

“Though This Be Madness, yet There Is Method in ’t”: Assessing the Value of Faculty Papers and Defining a Collecting Policy

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Abstract

This article describes a project undertaken in Manuscripts and Archives in the Yale University Library to develop a rational approach for the selection and appraisal of collections of faculty papers. The project developed a policy for identifying collections to actively pursue and for evaluating collections offered. To develop the policy, the authors adapted the Minnesota Method, an appraisal methodology developed by the Minnesota Historical Society to appraise business records. The article serves as a case study of the application of the Minnesota Method to a collecting repository within an academic setting.

It is Monday morning and you arrive at work with your phone already ringing. The son of an eminent and recently deceased economics professor at your university is in town dealing with his father’s effects. He wants to donate his father’s papers to your repository, where the papers of many of the father’s peers and predecessors reside. Never having heard of the man or his work, you search the biographical resources available to you and find out that he was a leading figure in the field of American and western European labor economics, who wrote and edited several books and many articles while teaching in the economics department for over twenty-five years. You get many donation offers like this every year, and you have a sizable backlog filled with similar collections. After viewing the collection, which includes standard research files, correspondence, writings, and personal materials, you are torn, but you decide to bring it into your department, where it becomes part of your already unmanageable backlog. The acquisition nags at you, because you realize you made the decision without a defensible rationale for either accepting or declining the donation.

In order to avoid the kind of situation described in the preceding scenario, archival repositories in institutions of higher education need to develop a more rational approach to the collecting of faculty papers. This article reports on a project undertaken in Manuscripts and Archives in the Yale University Library whose goal was to develop a policy for identifying collections of faculty papers to actively pursue and for evaluating collections offered to the repository. An appraisal methodology that was developed by the Minnesota Historical Society to appraise business records was adapted to address the problems of selecting faculty papers for a university manuscripts repository.

The Setting

Manuscripts and Archives in the Yale University Library is a repository comprised of both university records and non-university related manuscript and archival collections. Since its formal establishment in 1933, the repository has collected the personal papers of faculty members of the university, one of several groups from which the department solicits materials. Even though they often contain documents related to the life of the university, faculty papers are treated as collections of personal papers, rather than as record groups belonging to the university archives, and their donation is governed by the repository's standard deed of gift for manuscript collections. As of 1997, Manuscripts and Archives had acquired 225 collections of faculty papers totaling approximately 3,500 linear feet. In that year, the authors were assigned responsibility for analyzing the backlog of unprocessed manuscript collections in the repository and for making recommendations for ways to reduce its size. Our analysis showed a substantial number of faculty collections in the backlog and led us to closely examine the repository's practice of collecting them.

Collecting faculty papers helps carry out our mission to support "the selection, preservation, and use of materials documenting selected areas of research and teaching interest for the Yale community," and to foster "documentation, study, and appreciation of the history and activities of Yale University." It quickly became apparent to us, however, that there had been no real governing principles behind what collections of faculty papers had been accepted or sought after in the past, or what materials in them were considered valuable. Most of the collecting had been reactive, and the repository accepted almost everything that was offered. Nevertheless, we suspected that some valuable collections were not being acquired.

We knew from our extensive reference experience that faculty collections were often a "mixed bag" in terms of usefulness to researchers. Sometimes they were helpful in documenting the history of a given discipline or movement in which a faculty member was involved or some aspect of the history of Yale University. Other times, we had seen researchers disappointed in what they did

and did not find. Clearly we needed to determine how we could maximize the research usefulness of the collections we accepted.

The investigation asked, therefore, two questions: From whom should faculty papers be collected? and, What kinds of materials should be accepted? By answering these questions, we sought to articulate a focused collection development policy for faculty papers. The need for such a policy was obvious; there are 3,300 faculty members in Yale College, in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and in the schools of medicine, law, divinity, art, architecture, epidemiology and public health, forestry and environmental studies, nursing, music, drama, and management. We needed to refine selection criteria so that we would neither accept every faculty collection offered to us nor solicit only from those who won a Nobel Prize. Additionally, by determining what materials to collect, we could set appraisal standards for work in the field and for the processing of faculty collections in the backlog.

