RUNNING HEAD: REVIEW OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVAL REPOSITORIES

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I reviewed three websites of university archival repositories, selected at random from different regions of the country: Vanderbilt University, the University of California Dominguez Hills and the University of Delaware. The information I gathered indicated the purpose of each was to hold historical documents for its respective institution. However, each had its own focus in addition to that primary mission. What follows is a summary of my review of each archive, according to its website, in turn. Much of this information is taken directly from the relevant website. (Note: all information was accessed January 27, 2007 and January 28, 2007.)

California State University – Dominguez Hills Archives
http://archives.csudh.edu/csudh/

The purpose of the CSUDH Archives is to hold documents pertaining to the institution and to the surrounding community.

According to the CSUDH Archives website:

The California State College (later University) system was founded from several already existing colleges in 1961. The California State University Historical Archives on the campus of CSU Dominguez Hills was founded in 1979.

The mission of the University-wide system’s archives:

[i]s to collect, preserve, and create access for materials relating to the formation and progress of the system. This mandate complements the efforts of individual campus archives to collect and preserve materials that pertain to the historical development of their own campuses…
The mission of the archives at Dominguez Hills is to be the institution’s memory and to document the community’s activities by collecting and organizing historical documents. According to the website, these records include:

- materials representing transactions and decisions essential to the functions of CSUDH
- materials defining and enhancing the image of CSUDH
- materials and memorabilia documenting the undergraduate and postgraduate experiences at CSUDH and supporting significant interaction with past graduates

The University Archives supports the CSUDH mission by:

- providing information that documents and promotes the mission
- preserving essential administrative and historical evidence of the university
- supporting teaching and enhancing the curriculum through archives acquisitions
- supporting the research of the faculty, students, and other scholars

The archives at CSUDH holds records that relate to the history of several of the system’s colleges, materials related to the South Bay, the Dominguez Family, and Los Angeles. They also hold Special Collections and a Rare Books collection.

The Archives website has a link entitled “Resources for Students” which talks about primary sources, and provides links to guides on primary source research. This shows the Archives’ commitment to students. The site provides additional help with primary source materials with links to the Archives homepage, the California Library Directory, and the Online Archive of California (a database of finding aids from institutions throughout California).

The site provides policies on photocopying books, reproducing photographs, obtaining permission to reproduce copyrighted materials when necessary, and giving credit to the CSUDH
Archives when publishing. The website also provides the procedures that administrative areas should follow in order to transfer inactive records to the Archives and notes that finding aids will be created. The holdings will be publicized “to encourage use by members of the institution and the scholarly community to support the curriculum, stimulate teaching, and promote research, scholarship and intellectual exploration.”

I believe that the primary clientele of this repository are historians of each university in the university system, and more specifically the faculty, staff and students at the University of California Dominguez Hills. Other possible clients would be individuals interested in South Bay history, aviation historians and land grant scholars.

The website was very informative and a few things that I learned include:

- California has a large state university system.
- The contents of an Archives collection are listed in linear feet.
- The first international aviation meet in America was held on Dominguez Hill in 1910. The Archives’ collection includes photographs, slides, news clippings, programs, and a brief history of the meet.
- A University Archives can and should hold historical records pertaining to the community in which the institution resides.
- Some documents in Archives can be pretty mundane, such as a picture in the South Bay Photograph (digital) collection entitled “truck hauling dirt”.

I appreciated this quote from an Archivist about digitizing a collection, and particularly what he says about the archivist’s role:
Any collection this big has many stories and secrets you hope the researchers can find . . . It's the job of historians to find the deeper meaning in the collection. It's the job of archivists to give the hints.

Unfortunately, the archivist would be unable to give many hints as to the history of the academic departments at CSUDH. This Archive only seems to hold records from two academic areas of the institution. At this point, most records are from various administrative departments, or involve collections relating to special events.

This website had a great deal of solid content with information about the institution and its larger community. It was easy to navigate and included a site map. Hyperlinks made looking further that much quicker.

**University Archives – University of Delaware**

[http://www.udel.edu/Archives/](http://www.udel.edu/Archives/)

The University of Delaware Archives website indicates that the purpose of the University Archives is to document:

> [t]he history of the University of Delaware . . . through the collection of records from the Board of Trustees and all University units. Among the materials included in the archival collection are reports, committee records, correspondence, minutes of meetings, publications, yearbooks, news releases, theses and dissertations, department and program records, memorabilia, photographs, as well as records of the Women's College and the Foreign Studies Plan.
The Home page includes links to: Archives, Permanent Collection, Records Management, and Staff. In addition, there are icon links for Art for Offices, Commencement, Notable People, and Ribbon Garden.

