

Introduction to Archival Practice
Unit 1 Project Submitted by Tom Power

✓ The Nipissing University Archives are located in the The Education Centre Library, a shared facility of Nipissing University and Canadore College. Nipissing University has grown considerably in the last few years, and the archives are now assuming a higher profile.

It is expected that the archives will be more professionally administered in the near future. There are concrete plans in place to build a new library, which will include a new, improved archives.

✓ I am the Data and Documents Coordinator at the Education Centre Library. My desk is in the "Archive Room", and I currently assume a very limited role in providing archival services. The library recently hired a new Associate Director, who has extensive experience as an archivist.

✓ The following **draft** mandate was recently proposed for the university archives.

interesting!

THE NIPISSING UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

GENERAL STATEMENT

Nipissing University is committed to the efficient and effective management of its records and the preservation of its institutional memory through the establishment of a University Archives.

✓ *For the purposes of this policy, the term "record" means any information, however recorded, whether in manuscript, printed, mechanical or electronic form, and any copy thereof, but does not include a computer program or any other mechanism that produces records.*

Mandate

The University will establish a University Archives with the following mandate:

(a) to provide archival records management services to the Board of Governors and Senate, academic and administrative units, and committees of the University; and

✓ *(b) to identify, acquire, arrange, describe, preserve, promote the use of, and make available those University records and related archival materials from other sources which are of enduring historical, legal, fiscal and administrative value.*

All records created, received, used or maintained by officers and employees in the course of their duties on behalf of the University are the property of the University. Officers or employees leaving their positions with the University shall leave all records for their successors. This applies to both temporary and permanent departures, including transfers within the University.

✓ *The provisions of this policy do not apply to the records that are created or acquired by faculty members or other officers or employees pursuant to their individual responsibilities for teaching or research, unless the records are donated to the University Archives.*

✓ *The University Archives is the designated repository for all permanently valuable records of the University that contain information about its history, organization, structure and functions.*

Also, what do you think about "(a) provide archival RM services" - this is an interesting combination + it's not clear to me what it means.

Tom Power 2.

I think it's a bit long though. Could shorten it to (A) & (B).

I believe this is a well written mandate, and that this mandate addresses the requirements of institutional membership of the AABC. Unfortunately, the current operation of the Nipissing University Archives does not satisfy this draft mandate, or meet the standards of the AABC.

This assessment of the current Nipissing University Archives is based on the AABC Self Study Guide.

1. Legal Authority and Purpose.

Although Nipissing University is the obvious governing institution, there is not official documentation recognizing this authority, and the purpose of the archives has not been formally documented. This is addressed in the draft mandate and draft acquisition policy.

2. Designated Archivist.

The Associate Director of the library is the designated contact for the archives, although this may not have been formalized, and it is not one of her primary responsibilities. She is very well qualified. Her previous position was full-time archivist at a Canadian university. She is currently establishing policies, procedures and guidelines for the archives. Statistical data related to the use of the archives is now being collected. The archives generally meets this standard, but a formally recognized, dedicated archivist would be a considerable asset.

3. Sustainable Funding.

The university, through the library's budget, provides limited funding for basic supplies. There is no core funding in place. The proposed draft mandate will require additional, sustainable funding. It is hoped that an archivist, whose primary responsibilities are the archives, will be funded. There is not a budget or financial report at this time. This standard is being met at a very minimal level.

4. Secure, Designated Space

The "Archives Room" does not meet the standards of an archives for this guideline. The room was originally intended to be a self contained archives, but has become an area where non-archival items are stored, general library duties are

✓ conducted, and where some staff have their desks. There is not a separate area where the archival records are stored. The room was originally designed with some basic environmental controls (a motion detector for the lights, separate temperature control) but is still lacking in this area. There is so much traffic in and out of this area that controlling humidity, light, temperature etc. is almost impossible. The door is locked when a staff member is not present, but staff is usually entering and exiting continuously through the day. There has at times been minor water leakage from above, which has not damaged the collection.

5. Acquisition Policy and Procedures

✓ A draft acquisition policy has recently been completed. Currently, the archives does not meet this standard, but if the draft is approved, it will be a start. The archives will be required to adhere to the acquisition policy in order to meet this standard.

6. Access Policy

✓ The archives has guidelines for public access and use of the records. Hours of operation are posted, and researchers must register. FIPPA and copyright rules are enforced. There are contacts at the university for FIPPA and copyright consultation.

✓ | Unfortunately, staff is not always available to supervise researchers or provide reference services.

✓ | The archives partially meets the requirements of this guideline.

7. Preservation Policy

✓ The archives does not have a written preservation policy, nor does it have a disaster plan. The room is not monitored for humidity and temperature. There is potential for water damage. There is not a separate, secure area for storage of records.

Some preventative preservation policies are practiced (i.e. use of pencils only, gloves, no eating or drinking). Archival containers have recently been purchased for some records.

✓ The archives does not meet the most important components of this guideline.

8. Processing Procedures.

The archives does not meet this standard. Fonds have not been processed according to the standardized principles. The only finding aid is a shelf list.

- ✓ Often, records are located after physically searching through the archives and relying on memory.

In conclusion, the Nipissing University archives is in transition. The archives currently meets some of the institutional standards of the AABC. A new mandate and collection policy have been drafted, and it is hoped that more resources will be available so that this valuable service will meet all of the required standards.

▷ Sounds like big things are on the horizon that will propel the archives into the spotlight a little bit.

- good analysis of your institution's situation.

Proceed to Unit 2!

Keely-