The Process

As the first step toward answering the focal questions of the investigation, we reviewed the available literature. Two articles, a generation apart, reinforced the importance of collecting faculty papers. A 1971 Maynard Brichford article concludes that the personal papers of faculty are vital sources in documenting both the life of the university and the intellectual and cultural currents driven by scholars. Brichford advocates increased documentation of faculty in general because they “have been largely responsible for the creation and development of scholarly disciplines” and “have a great deal of knowledge about subject areas and an obligation to impart that knowledge to others.”¹ Writing from a university archives perspective two decades later, Frances Fournier argues for the importance of faculty papers as sources for documenting the history of educational institutions.² Helen Samuels, too, in *Varsity Letters*, maintains that certain materials found in faculty papers are essential to documenting the functions of colleges and universities, including conveying knowledge, conducting research, and providing public service.³ She provides guidance on what to collect if we were to concentrate primarily on using faculty papers to document the life and history of Yale University. These writings confirmed our belief that it is important to collect faculty papers.

¹Maynard Brichford, “University Archives: Relationships with Faculty,” in *College and University Archives: Selected Readings* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1979), 33. Originally printed in the *American Archivist* 34 (April 1971): 173–81.

²Frances Fournier, “‘For They Would Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach’: University Faculty and Their Papers: A Challenge for Archivists,” *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992): 58–74.

³Helen Willa Samuels, *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (Metuchen, N.J., and London: The Society of American Archivists and The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1992).

Several articles addressed the thornier issue of selection of faculty papers, with varying utility. In a 1971 report in the *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Harley Holden explains the Harvard University Archives policy to solicit all tenured faculty members for both their professional and personal papers.⁴ We did not seriously consider this approach; in addition to staff and fiscal constraints making it unrealistic, the papers of every tenured professor do not warrant long-term retention. Frederick Honhart provides a more careful consideration of selection, stating three main criteria: scholarly reputation, record of service to the college or university, and role in the community.⁵ Honhart's approach is well reasoned and articulated. It once again reinforced what we knew from our own experience, but it was still not selective enough. If it were employed without refinement, Manuscripts and Archives would still be faced with an overwhelming amount of materials to acquire, preserve, and make available for research.

While none of the readings that specifically address faculty papers proved to be very helpful, an article from the seemingly unrelated field of business archives provided an excellent lens through which to view our project. The "Minnesota Method" was developed by Mark Greene, Todd Daniels-Howell, and other staff members at the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) to articulate a systematic strategy for collecting business records in the state of Minnesota.⁶ In 1997 we read a prepublication version of the essay, which explained the problems faced by the MHS and laid out the Minnesota Method. Within its mandate to document business in Minnesota, the MHS faced issues similar to our faculty papers situation. Simply put, the MHS's potential acquisitions far exceeded their ability to appraise, accession, and process; and, the types of business collections that had historically been taken in often included materials that turned out to lack substance. Moreover, the records of Minnesota business comprised only one of several broad collecting areas for which the society is responsible.

Outside of the analogous relationship between faculty papers and business records, we found the Minnesota Method attractive because it is based on a pragmatic and proactive philosophy. The pragmatism of William James and his peers takes for granted that there are great unknowns, the truths of which we will only ever partly know. It advocates using the parts of knowledge we do possess, however, as a basis for reasoned action. In archival terms, particularly for collecting institutions, this means that although we may never anticipate the most important

⁴Harley P. Holden, "The Collecting of Faculty Papers," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 19 (April 1971): 187–93. Frederick Honhart (see citation below) reported that this policy was still in effect in 1983, but it is unknown whether Harvard still adheres to these guidelines.

⁵Frederick Honhart, "The Solicitation, Appraisal, and Acquisition of Faculty Papers," *College and Research Libraries* 44 (3) (May 1983): 236–41.

⁶Mark A. Greene and Todd J. Daniels-Howell, "Documentation with an Attitude: A Pragmatist's Guide to the Selection and Acquisition of Modern Business Records," in *The Records of American Business*, ed. James M. O'Toole (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1997), 161–229.

records from our present and recent past, we must rely on our own good judgment and decision-making abilities to guide proactive collection development.

