

# Session thirteen: Advocacy and outreach

LBSCI 730 Archival Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access



# How do non-archivists understand archives?



American Historical Association  
@AHAhistorians



The AHA has written a letter expressing concerns regarding the National Archives and Records Administration's planned research room capacity across its facilities, including presidential libraries, as the agency begins to reopen following pandemic closures.

AMERICAN  
HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

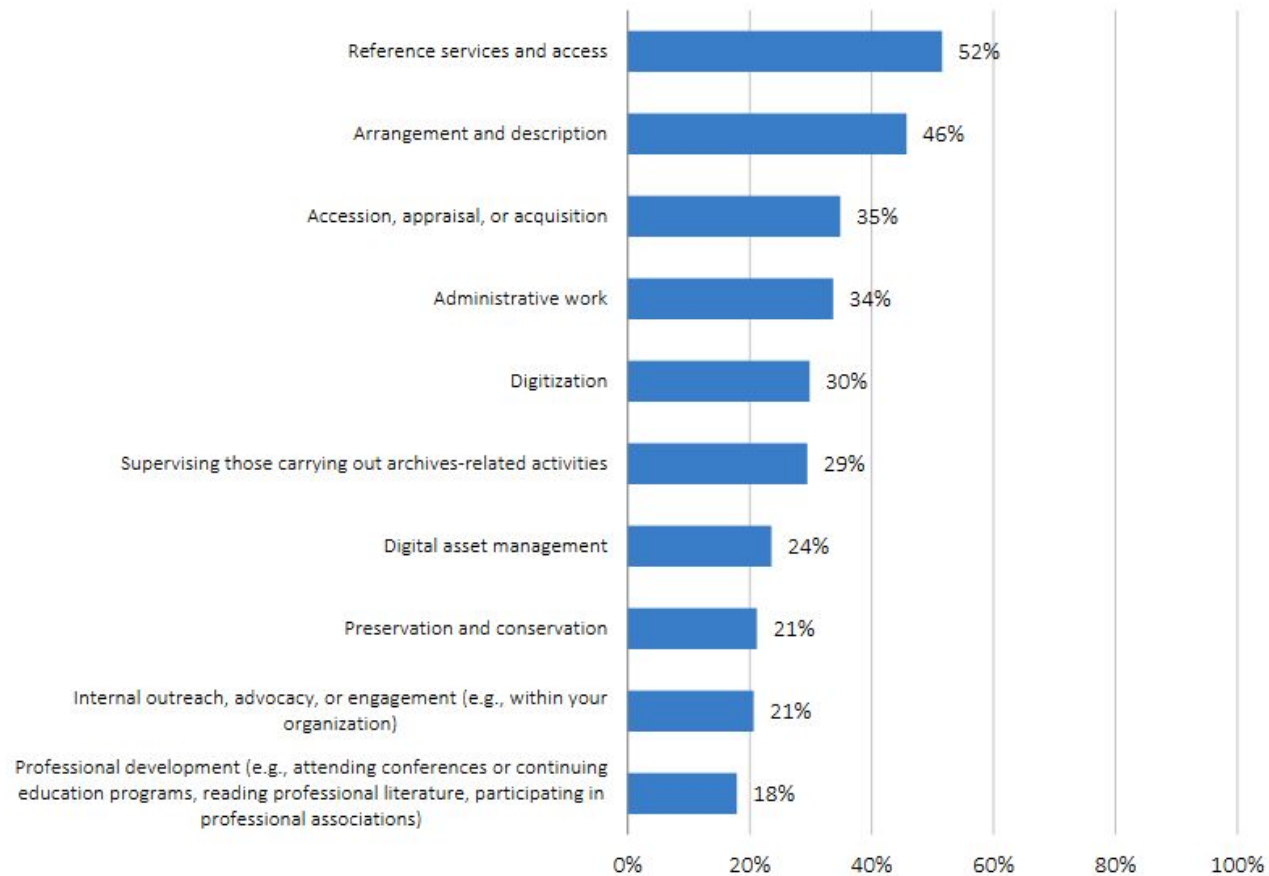
[historians.org](https://www.historians.org)

AHA Letter to NARA and Update (August 2021)

10:45 · 8/3/21 from Earth

15 Retweets 264 Quotes 59 Likes 37 Bookmarks

**Figure 23 - Identify the functions you have spent the most time on during your primary employment within the last 12 months. Please select up to five items.**



**Two questions you will have to answer again and again in a million contexts:**

Why do archives matter?

Why do *your* archives matter?

