SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES STRATEGIC PLAN

November 20, 2013

INTRODUCTION:

Since it has been several years since the last Special Collections and University Archives strategic plan, Rutgers University Libraries Administration requested that a new plan be created. Jeanne Boyle, AUL for Planning and Organizational Research, served as facilitator. The process was initiated in February 2013 and was followed by a series of meetings with all SC/UA personnel in the late winter and early spring. The following key components of SC/UA were defined: Leadership, Funding, People, Collections, Services, Preservation, Space, Exhibitions, and Description/Cataloging. The group performed SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analyses on each topic. Members of the group gave presentations summarizing their findings and suggested strategic directions in each area.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Special Collections and University Archives collects, preserves, and makes available rare, unique, and specialized sources to support study and research on New Jersey, the history of Rutgers University, and other select subjects that support the mission and curriculum of the university and the needs of the people of New Jersey. For more information on the Rutgers University Archives’ distinct mission, please see the appendix to this document.

VISION STATEMENT:

Special Collections and University Archives strives to be recognized as a major public research university repository, on par with Rutgers’ Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) peers, through collaborating with and providing leadership for special collections within Rutgers University Libraries and continuing to build and share unique holdings with the university community, the state of New Jersey, and beyond.

1. Building the New Jersey collections and other collections that support the Rutgers curriculum, faculty research interests, and SC/UA’s areas of strength.
2. Playing a leadership role in special collections throughout Rutgers University Libraries.
3. Implementing innovative outreach and programming to reach a wide spectrum of users.
4. Developing appropriate facilities, including expanded storage space and state-of-the-art preservation and processing areas.
5. Making collections discoverable online through cataloging, the creation of online finding aids, and the creation of digital projects, often in collaboration with other RUL units.
6. Developing librarians and archivists who are leaders in the profession.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

Special Collections and University Archives has outstanding collections and dedicated personnel, but limited resources. To fulfill its goals, SC/UA must prioritize its needs, make the best use of existing resources, and create strategic partnerships both inside and outside of Rutgers. While recognized by certain constituencies, SC/UA generally has a low profile within RUL, the university, and nationally. This plan sets forth strategies that will move SC/UA towards fulfilling its aspirations within the context of the strategic plans of Rutgers University and University Libraries. Leadership was identified as the most important aspect of SC/UA. It is understood that strong leadership will be needed to implement the strategic plan by setting priorities and time frames to accomplish the goals of the plan.

COLLECTIONS/DESCRIPTION/CATALOGING

SC/UA’s collections are what sets the unit apart from other libraries and forms the basis for all other activities. Preserving, expanding, and increasing access to the collections in all their varied components and formats is SC/UA’s major priority.

OBJECTIVES

- Continue to build the Sinclair New Jersey Collection as a comprehensive collection documenting New Jersey history in all formats, as well as emphasizing diversity as articulated in RUL’s strategic plan
- Acquire additional materials in keeping with the scope and mission of SC/UA, RUL, and Rutgers University
- Preserve and process current holdings, following established archival and library standards
- Provide digital descriptions for all collections and increase digital access to all materials

STRATEGIES

- Continue to prioritize acquisitions according to areas of strength
- Evaluate gifts in term of resources brought with them that can be used for processing and cataloging
- Advocate for additional MARC cataloging expertise within SC/UA focusing on special collections materials
- Prioritize cataloging of significant printed collections that have no Web access
- Make brief descriptive records for collections not represented online
• Expose more in house checklists and databases to the Web
• Complete arrangement and description, encoding, and mounting of finding aids for largely-finished collections

FUNDING

SC/UA must actively pursue fundraising opportunities through grants, foundations, individual donors, and partnerships in conjunction with the RUL Director of Development and the Rutgers University Foundation.

OBJECTIVES

• Secure federal, state, and foundation support to fund preservation, processing, cataloging, and digitization
• Raise funds to endow positions and, ultimately, for a Special Collections and University Archives building

STRATEGIES

• In conjunction with RUL Administration and the Development Office, investigate appointing a SC/UA Advisory Board or friends group to create stakeholders and leverage fundraising efforts
• Continue to obtain state grants for general operating support, projects, and exhibitions
• Apply for federal grants from agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and the Council on Libraries and Information Resources (CLIR) to fund arrangement, description, and digitization of prioritized collections
• Continue to work with the RUL Director of Development on private fundraising initiatives
• Continue to work collaboratively with RUL Administration, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, and the Division of Grant Accounting on the grants process
• Develop a method to receive donations on the SC/UA Web site

STAFFING

SC/UA has many dedicated long-serving full-time and part-time employees. Because of limited funding and space and heavy workloads, SC/UA personnel face unique challenges.

