searching for an archival position?  
1–3 months    4–6 months    7–9 months    10–12 months  
13+ months

**C. Continuing Education**

27. Have you sought out continuing education since graduation?  
 Yes No
28. Do you find continuing education opportunities sufficient?  
 Yes No
29. In what areas do you search for continuing education offerings?  
 Administration/Management Oral History  
 Arrangement/Description/  
 Descriptive Standards Appraisal  
 Electronic Records Reference/Access  
 Preservation/Conservation Public Programs/Advocacy  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Professional Activities**

30. To which professional organizations do you belong? (Circle all that apply)  
 SAA MAC MARAC ARMA NEA SSA  
 ICA ALA ASIS ACA(Canada) Others:
31. Do you or have you held any committee assignments in any of these organizations? (Circle all that apply)  
 SAA MAC MARAC ARMA NEA SSA  
 ICA ALA ASIS ACA (Canada) Others:
32. Have you been elected to any governing positions in any of these organizations? (Circle all that apply)  
 SAA MAC MARAC ARMA NEA SSA  
 ICA ALA ASIS ACA (Canada) Others:
33. Have you published any articles in the professional literature?  
 Yes No
34. If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please provide the citations to these articles (use another sheet if necessary):
35. Have you become a certified archivist? Yes No
36. Are you planning to become a certified archivist? Yes No
37. Have you become a certified records manager? Yes No
38. Are you planning to become a certified records manager?  
 Yes No

**E. Demographic Information**

39. Age at graduation:  
 1-25 26-30 31-35 35-40 41+
40. Sex: Male Female

