Go to the Source:
Effective Archivist/Faculty Collaboration in Writing Instruction

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study explores collaboration between archivists and instructors of first- and second-year composition classes. The authors outline how a fruitful collaboration can begin before a class is designed to allow archivists to recommend particular collections and records that can help the instructor determine specific assignments and course themes. This collaboration continues within the course through embedded instruction and one-on-one student counseling. They argue that the model overcomes barriers traditionally faced in archival instruction and utilizes inquiry-based learning techniques. Such collaborations with equal participation by archivists and faculty members have a high potential for replication and benefit archivists and instructors while producing important student learning outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The University of Dayton, located in Dayton, Ohio, is a mid-sized private university affiliated with the Marianist order of the Catholic Church. The university has around 8,000 undergraduates and has a strong liberal arts tradition. Students are required to take classes throughout their university career to fulfill Common Academic Program (CAP) requirements. These courses emphasize interdisciplinary study, inquiry-based learning, social justice, and faith traditions, as well as advanced studies in humanities programs. While many of these classes can be fulfilled through flexible options, all students must take introductory composition courses. The first of these, English 100, emphasizes inquiry and the writing process. While many students can test out of English 100, almost every student will take either English

114 or English 200–both of which emphasize primary source research and writing to both academic and non-academic audiences. The collaboration outlined below includes an assignment for English 200 classes. Both English 200 and English 114 are closely tied to University Libraries and are one of the primary introductions students have to library resources. These classes are taught through the English department, one of the largest departments at the university with more than 40 full-time faculty members, the majority of whom teach English 114 and English 200 regularly.

The University of Dayton Libraries contain the library's general collections, supporting learning, teaching, research, and scholarship across the university, as well as three distinct special collections. The Marian Library is an internationally known collection of works about Mary, the Mother of God, and various devotions to her. Its collections include books, periodicals, archival collections, and artwork. The U.S. Catholic Special Collection documents the experience of being Catholic in America, through records of Catholic organizations and religious orders, books, periodicals, and relics. Finally, University Archives and Special Collections (UASC), the unit that participated in this collaboration, collects records of the university and its history. It also includes a significant rare book collection. Each special collection has dedicated faculty and staff, who collaborate with library-wide technical services employees, to provide access to their materials.

UASC's major collections documenting the university include records from every academic unit, presidential papers, athletics, student publications, collections from prominent faculty members, and a variety of university memorabilia. The majority of these records are from the middle of the 20th century and forward. UASC also houses significant special collections from noted alumni, including a collection of Congressional papers from the area's representative in the late 1960s–1970s and several prominent journalists. Besides supporting the university's faculty and students in their teaching, research, and scholarship, UASC also serves other significant constituencies. These include university departments like Marketing and Communication, Advancement, and Athletics, as well as alumni, family history researchers, and others from the general public. At the time of this collaboration, the UASC employed two full-time employees.

BACKGROUND

From the beginning, there existed the potential for collaboration between UASC and composition classes because of a shared objective of exposing students to primary source use. The University Libraries' strategic plan includes a goal to "increase the use of rare and unique materials in the undergraduate and graduate curriculum" as part of the objective of "highlighting our Catholic, Marian and university special collections and programs" (University of Dayton Libraries, n.d., p. 7). Likewise, utilization of primary resources is a central objective in the university's humanities and English instruction. The first student learning objective outlined by the Humanities Commons, a general education curriculum, is for students to "read primary texts closely and critically" (University of Dayton Office of the Provost, n.d.). A central spot for this objective to be met is in composition courses. The English department lists the critical reading of primary texts and helping students better understand what constitutes a primary text as a course objective in English 200, the course that we discuss for our collaboration here (University of Dayton Department of English, 2021).

Archives and library literature abound with examples of instruction for undergraduate students. The traditional form of archival instruction is the one-shot session, where the archivist spends a single

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