OBJECTIVES

• Add one or two permanent new positions to SC/UA
• Utilize part-time positions effectively
• Capitalize on strengths of existing personnel
• Build morale of existing personnel
STRATEGIES

- Develop a list of prioritized positions and preliminary job descriptions in case an opportunity arises for a new position
- Consider appointing a coordinator of student workers
- Have different levels of projects ready for part-time workers of various skills and abilities, bearing in mind the critical needs of the unit
- Retain lines of communication with SC&I, Public History Program, and others about internship possibilities
- Clearly communicate roles, expectations, and goals of existing personnel
- Assess and communicate effectively through evaluation, reviews, promotion, and post-tenure review, engaging in constructive criticism where necessary
- Support research, training, and professional development activities
- Continue to encourage information sharing about research, workshop attendance, conference participation, and other activities
- Encourage participation in RUL governance and system-wide activities

SERVICES

SC/UA provides reference services to a wide range of users, including students, faculty, university administration, professional researchers, genealogists, and the general public. In addition to providing information, SC/UA increasingly furnishes reproductions of documents and photographs. Inadequate bibliographic control and lack of Web access make discovery more difficult for both employees and patrons. At the same time, Web access brings more users and increases the workload of reference personnel.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide effective and timely reference services without an excessive burden on individual employees
- Provide timely reproduction, digitization, and permissions services following appropriate guidelines
- Maintain security and order in the New Jersey Room through effective staffing of the SC/UA Information Desk
- Create Web tools to enhance discoverability of SC/UA resources

STRATEGIES

- Centralize SC/UA reference services under the New Jersey Regional Studies Librarian/Head of Public Services, distributing inquiries to appropriate personnel
- Make distinction between reference and research services and refer patrons to paid researchers when necessary
- Centralize reproduction and permissions services under new Head of Public Services
- Appoint new part-time Public Services assistant to focus on reproductions and permissions
• Reorganize SC/UA website to enhance discoverability of resources in conjunction with RUL Webmaster
• Prioritize staffing of Information Desk with reliable student workers
• Create Web-based guides to increase retrievability of information

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**SPACE**

Most of Rutgers’ CIC partners have separate, dedicated buildings to house their Special Collections and University Archives. SC/UA’s long-term goal is to acquire its own building. In the short-term, efforts will be made to improve and utilize existing space more effectively. In the last few years, additional space has been acquired through the installation of compact shelving wherever possible. Most recently, the new University Records Center provides an opportunity to gain space in the Annex and sub-basement.

**OBJECTIVES**

• In the long term, to establish an SC/UA building
• Create attractive and useable public and work spaces at Special Collections and University Archives
• Improve spaces for exhibition display, preparation, and storage
• Advocate for increased environmentally-controlled storage space for SC/UA collections
• Create staging area for collections

**STRATEGIES**

• Perform collection survey of uncataloged printed collections and manuscript collections and consider deaccessioning if material does not fit into SC/UA’s collecting priorities
• As University Archives material is moved to the Records Center, review and consolidate remaining material in the Annex to create room for additional manuscript and archival collections
• Move processed collections to permanent storage locations in a timely manner
• Investigate acquiring additional space in the Alexander Library

**OUTREACH/EXHIBITIONS**

In order to accomplish fundraising goals, SC/UA must raise its profile in RUL, the university, nationally, and internationally. Exhibition programs are one way to improve SC/UA’s visibility, publicize its collections, and attract new users. Reaching out to classes, using social media, and enhancing SC/UA’s Web presence are additional ways to increase visibility.