The Minnesota Method fuses different aspects of several contemporary appraisal methodologies—including collection policy, documentation strategy, macro-appraisal, functional analysis, and the “black box”—into what the authors refer to alternately as a “quilt,” or “Frankenstein’s monster,” depending on how much mind they pay to their potential critics.⁷ The sophisticated blend of appraisal theories and techniques intrigued us, and we decided to attempt to apply the method to the collection of faculty papers.

The method delineates a six-step process for collecting certain types of records: 1) define and analyze a particular collecting area, and survey relevant holdings; 2) determine the documentary universe; 3) define criteria for prioritization, and use the criteria to prioritize sectors, records creators, geographic regions, and/or chronological periods into a range of tiers; 4) define functions most appropriate to collecting area and levels of documentation that relate to those functions; 5) refine prioritization by connecting documentary levels to priority tiers and testing the model by applying it to actual appraisal situations; and 6) update. In short, the method allows archivists to prioritize records creators and to determine different levels of appropriate documentation that correspond to the priorities. (See Figure 1.)

The Minnesota designers point out, that “only the structural outline or skeleton of the method is meant to be transferable from one repository to another; every repository setting will flesh out the content and practice of the method to suit its peculiar needs.”⁸ That proved to be very true for us, and our path diverged from the one pioneered by the MHS. We found that some of the six steps did not provide us with the same clarity of answers that they did for the Minnesota group. Nonetheless, by proceeding through each step we examined a number of issues and answered a number of questions, all of which helped us arrive at our own policy for collecting faculty papers. The six steps of the Minnesota Method are designed to be followed sequentially, but we did not do so. Several of the steps overlapped with each other, and it was not until we had completed the information gathering in the first four steps that we were able to use that information to draw conclusions.

In step one, “define, analyze, and survey,” we spent a good deal of time discussing our collecting area. At first glance it was simple: faculty members at Yale University. Our discussions, however, raised the question of whether we wanted to document the careers of prominent faculty members at Yale, and what we meant by “prominent,” or to follow the functional approach, such as that advo-

⁷ Greene and Daniels-Howell, “Documentation with an Attitude,” 167–70.

⁸ Greene and Daniels-Howell, “Documentation with an Attitude,” 203.

- I. **Define, Analyze, and Survey** (from Collection Policy)
 - A. Define collecting area: geographic, chronological, type of business etc.
 - B. Analyze collection
 - C. Survey other relevant repository holdings and collection goals
- II. **Determine Documentary Universe and Consultation** (from Documentation Strategy)
 - A. Research documentary universe
 - B. Survey relevant government records, printed and other documentary sources
 - C. Consult with selected subject experts, researchers, creators, or business archivists
- III. **Prioritize** (from Macroappraisal)
 - A. Define criteria for prioritization
 - B. Prioritize industrial sectors, individual businesses, geographic regions, and/or chronological periods into five tiers
- IV. **Define Functions and Documentary Levels** (from Functional Analysis)
 - A. Define functions and Information most appropriate to particular collecting area
 - B. Define documentary levels relating to these functions
- V. **Refine Prioritization Test** (from “the Black Box”)
 - A. Refine Prioritization within tiers
 - B. Connect documentary levels to priority tiers—what will be the practical, operational differences in approach to top priority companies versus second priority, etc.
 - C. Test the model by applying it to real companies, either those already accessioned or realistic possibilities
- VI. **Updating**—Collection analysis, research, and consultation should be updated every three-seven years

FIGURE 1. An Outline of the Minnesota Method. (From *The Records of American Business*, 172.)

cated by Helen Samuels, and document the functions in which individual faculty members were prominent, especially teaching, research, and service. We ended up with a policy that does a little of both, but only after lengthy, and sometimes complicated (and confusing), discussions.

Since we needed a better understanding of what faculty papers had been collected in the past in Manuscripts and Archives, we did as the Minnesota authors advised and surveyed our extant holdings and compiled the information in a database. We used RLIN records for the information and found, as noted above, that we had roughly 225 faculty collections totaling approximately 3,500 linear feet. We also ran analyses that showed that among academic divisions most of our collections came from the humanities, followed by the professional schools.⁹ Among specific departments and schools, the history depart-

⁹ There are four academic divisions at Yale University: Biological Sciences, Humanities, Physical Sciences and Engineering, and Social Sciences. For the purposes of our analysis, we created a fifth category for professional schools.

ment and the medical school were most heavily represented. The analysis also revealed that the research function was most frequently documented, followed by teaching, and that among record types, correspondence appeared most often. We were hesitant to draw firm conclusions because we did not know enough about past collecting efforts in the department and about twentieth-century Yale history to confirm them. If the policy we finally arrived at had been put into effect in earlier years, our database would have looked much different.