# Challenges to understanding archives

- Common misconceptions/pop culture stereotypes lead to skewed perception of archival roles and functions, plus
- Very often archives programs are viewed as low-priority within institutions; a “value add” but not an absolute necessity, =
- **Contributions and value of archival programs not always successfully explained to stakeholders**

# Outreach

- activities and programs that **promote use** of archives, archival resources, and archival collections
- activities and programs that **educate about and advocate** for archives and archivists

# Outreach

- “Awareness”: Very general but valuable
- Message: understand us/change your perception of us
- Targets:
  - Records creators/donors
  - underrepresented/diverse communities
  - Historical researchers/users
  - supporters/friends

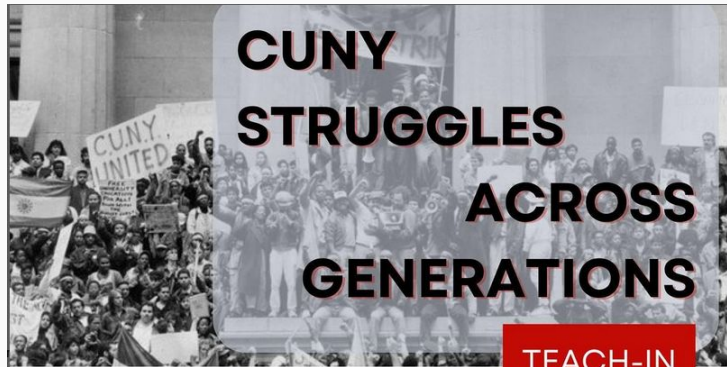
# American Archives Month

SAA launched American Archives Month in October 2006 as an annual nationwide celebration that could be adapted by any group to suit its needs and resources, but that could also stand as a unified effort to promote archives and the work of archivists.

In 2014, in conjunction with American Archives Month, #AskAnArchivist Day was introduced to provide an opportunity via Twitter for archivists to talk directly to the public about what they do, why it's important, and the interesting records with which they work.



# Teach-in at the Graduate Center (April 2023)



Come learn about **the Student Protests of 1969**, the **1991 Graduate Center Student TakeOver**, **the Student Liberation Action Movement (1996-2004)**, **Free CUNY!** and **Cops Off Campus** with CUNY activists and archivists

TEACH-IN  
AT THE  
PEOPLE'S  
PANTRY

Sponsored by

ASOCIACIÓN  
DE ESTUDIANTES  
LATINOS Y LATINO  
AMERICANOS



WED APRIL 26  
Dining Commons (8th floor)  
4:30PM film and presentations  
6:30PM dinner

## THE CUNY 1969 PROJECT

*The Struggle For Open Admissions*

ABOUT    START THE STORY    TEACHING MATERIALS    SUMMER 2023 TEACH-IN & RETREAT

WELCOME TO THE YEAR 1969 AT THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK. SPRING IS IN THE AIR, AND SO ARE PROTESTS, SIT-INS, OCCUPATIONS, AND DEBATES ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY. ONE QUESTION IS ON EVERYONE'S MIND: WHOM IS THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY MEANT TO SERVE? YOU MAY THINK YOU KNOW THE ANSWER, BUT BE PREPARED TO QUESTION WHAT YOU KNOW.

START THE STORY AND FIND OUT. >

<https://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/cuny1969/>

# Inreach

The activities conducted by an archives **within** its parent institution to raise awareness and gain support for its programs

# Inreach

- Targets:
  - Institutional management
  - Institutional groups that affect the archives program operation
  - Institutional groups that can benefit from/use the archives program
- Goal: **build a collaborative, supportive web of stakeholders, contributors, and champions around the archives**

# LGBTQ Journal Party (May 2023)



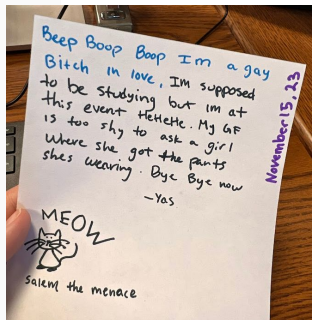
# “Inreach” efforts for Journal Party

- Collaboration with GLASA
  - Fellow attended meetings and spoke with current members
- Co-sponsorship with Student Affairs, LGBTQIA+ Consortium
  - Marketing, materials
- Co-sponsorship with Counseling Services
  - Tie-in to mental health and self-care
- Emails to GSLIS students, library faculty and staff

# Queering the Archives staged reading, collaboration with What Will the Neighbors Say?

## QUEERING THE ARCHIVES

a new verbatim performance piece



**Compiled by**  
Pablo Aranela  
Quinn Canales  
Emily Cronin  
Crystal Diaz  
Samantha "Safi" Fernandes  
Prince Hurst  
Aylin Johnson  
Cris Nieves  
Nyx Pena  
Deianeira Rodriguez