The Permanent Collection, managed by the University Archives, is a circulating collection of over 1,600 works of art and antiques. The artwork is displayed around campus in various university buildings. The website contains information about the University’s Records Management Program with retention schedules, a contact system, information on storage, records destruction, vital records protection, and consultation for departments. The site lists some pretty stringent guidelines for records management.

The Ribbon Garden was unique among the three Archives I reviewed, and shows the University’s “heart”. After September 11, 2001, a Ribbon Garden was established to give members of the university and neighboring community a way to express their emotions. Over 4,000 yellow ribbons were inscribed and hung in an area of the campus from September 14-23, 2001. The University Archives now has the ribbons. They have been numbered, organized and stored. The messages on the ribbons were transcribed and entered into a database with the help of many volunteers. The University considers this Ribbon Garden Collection to be “a unique part of the history of the University of Delaware and symbolize[s] the community's attempt to accept and cope with the catastrophe of September 11.”

The University of Delaware established the first “study abroad” program which ran from 1923 to 1948. When the program ended, the Foreign Study Papers were transferred to the Archives. UD considers itself a pioneer in the field of Foreign Study, and these Papers to be an excellent source for studying the history and development of the Foreign Study Movement.
I believe the primary clients for this repository would be the University’s administrative departments for records management, and the University historian. Scholars interested in the history of studying abroad would also find it useful.

This website provided me useful information such as:

- The first study abroad program in the United States began at the University of Delaware.
- An Archivist can be the keeper of documents that are not necessarily locked up in the Archives (such as the circulating Permanent Collection).
- A person who lives in Delaware is a “Delawarean”.

I expected to see many more archives or artifacts from colonial America, and an indication of records from the earlier days of the school. I also would have expected to see some digitization of early photographs and/or documents, but the Archives has apparently not done such a project.

The website had good content, but since the University of Delaware is an older school, I believe that it could have been much richer in content than it is. Only a few links existed, so it was very easy to navigate, and the information that it did have was very good.

**Vanderbilt University Special Collections & University Archives**

http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/speccol/archives/

As the name indicates, this department worked with both Special Collections and the Archives of the University. Each has a very different purpose.

Special Collections houses one of the finest twentieth-century Southern literature collections in the United States and is the center for the study of the Fugitive and Agrarian literary groups. Other collections include Southern history since the
Civil War, Southern Culture, Women's Issues, Civil Rights, Religion, and the Performing Arts.

Although not stated, it can be inferred that the mission is to provide access to scholars researching these topics. The goal of the Archives, on the other hand, is:

- to preserve the historical memory of the university and to make this information available, primarily, to the Vanderbilt community and, secondarily, to the world at large. This is achieved through the collection and preservation of historical Vanderbilt university records and artifacts.
- The University Archives not only provides the history of the institution, but often are retrieved for administrative and scholarly use, in that they document efforts to develop higher education in the post-Civil War South.

The Archives keeps the following types of records: documents from the University's Board of Trust, senior administration, deans, major academic and administrative committees; self-study and accreditation reports; budgets and audits; research projects and grants; theses and dissertations; artifacts relating to the institution; manuscript collections related to the school.

The website instructs potential donors on the process of transferring records, appraising materials, box requirements, correct labeling, accessing the records, restricting access, and record destruction. The Archives creates finding aids for Archives, Serial Publications, Athletic Publications, Ephemeral Publications, and Give Away Publications.

I believe the main users of the Special Collection are historians having specific interests, and scholars of 20th century Southern literature. Archives clients would include current Vanderbilt employees, the University Historian, Vanderbilt students, and scholars of Higher Education in the South.
Some information I found useful included:

- Specific items in the Special Collections could be searched from ACORN, Vanderbilt’s OPAC. The Archives could not be searched, but there is a separate link of Finding Aids on the Special Collections/Archives home page which is searchable (many are linked)—which seems to be for both the Archives and the Special Collections.

- How the University Archives at Vanderbilt is structured; and a greater understanding of archives in general.

  This was the first site that I reviewed, so I didn’t know what to expect from the University Archives. I did think that I might find more primary source materials relating to the history of the South. Apparently, these are located in the Special Collections part of the department.

  This website had a lot of places to go, with good navigation tools and was fairly easy to use. Through this website, the Archives provides excellent services to its clients in Special Collections and University Archives.

**Conclusion**

Reviewing the websites of these three University Archives was interesting and very informative. The exercise gave me an excellent idea of the purpose and services of University Archives, and also showed that different institutions can and should have different foci in their collections. Vanderbilt University, the University of Delaware and California State University Dominguez Hills all seem to place some importance on their Archives and also on special collections that the university might acquire. Their mission and purpose all seem to be to provide a history of their respective institutions and to hold at least some records of historical note relating to the surrounding community. They make their collections available to university
faculty, staff and students, to outside scholars, and to the community at large, and are therefore a valuable part of any University’s mission.