Step two—determine documentary universe and consult with users, creators, and experts—turned out to be the most important step for us, although it was not until we completed most of the rest of the steps that its importance became so clear. Our documentary universe includes a university archives that documents the functions of teaching, research, and service. We needed to determine if faculty papers should primarily be collected to document these areas over and above what is found in official university records. Our documentary universe also includes the manuscript half of the repository, in which there are areas of collecting strength that we wished to continue to develop (e.g., social commentary, public policy, contemporary medical care and health policy, etc.). Should we prioritize faculty collecting based on how such collections strengthened our manuscript holdings? Finally, we had to consider that the ten million volumes in the Yale University Library were going to include the vast majority of published works that result from research. If we wanted to prioritize based on the quality of research conducted by faculty members, the question became one of determining if published works were an adequate way to document research, or, as others have argued, that unpublished material must also contribute to understanding the research process.¹⁰

As part of step two, we began to consult with professors, administrators, librarians, and other archivists. We discussed what records were created by faculty members; how and whether they varied by discipline and academic sector; what the consultants thought would be useful to researchers and why; and what they thought about how we might prioritize our collecting efforts. The discussions provided information that helped us in steps three and four as well.

The Minnesota authors explain at the beginning of their discussion of step three that “appraising and setting priorities among records creators is the single most important—and probably single most difficult—step in the process.”¹¹ Never were truer words written, especially for our project. At the outset, we devoted a good deal of time to wondering whether we should prioritize the university-related functions in which faculty members were engaged. If, for example, we wanted to document research first and foremost, we would need

¹⁰ Samuels, for instance, while admitting the difficulty of documenting the research function, notes that research notes, correspondence, grant proposals, and project journals found in faculty papers can help. Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 121.

¹¹ Greene and Daniels-Howell, “Documentation with an Attitude,” 179.

to move one step beyond Frederick Honhart's approach and develop criteria for determining who the great researchers were at Yale University and approach them for their papers. If a faculty member contacted us, we would first see if he/she fit the criteria we had established.¹² We wondered if instead we should prioritize by academic sector. Yale has traditionally been strongest in the humanities; documenting the work of faculty members from that sector, therefore, might take precedence over documenting the work of faculty in the physical sciences. We considered prioritizing by department and professional school. There are over seventy-five such units; in terms of collecting faculty papers, we wondered if there were ones that should be ranked higher than others, and if so, for what reasons.

What we did not have for any of these methods was a way in which to actually prioritize the functions, sectors, or units within them. Daniels-Howell and Greene used economic impact, extant documentation, and uniqueness to Minnesota to prioritize their business sectors, and these gave them an important way to make their first, and sharp, appraisal cut. In our situation, however, each of the three functions on which we focused had merit. Prioritizing by the small number of academic divisions seemed too draconian, while prioritizing by the large number of departments too unruly. Although we tried, we were never able to determine any objective decision points for prioritizing the solicitation of individual faculty members. We ended up looking elsewhere for assistance. We turned to those academics and librarians with whom we first began consulting in step two, to see what they thought about how to select faculty members.

Throughout our conversations with our consultants, the implicit or stated conviction on their part was that quality of research was the single most important factor by which to judge a Yale faculty member and hence his/her importance as a donor of papers. They advised that we talk to chairpersons of departments, deans of professional schools, and members of the four division advisory committees to learn the names of prominent researchers. They found it difficult to articulate criteria that we could use to judge faculty members ourselves; they felt the quality of research had to be judged by academic peers. As a complicating factor, we also learned that due to Yale's demanding tenure process, every person who is granted tenure is considered by his peers to be a "great" researcher.