**OBJECTIVES**

• Ensure that SC/UA is known as the go-to place for New Jersey historical resources
• Secure high attendance at all SC/UA programs
• Increase usage of SC/UA reading room and gallery visitations
• Increase coverage of SC/UA events, programs, and acquisitions in all media outlets

STRATEGIES

General
• Explore founding SC/UA newsletter, possibly in conjunction with the development office newsletter
• Work with the RUL Webmaster to update the SC/UA website
• Explore using social media as a way to promote SC/UA through blogging, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and other appropriate technologies
• Contribute articles about SC/UA to internal and external media outlets
• Reach out to Rutgers faculty and classes in collaboration with library liaisons in appropriate subjects such as history, English literature, art history, geography, and others
• Continue to participate actively in appropriate statewide groups, such as the New Jersey Studies Academic Alliance, Advocates for New Jersey History, New Jersey History Day, and the MARAC New Jersey Caucus
• Continue to make SC/UA space available for meetings of the above groups
• In conjunction with the RUL Director of Communications, revive SC/UA mailing list and explore creating an electronic mailing list

Exhibitions
• Obtain more prominent signage for SC/UA galleries
• Continue developing digital exhibitions platform
• Ramp up publicity for exhibitions and programs using methods above
• Include artifacts in exhibitions to enhance visual appeal
• Ensure that label text is at seventh-grade level to make exhibitions more accessible to general public
• Always balance preservation and access in display decisions
• Consider accepting traveling exhibitions that could be augmented by SC/UA materials when subject matter is appropriate, in order to alleviate pressure on SC/UA personnel
• Work with guest curators (when appropriate) to alleviate pressure on SC/UA personnel
• Continue to use interns and student workers to assist with exhibitions

PRESERVATION

Preserving SC/UA’s collections is vital in fulfilling the division’s mission and goals. SC/UA has a small in-house preservation unit comprised of one full-time Head of Preservation, part-time technicians paid through below-the-line funds, and student workers. The goals of the preservation program are to stabilize collection objects by preparing protective enclosures and simple treatments, monitoring environmental conditions in the unit, and preserving digital and born-digital objects in collaboration with other units. The preservation unit is also responsible for preparing objects for exhibition and disaster planning. The Head of Preservation regularly
provides advice and assistance to other RUL units and organizations and individuals throughout the state. The small preservation laboratory is located at the rear of the SC/UA processing area, where space for personnel, equipment, and supplies is rather limited. The small number of employees, limited space and budget, and fluctuating environmental conditions in the Alexander Library present unique challenges for the SC/UA preservation unit.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Create stable and appropriate environmental conditions in SC/UA storage and work spaces
- Maintain efficient preservation laboratory with appropriate space, environmental conditions, and equipment
- Provide appropriate conservation/preservation treatment for all SC/UA collection objects when required
- Safeguard SC/UA collections from environmental disasters and accidents
- Play an advisory role in preservation and conservation for the Institute of Jazz Studies, the George F. Smith Library of the Health Sciences, and other units holding rare and unique materials
- Collaborate with RUL-wide Preservation Unit
- Take a leadership role in preservation in the New Jersey community

**STRATEGIES**

- Prioritize monitoring environmental conditions in the New Jersey Room and stabilizing temperature and humidity
- Create staging space to help to safeguard collections while in transit
- Create an isolation area for materials that need mold remediation
- Improve digitization infrastructure in coordination with other units
- Increase staffing of preservation laboratory
- Utilize existing part-time employees and incoming work study students and interns to ensure that those with appropriate skills are assigned to preservation lab
- Perform a collection survey to identify at-risk material and prioritize for preservation treatment and rehousing
- Identify priority projects for grant funding
- Work collaboratively with RUL to develop a system-wide preservation program for both physical and digital materials
- Update disaster plans and create clear and prominently posted guidelines in conjunction with RUL colleagues and RU facilities
- Continue to participate actively in state-wide preservation efforts
- Reach out to the community through presentations and consultation
- Further explore collaborative opportunities through CIC and other national and regional consortia
I. MISSION STATEMENT

The Rutgers University Archives serves as the final repository for the historical records of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Its primary purpose is to document the history of the University and to provide source material for administrators, faculty, students, alumni, and other members of the Rutgers community, as well as scholars, authors, and other interested persons who seek to evaluate the impact of the University's activities on the history of American social, cultural, and intellectual development. The goals of the Rutgers University Archives are as follows:

- Appraise, collect, organize, describe, make available, and preserve records of historical, legal, fiscal, and administrative value to Rutgers University.
- Provide adequate facilities for the retention and preservation of such records.
- Provide information services that will assist the operation of the University.
- Serve as a resource and laboratory to stimulate and nourish creative teaching and learning.
- Serve research and scholarship by making available and encouraging the use of its collection by members of the University and the community at large.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the origins, aims, programs, and goals of the University, and of the development of those aims, goals, and programs.
- Facilitate efficient records management.