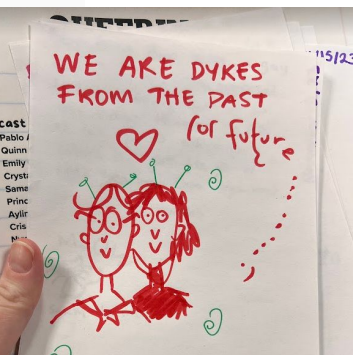
**With words from**  
the historic Queens College Gender, Love, and Sexuality Club Journals  
from 1987-2017  
and contemporary writing from current Queens College students

**Script Supervised by**  
Alan Wong

**Dramaturgy by**  
Aniko Szucs

**Facilitated and Conceptualized by**  
What Will the Neighbors Say?

**Supported by**  
Queens College Special Collections and Archives  
and  
The CUNY LGBTQIA+ Consortium



# Advocacy

Activities in which archivists and their allies engage to gain support for:

- archival records
- the institutions that manage these records
- archivists
- the archives profession

# Advocacy

- Focused, purposeful message to a targeted audience to effect a positive change
- “Consciously aimed to persuade individuals to act on behalf of a program or institution (archives)”
- Well-planned, carefully executed advocacy action is **essential to develop and maintain fiscal and operational health and management of archives program**
- Can include:
  - Asks/needs as they come up during the course of your work
  - Broader planning initiatives



# Strategic planning

Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its strategy or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to attain strategic goals. It may also extend to control mechanisms for guiding the implementation of the strategy.

# Strategic planning

1. Where do we want to go?
2. How do we get there?
3. How do we measure success?
4. How did we do?
5. How can we improve?

# Strategic planning

1. Forecast and analyze emerging developments before they become unanticipated crises
2. Determine whether and how those changes may benefit or threaten your organization
3. Plan for addressing those developments
4. Have a set of goals (initiate changes on your own)
5. Set concrete, time-delimited objectives for implementing goals
6. Consider and flexibly respond to large forces impinging on unit (ie don't lose the forest for the trees)

# Strategic plans

- [CUNY Lifting New York 2023-2030](#)
- [CUNY Office of Library Services Strategic Plan 2022-2027](#)
- [Queens College Special Collections and Archives Strategic Plan 2023-2028](#)

# Art of the ask

- Advocacy efforts need:
  - Well-defined goal (be specific!)
  - Clear sense of audience to whom appeal will be made (stakeholders? Supporters? Opposition? internal/external?)
    - Who are they?
    - What matters to them?
    - What can I do for them?
  - Set of actions that are most likely to achieve the goal

# Art of the ask

- What do you want to change and why?
- What outcomes are you seeking?
- Identify:
  - a. Need/action
  - b. Audience
  - c. Outcomes
  - d. Benefits

Example: “We need to clean up a backlog of processing projects”

What are you **actually** asking for?

- Need: our collection is of research interest, so must be accessible to researchers. This requires processing collections, which requires staff and money to pay the staff.
- Audience: administration.
- Outcomes: usable collections, findable collections, reduced backlog.
- Benefits: more researchers will be aware of the collections and will come and use them, increasing archives use in general

Example: “We want to digitize some of our collections.”

What are you **actually** asking for?

- Need:
- Audience:
- Outcomes:
- Benefits:



# Everyday archives awareness and advocacy

- Implementation and responsibility for archives awareness should be at every personnel level
  - Students
  - Part-timers
  - Full-timers
  - Specialists
  - Senior management

What do you do with problems or challenges that feel or are too big for you to address on your own?

# Collective action

UNIONIZE YOUR  
WORKFORCE BABY



# Archives/cultural heritage professional organizations

- [Society of American Archivists \(SAA\)](#)
- [Archivists Round Table \(ART\)](#)
- [Library Association of the City University of New York \(LACUNY\)](#) and [Archives and Special Collections Roundtable](#)
- [Metropolitan New York Library Council \(METRO\)](#)
- [New York Archives Conference \(NYAC\)](#)
- [Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference \(MARAC\)](#)
- [American Alliance of Museums \(AAM\)](#)
- [Museum Association of New York \(MANY\)](#)
- [Art Libraries Society of North America \(ARLIS-NA\)](#)
- [Association of Moving Image Archivists \(AMIA\)](#)
- [Special Libraries Association \(SLA\)](#)

# Circling around and back again

The same lesson here as when we started the course:

- To be an effective advocate for and an effective practitioner of archives, **YOU** have to know:
  - Your institutional priorities
  - Your department priorities
  - Your own practice, ethics, motivations

Why do you want to do this job?