As for teaching and service, the consultants themselves placed little value on judging the importance of faculty members by their teaching abilities, but did advise relying upon students to be judges of good teaching and thought we might use student evaluations or several of the awards given by students to faculty members to determine whom to approach. They also advised relying upon

¹² Criteria could be based on awards or distinctions received, or membership in select societies and organizations.

the provost to help determine those who excelled at service to Yale and to the various local, national, and international communities.

We did not reach any conclusions about prioritizing records creators as part of step three. We still were not clear whether we were prioritizing records creators or some other element, such as the functions in which they engaged. The boundary line between steps three and four, therefore, was fuzzy for us, and the discussions we had with our consultants often overlapped the two.

In step four we were supposed to define functions and documentary levels. We knew our functions were teaching, research, and service to the university, and to the local, national, and international communities. Before we could define levels of documentation, however, we had to define what materials in faculty papers documented those functions, and our consultants had some thoughts. Regarding teaching, they generally agreed that there is little of value in lecture notes, since they are mostly surveys and summaries of information from secondary sources. In terms of research, most of the academics believed that the research process—that is, how one defines a question to answer and then goes about answering it—ends up in the published record, and that research files containing materials such as printed works, handwritten notes, raw data, and photocopies from archives are not valuable. The exception was raw data, mostly generated by research in the physical, biological, and social sciences, that can be placed in some kind of data archives. Several felt that dialog about the intellectual process can be found in correspondence, whereas others agreed with Helen Samuels that scholarly discourse mostly takes place over the phone or through e-mail,¹³ and, when the opportunity exists, in person. Regarding service to Yale, all agreed that we should primarily be looking for committee files, but more than one consultant said that the significant work of most committees goes unrecorded.

Step five, in which we should have refined prioritization and tested the model, was actually the “let’s try to put it all together” step for us. We had gathered a great deal of information by going through the various steps, but we needed to arrive at some decisions about what it all meant. We started reviewing from the beginning. Step one primarily confirmed for us that we needed to have some kind of collecting policy for faculty papers. Such papers helped us to carry out our mission, and we had collected them in the past. We were continually being offered new collections, and we intuitively knew there were probably faculty members we should be contacting. As noted earlier, a review of step two provided a light that guided us to the end of the tunnel. We realized that our two most important documentary universes, the university archives *and* the manuscript side of the repository, each required a collecting policy for faculty papers, and they were not necessarily identical to one another. We had primarily been

¹³ Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 123.

involved with the manuscript side of the repository, and there was a university archives staff working on a records policy for the university. We concluded, therefore, that our policy statement should focus on which faculty papers should be collected for their value as manuscript collections. The policy incorporated much of what we learned from going through steps three and four, and was reviewed, discussed, and approved by the rest of the staff of the department, including the university archives team. We are still in the middle of step five because we have just begun to test the policy. During the next three to five years, we will be able to assess its efficacy and will refine and update it (step six) as necessary.

The Minnesota Method, applied to the businesses of Minnesota, developed a series of flow charts that define an appropriate documentation level for prospective donors. The flow charts can be overwhelming and complicated to follow, although the authors would rightly defend the process, citing the sheer number of prospective donors conducting business in the state of Minnesota. Given our smaller situation, we did not create a set of flow charts. Instead, we ended up with a fairly simple policy that prioritizes only by function and defines the level of documentation each function requires. Like the Minnesota Method flow charts, however, our policy works quite well.

The Policy

The underlying assumption governing the policy we developed is that faculty papers are the personal papers of people who happen to be faculty members at Yale. These people can be of potential interest to us for several reasons, sometimes Yale-related, sometimes not: 1) they can influence or have an impact on the world outside of Yale and academia; 2) they can engage in path-breaking /extraordinary research; 3) they can be excellent teachers; or 4) they can have important university records. Because of our underlying assumption, we determined that we should proactively document only those faculty members who have an impact on the world outside academia and whose area of impact falls into one of the departmental, manuscript priority collecting areas (e.g., social commentary, public policy, contemporary health care and medical policy, etc.). We would collect those personal papers—probably correspondence and unpublished writings—that document their impact. We also determined, when applicable, to solicit faculty members who established new fields of study that had been replicated around the country and thereby had a pronounced impact on academia itself. We would consult with the faculty member to determine and preserve those materials that documented the process by which the field was established.

