

Oakland University Archives

Annual Report 2002-2003

This will be a non-traditional annual report in that a lot of unnecessary detail is going to be included as a means of tracking and recording exactly what has been done in the year. Briefly it has been a fairly quiet year for Archives which has allowed time for me to familiarize myself to some extent with the collections and locations of materials.

Of special note: Archives was the venue for a special spring meeting of an Oakland University Charter Class committee as they prepared for a 40th anniversary get-together in the fall of 2003. Selected materials from the early days of the university were on display and the charter class alums expressed interest in doing something for Archives. The Charter class will also be visiting the Archives during their weekend on campus in the fall. Also in May of 2003 the Provost of the University was given a special tour of the Special Collections/Archives areas.

The summer of 2002 was a productive one. Robert Gaylor, former archivist, had the assistance of Christa Siegel, a part time librarian with exceptional organizational skills, and a number of boxes were processed and organized. In the fall Linda Hildebrand took over on a part-time basis and began dealing with the boxes and the large amount of paper that had accumulated and awaited disposition.

A revised Archives policy (based on a Northern Michigan University document and used with their permission) was drafted and is in the process of being shared with other campus units. For the time being I am defining OU Archives as those materials that relate to the history and development of Oakland University.

The primary goal of this year's activities was to get a sense of what is in archives and to that end, a number of activities are detailed below:

Collected in one place and in some cases, arranged for use*:

- *OU News, OU, MSUO Staff Newsletters, Oakland; News@Oakland; Oakland Magazine; Oakland Post and its predecessors
- *Office of Institutional Research Memos and Reports
- *Clippings and press releases, now arranged in chronological order
- *Senate Minutes
- *Board of Trustees Minutes
- *OU Audited Financial Statements (now cataloged)
- *OU Commencement programs
- *OU Schedules of Classes
- AAUP materials
- Academy of Dramatic Art boxes
- Continuing Education files, folders and boxes

Honors College
Kresge Library – selected boxes only;
Student Life materials
Meadowbrook Theatre materials
Meadowbrook Art Gallery files (exhibition programs have been cataloged)
Meadowbrook Summer School of Music materials
Various reports, proposals, plans.
Flyers announcing campus events.

Other projects:

Dusted and vacuumed room, probably the only time this has occurred since the room was set up in 1989.

Emptied, sorted and filed 22 boxes from Publications Office

Rearranged collections

Moved the Faculty Collection to the wooden shelves.

Shifted both the Archives Collection and the Theses collections to provide for growth space. This also allowed me to shelve the theses that were sitting on the floor.

Moved filing cabinets from south wall to east wall. Added filing cabinets to west wall.

Emptied and sorted approximately 30 boxes of materials from various offices.

Updated and added a few items to the online Archives page.

Collected in one place and consolidated non-archives materials:

Howard Shelley materials in southwest corner next to cabinet.

Charles Ferry materials

Billy Farum files

Oakland County historical materials

Oakland County Art in Public Places file (created by OU art history students)

In process:

A special summer 2003 project to digitize Board of Trustee Minutes from 1957-1970 using the new scanner in ILL.

Emptying and sorting boxes.

Identifying what is in un-labeled boxes.

Identifying what is in labeled boxes (have discovered that the labels on the boxes that have labels don't necessarily represent what is in the boxes)

Sorting flyers and OU publications—clearing off the desk, tables, bookcase, etc.

Creating a database of performing arts programs (music, theatre, etc) - name of program, date, performers.

Creating a database of OIR memos (date and topic)

Continuing to digitize and index Senate minutes (back to 1974 for minutes, index to 1980)

Discarding duplicates of items (in general keeping two and discarding the rest).

Identifying photographs (volunteers are coming in to help with this process)

Puzzlers:

What to do with non-OU materials in Archives room. These are more “special collections” than OU Archives *per se*:

- Underground newspapers
- Oakland County historical materials
- Billy Farum materials (a one-time state rep. from Pontiac area)
- Oakland County art in public places (created by OU art history students)
- Eugene Mack materials
- Charles Ferry materials (local Rochester author)
- Howard Shelley motion pictures (16mm reels)
- 8 track tapes and other out-dated media, e.g. 5" floppy disks, LP's.
- Springer stuff—Lincolania – have file cabinet plus various artifacts in Archives room.

Other:

- How much of Glyndebourne memorabilia should be retained?
- What library files should be retained?

Facilities and equipment

How best to house the materials is a concern. I have found that the large boxes are too heavy and too unwieldy to manage. They can't be opened while on the shelf and the weight is such that, if I get them down on the floor, I can't get them back up on the shelf. So I am in the process of changing some records from boxes to vertical files; also will be downsizing the large, extremely heavy boxes to smaller, more manageable ones.

The humidity in Archives, as in Special Collections, is high and this is inadvisable for Archival materials, particularly the old newspapers and photographs.

A computer, scanner and printer were finally installed in the summer of 2003 in the KL 100 office. This will facilitate data entry, checking on holdings, scanning and other processes that have had to be done in offices upstairs. Also three filing cabinets were added to the room.

If we ever begin collecting all that we should have, adequate space will be a problem. However, in the short term I am finding so many duplicates and boxes full of multiple copies of one item that, by consolidating and discretionary discarding of multiple copies, there should be no problem for the short term.

Staffing

A student was hired to assist in Archives in the fall semester. However, the employee had to be let go—was not showing up for work, was unable to work independently, e.g. only worked when someone stood over her, productivity was abysmal.

Currently Jan Tigar-Kramer is assisting with the data entry for selected files; right now she's working on a database of musical programs. Also, this summer, 2003, Kristal is scanning the 1957-70 Board minutes which we have on short loan from the Board of Trustees Office. But in general, I am doing all the sorting, filing, scanning, typing—and mostly it is sorting and filing since there are lots of boxes still to be processed.

Statistics

At the moment I have no use statistics to report since Bill Cramer took off with all the forms, both the ones for Special Collections AND the ones for Archives.

Conclusion and future plans:

It's been quite a challenge and a fun one, to investigate the materials in Archives, to delve into boxes, to find both some treasures and a whole lot of trash. Much remains to be done and so future plans are basically, more of the same. More sorting, more organizing, more discarding of duplicates, more lists of what is available, more scanning of materials for preservation and to make them more readily available to the user.

A tip of the hat and special thanks to Ann Pogany and her staff for cataloging of a number of items. There will be more to come since having major items listed in the online catalog is the best access point from a user's point of view.

Once a new Archives policy is approved, active solicitation of materials for archives will need to be done on a regular basis, along with guidelines for submission protocols. And the need for staff to process the materials and the space to house them will be a concern.

Submitted by
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August 4, 2003