II. DESCRIPTION

The University Archives attempts to collect as comprehensively as possible those records that have enduring value to documenting the history of Rutgers University, its programs, services, and members of its community. Through a systematic records management program, only those records which maintain historical, administrative, legal, and fiscal value are identified and retained permanently.

A. TYPES AND FORMATS

1. Official records, papers, and publications of Rutgers University.

The official records encompass those records or papers generated or received by the various administrative offices of Rutgers University in the conduct of its business and which are preserved for their enduring value. These records include among many different forms correspondence, reports, and financial records. The University Archives also collects all publications, newsletters, or booklets distributed in the name of Rutgers, The State University including catalogs, special bulletins, yearbooks, student newspapers, University directories and faculty/staff rosters, faculty and administrative newsletters and publications, alumni

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1 Available online: http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/libs/scua/university_archives/ua_doc_policy.shtml.
publications, and ephemeral material. Audiovisual records documenting the development of the University such as photographs, negatives, slides, motion picture film, oral history interviews, audio and video tape, discs, and recordings are solicited as well as dissertations, theses, and scholarship program research papers of Rutgers students. Machine-readable data files generated for conducting University business will also be considered for permanent retention. The Archives will maintain all security copies of microfilm produced by any vital records program. Maps, prints, and drawings documenting the physical growth and development of the University form an important part of the collection. The archives also retains artifacts relating to the history of Rutgers University.

2. Personal and Professional Papers of Rutgers University Faculty

As an important part of its mission of documenting the internal life of the Rutgers University community and placing it in a broader societal context, the University Archives actively seeks to acquire, organize, and make available the personal and professional papers of the Rutgers University faculty. Rationale: Faculty papers offer insight into the history and operation of the University that otherwise may be lost by relying only on official administrative records. They reveal professional interests and opinions that frequently clarify matters mentioned in the official records of the central administration. Faculty papers document the academic life of the University and relate one's academic career to his or her total interests, thereby constituting an important record. Personal viewpoints expressed in private correspondence and documentation resulting from service on academic committees may provide a better basis for understanding the University than a much larger volume of official records from administrative offices. Without a broad range of faculty papers the formal official accounts of the University are often misleading. Criteria for Selection: The size of the Rutgers University faculty, and the available storage space and staff of the University Archives place limitations on the extent of collecting faculty papers. While attempting to acquire a broad range of personal papers, the Archives must be selective. The following criteria are applied when appraising and soliciting the personal and professional papers from the faculty:

- National or international reputation in one's respective academic field.
- Records of one's service with Rutgers University and contribution to its growth and development.
- Service on the faculty of a recognized area of excellence within Rutgers University.
- Service and contribution in community, state, and national affairs.

Types and formats: The following types of documentation reflect and illuminate the careers of the Rutgers University faculty and are sought by the University Archives: official, professional, and personal correspondence; biographical material; photographs; tape recordings; class lecture notes and syllabi; research files; departmental or committee minutes and records; drafts and manuscripts of articles and books written; and diaries, notebooks, appointment calendars, and memorabilia. The Rutgers University Archives is committed to preserving selected faculty papers and to making them available for research as soon as possible. At the same time, it has a certain obligation to guard against invasion of privacy and to protect the confidentiality in its records in accordance with law. Therefore, every private donor has the right to impose reasonable
restrictions upon his or her papers to protect confidentiality for a reasonable period of time. Restrictions on access are for a fixed term and are determined at the time of donation. The Archives does not accept agreements that restrict access to material for the lifetime of any person or persons or agreements that are difficult or impossible to administer. It encourages minimal access restrictions consistent with the legal rights of all concerned.

**B. FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO DOCUMENTATING THE UNIVERSITY**

The University Archives seeks to document the Rutgers University community, which includes the administration, faculty, students, alumni, and staff. In assessing records appropriate for permanent retention, the Archives attempts to document the University's role in higher education as it relates to seven functions common to academic institutions, as delineated in Helen Willa Samuel's *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (1992): convey knowledge, conduct research, confer credentials, foster socialization, promote culture, sustain the institution, and provide public service.