We determined that the best way to document research is through the published word found in the library's holdings. If the impact of faculty members we contact is due to research they conducted, we would consider taking research-related materials only if someone were to make a very compelling case

about their historical worth. Word might reach us about a faculty member who is doing some kind of pioneering research that is beyond the normal standard of research done at Yale. If the quality of an individual's research was so extraordinary, we would explore with him/her what unpublished documentation of it existed that would be valuable to scholars, and whether it included raw data that was not going to be preserved in a data archives. We would then determine what to preserve in Manuscripts and Archives. We know, too, that certain kinds of documentation generated during the research process, such as field notes and oral interviews, can be very useful to patrons. These would need to be carefully evaluated to determine whether they should be accessioned. In the past we preserved what are commonly referred to as "research files." These are generally collected materials related to fields of interest to the faculty member. With few exceptions, we will no longer take such files.

We realized that prioritizing based on impact on the larger world would also lead us to faculty members who might be defined as "important teachers." In academia, one of the most important criteria used to judge how a faculty member has influenced his/her field is the number and prominence of the graduate students they have trained and placed in institutions of higher education. We would determine whether the faculty member has met this criterion. We named this our "C. Vann Woodward test." Woodward, noted historian of the American South, met both of our criteria for collecting faculty papers. His research, writing, and activism had a profound impact on the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, and, it has been argued, the new directions in which he took the field of Southern history helped lead to the creation of the field of African-American studies. Many of Woodward's graduate students are considered the luminaries of the field of Southern history. They occupy prestigious places at prominent universities around the country and are setting the current research agenda for the field of Southern history. If the impact of faculty members were similar to Woodward's, we would collect whatever documentation there is of their influence. In the case of Woodward, this documentation is found in his correspondence files. We believe that the same would probably be the case with other faculty members.

By focusing on the C. Vann Woodward test, our definition of what makes a faculty member important from a teaching standpoint does not directly include what he or she does in the classroom. We concluded that the criteria for determining how to document "teaching" per se needed to be set by university archives representatives. They needed to define how they wanted to document teaching at Yale, whether through collecting the *Great Teachers* video series, videotaping award-winning professors in the classroom, collecting syllabi and reading lists (on paper or in electronic form), or preserving whatever student evaluation forms are collected by units around the university. If certain kinds of documentation university archives representatives want to preserve are found only in faculty papers, they could develop their own list of faculty mem-

bers to contact. There will be times when we review and appraise the papers of faculty members and find syllabi, reading lists, lectures, or lecture outlines that are of interest to the university archives. Even though these materials fall outside the collecting scope we set for the manuscript half of the repository, we could accept and turn them over to university archives representatives.¹⁴

We also argued that, by definition, documentation of the daily/monthly/yearly work of departments, schools, committees, and task forces, which is sometimes found in faculty papers, belongs in the university archives. As with teaching materials, university archives representatives could generate their own list of faculty members to contact for such material, and we now alert university archives representatives to the existence of such material when we come across it.

Our policy acknowledges that a vita and photograph should be acquired for all faculty members, but especially for those who are tenured. We knew from experience that researchers frequently ask for these items and that requesting a vita and photograph often helps allay the disappointment of potential donors whose papers we decline. The university archives has an ongoing initiative to acquire such documentation, and we coordinate with them as necessary.

We are currently using and testing our policy in several ways. We use it to select those faculty members to contact and proactively pursue. For example, we recently read an obituary of a professor emerita in the English department. She was a scholar of Middle English, medieval Arabic language and literature, and Herman Melville, and had been associated with Yale as a faculty member and administrator for more than thirty-five years. She had also been an active member of the Zionist movement in the 1930s and an important figure in the founding of the state of Israel. One of our subject strengths is international relations and diplomacy, and we have a large and significant collection of materials from the 1930s and 1940s related to the establishment of an independent Jewish homeland. We contacted the professor's family and explained that we were interested in documenting her contributions to the Zionist movement and establishment of the state of Israel. The family responded positively, and we will eventually review her papers. In addition to Zionist materials, a member of the university archives team will review whatever exists in the way of documentation on Yale University. We will not take any materials related to her research.

