

## Oakland University Archives

### *Annual Report*

2011-2012

The image of treading water, that is, maintaining but neither progressing much forward nor backsliding too badly, comes to mind when considering the accomplishments in Archives during the 2011-2012 year. There were no new initiatives but the basic operations of filing, indexing, accessioning new materials and, most importantly, responding to requests for information or materials continued.

#### **The Staff**

Archives continued to be staffed by Shirley Paquette who regularly provided reference assistance to all units and individuals needing materials or information about the university's history. She also competently went about the daily routine, taking care of ongoing operations which consists of a lot of sorting, filing and indexing. In August Shirley's hours were reduced to half a day in Archives, with the remainder of her time being allocated to Technical Services. Unlike past years we did not have any intern at all during the year to assist with ongoing projects and special needs. Linda Hildebrand remained the librarian in charge of the unit.

#### **Equipment**

The wonderful news of the year is that much of the equipment was updated. New faster computers were installed in the archives workroom and the offices. New scanners, much faster and much better scanners, were **finally** acquired and installed. After making do for the past two years with very slow and inaccurate scanners that frequently required several tries before an acceptable scan was produced, this was a major boon to the operations. One can only rue the lost production and inadequate scans that we had to accept with the old malfunctioning machines. The only saving grace is that the scans of older materials, even bad scans, are available and usable on the archives web site and thus protect the originals from overhandling.

Additionally, the installation of a picture hanging system was completed during the winter term and we now have a place to hang many of the larger, framed items. Finally, George Preisinger sent over a digital presenter with an underlit flat bed display that works quite well as a slide and negative light box.

The Atiz BookDrive Pro equipment was used by Art Department for scanning a number of library art books and also by an individual from Macomb County who scanned the Macomb County election records from 1898 to 1912. This equipment may be useful to Archives for scanning the OU newsletters from 1975 on if we can get it set up to scan properly without

having to do a lot of extra work afterwards to fix the images and if we can get staff with time to use it. (Currently only one of the two cameras produces a usable image. )

### **Ongoing projects**

There are a number of activities that are ongoing, for example:

- collecting and indexing the student paper, the Oakland Post
- updating websites (OU Senate, Board of Trustees Minutes, Newsletters, etc. )
- sorting and indexing the photographic collection
- contacting retirees and asking for OU materials and memorabilia
- lots of sorting and filing and inventorying of new materials as they arrive.
- updating the buildings files, added information on barns, Health Bldg, faculty sub.

### **2012 happenings**

The University Telefund took over the Archives reading room during both the fall and winter term. The goal was for them to help raise funds, hopefully including some for the library, in exchange for use of our space. However it is not clear that the library was ever a target for donor's dollars.

Mariela Gunn designed an online request form for Archives requests.

After consultation with the Student Body President, some of the recent Minutes from Student Congress were added to Archives. This, however, remains an area in which we are sorely lacking documentation.

Shirley assisted the Dean with an impromptu tour of Archives for potential library donors.

The *Oakland Journal* published former Archives intern Lori Rigg's article on Mrs. Wilson's philanthropy in its Fall, 2011 issue.

Archives began to deal with the changes from print to digital only (telephone directories) by saving them as pdf's in the OU repository. The schedule of classes, which according to the University Policy is to be saved in Archives, posed more of a problem since they are not available at all in print form anymore. The question of who is to archive the electronic versions of newsletters is yet to be answered.

The Institutional Repository was in a state of limbo this year since the software couldn't be updated and so additions to it came to a halt.

The Archives Policy and Procedures document was updated in April, 2011. The policy remained basically the same but was revised to fit into the new required format and a procedures section was added. Apparently this revised document has yet to be submitted to the appropriate council by the library administration. This may need further revision, however, as many historical documents are being produced only in digital format, not easily saved in print or as a pdf.

Lee Elbinger, the 1968 nude poetry reader, visited Archives to see the we had on him, having recently discovered them in the Varner papers after doing a Google search on his name. It turns out that Elbinger left the country immediately after his reading/disrobing and had no idea of the furor he caused with the State Legislature getting involved and Varner's subsequent departure.

The archives website on campus sculptures created by Audra Pieknik-Shewell was heavily copied for a Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> 2011 centerfold page of the *Oakland Post* and then reprinted in a Nov. 27 2011 article "Oakland university campus filled with meaningful sculptures" by the *Oakland Press* with no attribution to Ms. Pieknik-Shewell or the OU archives.

A request for a copy of *Kontuse 7* initially was initially unfilled because it turned out we didn't have a copy in Archives. This particular edition of OU student writings had what was considered questionable content at that time (nude photographs) and was in fact printed off campus. Serendipitously, a few weeks after the request Prof. Peter Bertocci walked into the library with a copy of *Kontuse 7* and asked if we'd like it to have it for Archives. Indeed we would and we were able to provide the requestor who had several poems in the publication with a pdf version of the publication.

In February Paul Howell, the Digital Collections manager at Western Michigan University Libraries, provided a digitization workshop to a group of interested individuals in the library. Various aspects of his presentation included planning and selection, copyright, metadata planning, equipment, image capture, quality control, standards, hosting and backup and preservation. His knowledgeable and informative presentation was extremely helpful and pointed out the many ways in which OU's program needs extensive and major improvements, in particular improved and more qualified leadership, expertise and equipment.

### **Interesting Requests**

The Office of Legal Affairs wanted to know when the university's name changed from Michigan State University - Oakland to Oakland University.

Communications and Marketing wanted to know why OU has a Rochester address.

A special Oakland Post April 18, 2012 centerfold on unusual or weird items from OU's past drew on photos from the historical collection in Archives, including a wonderful photo of a snow sculpture contest winner. Other items included the ski lift, water tower, barbershop in the OC, and the real Obear.

A WRT 160 class reviewed student writing from earlier years by looking at various publications containing student's written work.

Jean Szura , who's the coordinator for Student Activities OUWBSM requested pictures of "famous" historical faces of OU for a event called New Employee Meet and Mingle. (She wanted to use the images in a game where the attendees would play guess who.)

There were many requests for photos, including ones of Dr. Moudgil for his farewell, the golf course, Stephen Sharf, the geodome.

### **Conclusion**

All in all, not the greatest year but not all that bad either. The fun part is always in the discovery of new bits of information or items that we have but didn't know we have. The credit for the smooth running of the unit and the successful fulfilling of requests belongs to Shirley Paquette and her dedicated and inspired work in the unit.

Submitted by

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