The seven functions are defined as follows:

1. "Convey knowledge" incorporates the traditional mission of teaching at Rutgers University but recognizes that the mission actually encompasses both teaching and learning—the interaction of its faculty and students in the educational process. Teaching involves an analysis of the curriculum—its development and evaluation as well as the internal and external forces that influence its implementation. Teaching includes the faculty, and the methods used by that faculty to transmit knowledge. On the other side of convey knowledge is learning—the acquisition of knowledge.

2. "Conduct research" is essentially the research function performed by the Rutgers faculty and students—the process of questioning and reinterpreting existing theories and knowledge and discovering new knowledge.

3. "Confer credentials" examines all the administrative activities that lead up to the award of a diploma which certifies the completion of a student's academic work at the University. Included in this function are recruiting activities, the selection and admission of students, financial aid and other methods of funding a student's education, academic and career advising and counseling, and finally, the graduation process itself.

4. "Foster socialization" encompasses the informal learning and socialization process that occurs in academic institutions—extracurricular activities, residential life, and personal counseling.

5. "Promote culture" centers on the institution as a "collector, preserver, and disseminator of information and culture" and includes among others the libraries and museums.

6. "Sustain the institution" focuses on all the activities that are required for Rutgers University to assure its existence. This function includes governance, administration, personnel, funding, and the establishment and maintenance of the physical plant.

7. "Provide public service" covers those services and activities that Rutgers conducts for the benefit of outside communities. These include among many activities continuing education programs, service to community schools and organizations, sponsorship of academic and social programs, and making the institution's physical facilities such as the library or gymnasium available to the community.
An analysis of the functions performed by Rutgers University focuses our attention on purpose rather than structure. We examine the objectives of the institution rather than solely on organizational structure and the records themselves. From this analysis we discover how the functions have appeared at the University over time and how they overlap. The study of these seven functions and their associated activities assists in our appraisal decisions and identifies areas which may lack adequate documentation. Our documentation activities move beyond appraisal; they incorporate all activities that affect the documentary evidence including its creation, management and selection. Appraisal is one part of the complete documentation process.

The examination of Rutgers University by function identifies documentary issues specific to an area of responsibility and assists us in planning goals for identifying and in some cases, creating an adequate record. The documentary goals clearly reflect the historical development of Rutgers University as each of the seven functions manifests itself differently.

C. ARCHIVAL MATERIAL IN OTHER RUTGERS LIBRARIES

Though the University Archives is the central repository for Rutgers University, there are other collections of historical material relating to Rutgers in other areas of the University. While it is appropriate for libraries within the RUL system to collect publications and historical items related specifically to their campus or college, the official records of the University and all published items created by Rutgers University should reside in the University Archives. Consultation and cooperation between the University Archives staff and members of individual libraries will assure that a complete historical record of the University is located in the University Archives.

D. ACCESS TO RECORDS AND COLLECTIONS

Access to the record series and collections of the Rutgers University Archives is governed by a University Records Access Policy and facilitated by inventories, registers, guides, and indexes prepared by the staff for patron and staff use. These reports consist of histories and/or biographical sketches of the record creators, summary information on the series or collection, and detailed content information (see Finding Aids, Guides, and Databases to University Archives Collections). As an extension of this descriptive practice, the staff also enters bibliographic records into the Library Catalog, to allow access to the Rutgers community as well as patrons searching the Library Catalog from remote sites using the Internet. These records are also loaded into national catalogs such as the RLIN/OCLC databases to enhance access to the historical records of the University. In conjunction with Technical, Automated, and Network Services of the Rutgers University Libraries, the University Archives staff also catalogs Rutgers publications and special format material so that all the holdings of the University Archives will be represented in the Library Catalog and RLIN/OCLC. The University Archives staff has also created several specialized databases for immediate access to its holdings and available for searching by staff as well as patrons visiting Special Collections and University Archives in Alexander Library.
Since the historical records of Rutgers University are non-circulating, access is provided in the New Jersey Room of Special Collections and University Archives in Alexander Library. Photocopying is provided to patrons within and outside the RUL system. Staff will provide research assistance for questions received by mail, telephone, or email.

For further information on the Rutgers University Archives contact Thomas J. Frusciano, University Archivist: fruscian@rci.rutgers.edu