When collection development staff discuss how to be proactive, we often choose to solicit Yale faculty members whose papers fall into collecting areas we emphasize. We have, for example, worked with Dr. David Kessler, dean of the Yale Medical School and former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, who led the FDA battle against the tobacco industry. His papers

¹⁴ Subsequently we met with the department head and the archives team to discuss how best to document teaching, both through official university records and through faculty papers. What emerged from the discussion were procedures for accessioning materials such as course catalogs, curriculum committee minutes, syllabi, lecture notes (the archives team believed they merited retention), reading lists, student evaluations, and videotaped lecture series.

complement our extensive holdings in the field of contemporary medical care and health policy. We have also contacted Strobe Talbott, the first director of the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization, deputy secretary of state in the Clinton administration, and former *Time* magazine editor-at-large and foreign affairs correspondent. Talbott's gift of papers will enhance our strong collections in the areas of international relations and public policy.

We have also put the policy to work in reactive collection development. When the wife of a deceased professor of psychiatry contacted us about his papers, we reviewed his career and determined that his influence did not extend outside his academic domain. We explained to her that his research and professional contributions were adequately captured in the published record. Because he had been at the university for almost four decades and had served on a number of committees, however, we asked her if we could review his papers on behalf of the university archives and select materials that documented Yale University history. She was receptive and allowed us to do so.

Finally, we are using the policy to assess what to retain when we process faculty papers in the backlog. In preparing to process the papers of a professor well known for his scholarly work in Old English, we first determined that his influence did not extend beyond his academic field. As a result, we separated out more than ninety percent of the collection documenting his research. We retained only those materials that documented his work as secretary of his Yale College class and the various syllabi, class outlines, and reading lists from the classes he taught, because they fit the criteria established by the university archives.¹⁵

Conclusions

Overall, we are pleased with the path the Minnesota Method led us down and the policy we have put into place. Although we did not follow the method to the letter, many of its principles worked. Most notably, tying the prioritization of records creators to levels of documentation proved remarkably useful. Also, the process by which the Minnesota Method employed macro-appraisal strategy pushed us to first consider the records creator before the records themselves. As a result, we no longer deem it necessary to review the actual records from every offer we receive. While theoretically we would not have needed the integrated appraisal strategies of the method to lead us down this path, the

¹⁵ When a gift or transfer of files from a faculty member contains materials of interest both for the manuscripts archivists and the university archives team, we try to keep all of the materials together. The papers of C. Vann Woodward, for example, include Yale University committee and teaching files, as well as his correspondence and writings. Though our ideal is to follow provenance, we will make exceptions. When we find Yale University publications, we set these aside for individual cataloging, and we routinely place Yale class photographs with like images in the appropriate record unit of the university archives. If faculty papers are accepted solely because they document Yale University history, the university archivists assign them to a record unit in the university archives.

MHS archivists provided a practical implementation of appraisal theory that focused on the problems faced by most manuscript repositories. The proactive nature of the method has also helped us to evaluate faculty members earlier in their careers. We are only in the first stages of negotiation with several of these faculty members, but we are hopeful that early intervention will cause them to keep the types of records in which we are interested. This aspect of the method proves particularly useful in the current age of electronic records, when early intervention may be the only way to prevent record formats from becoming obsolete.

Beyond our own implementation of the Minnesota Method, its lasting legacy will be as a usable and useful appraisal theory and practice. Early in their essay, Greene and Daniels-Howell invoke Timothy Ericson's seminal article "At the Rim of Creative Dissatisfaction," which essentially calls for innovation in appraisal methodology.¹⁶ The Minnesota Method has answered that call. As a method, it may not be applicable to all situations, but it should serve as an inspiration for archivists struggling to make sense out of the vast landscape of potential acquisitions and complex appraisal theories.

Other academic repositories can draw on our experience and conclusions. Taking into account local variations, they should be able to develop policies suitable to their own institutions. With a policy now in place, we know what we want to collect and from whom, and we understand the rationale for collecting. There will always be exceptions due to political considerations, but they will be just that, exceptions. We no longer dread those Monday morning phone calls.

¹⁶ Timothy L. Ericson, "At the 'rim of creative dissatisfaction': Archivists and Acquisition Development," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991/92): 69, cited in Greene and Daniels-Howell, "Documentation with an Attitude," 161.