



# Behind The Times

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A bright new academic year is upon us all! May it be filled with rich experiences, such as the thrill of understanding something for the first time or experiencing a deeper appreciation of an age-old truth, meeting new people, and seeing the new sites of the multi-campus university!

In using the word new again, I'd like to share with you new honors in the Archives. Valerie Gerrard Browne, Assistant University Archivist, was elected president of Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) last May and will hold the office for two years. So, the LUCA is the seat of the MAC presidency! The organization, by the way, is a twelve-state regional archival association which is almost twenty years agoing.

The Archives has two new student archival assistants this year, Lynette Jackson, a first year undergraduate biology major from St. Martin De Porres High School, Chicago, and Laszlo Sulyok, a history and political science major and transfer student from Mount Mercy College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Returning for his fifth and final year is William Lum who is also president of the student organization, Campus Life Union Board (CLUB), formerly known as the Student Activity Board (SAB).

## NOW AVAILABLE ON MICROFILM

Looking for back issues of the Loyola World during the period of 1981-1990? or the Loyola Phoenix between September 1969 and April 1991? You can find them on

microfilm in the microform sections of both the Cudahy and Lewis Towers libraries. The call number for Loyola World is LH1 .L6 L63, and for Loyola Phoenix, LH1 .L6 L6. The paper copy is still located in the University Archives, Cudahy Library, LSC.

## RECORDS MANAGEMENT

During the last academic year the Loyola's Archives Committee studied carefully the need for a University-wide records management program (RMP). It recommended to the administration that a records management consultant be hired to assess Loyola's records situation and to make recommendations for the implementation of an RMP. At this time, no decision has been made about the feasibility of such a study. In the space allotted, I will attempt to describe what is meant by a RMP.

First, a little history of records management is in order. About sixty years ago the United States National Archives noticed that Federal offices were generating so many paper records that procedures had to be established to decide what records should be retained permanently and which could be destroyed after a given period. Out of this concern records management was born.

In time, businesses and other institutions who generate a large volume of records began establishing record management programs. Now the records management profession is so large that it has a national association

called the Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA).

An example from a large, well respected, academic institution with a RMP in place illustrates the savings such a program can produce. There, no department can purchase an additional file cabinet without the approval of the records manager and archivist who must decide whether the purchase is warranted by real need or whether a properly implemented records retention schedule would be an effective alternative. Of course, if the purchase is warranted, it will be approved. If, however, one looks at the number of requests for new file cabinets generated annually here and the space required for each of these cabinets, one must question whether an effective University-wide records management program is not a more logical alternative.

At this point, a definition of the word record (as we understand it) is in order. A simple definition is: a record is information created by an institution in the course of doing its business. Examples of record forms are correspondence, reports, institutional newspapers, newsletters, photos, and non-print materials.

When a RMP is implemented, it is a cooperative effort between the staff of each individual office, the records manager, and legal counsel who makes sure that legal requirements are met. Together, they prepare a records retention schedule which determines the lifespan of each body of records, e.g., 5 years, 20 years. At the end of the specified period the records are purged or forwarded to the archives for permanent retention.

On occasion the records manager may

say a record can be destroyed at a certain point, but the archives staff thinks the records should be kept permanently. In such cases, the record is handed to the archives for permanent safekeeping.

You may be wondering where records are stored between the time they leave an office and are destroyed or transferred to the archives for permanent retention. The place is called a records center, and it can be on the institution's campus or at off-site storage location. If the location is off-site, the institution usually contracts with a company that stores and retrieves records on demand.

One of the aims of an RMP is to ensure that records of permanent value are maintained permanently and temporary records are purged according to the records retention schedule. Space is an important factor. Some office personnel save all records, and some purge too quickly. A RMP aims to arrive at a proper and legal balance between what to keep and for how long.

Another important factor is money. It costs money to do a feasibility study and to implement and maintain a RMP. But these costs will be quickly offset by the better management of space, the reduction in the need for new file cabinets, easy retrieval of files when needed, and procedures to dispose of purged files.

I realize that these thoughts are condensed, but it is my aim to offer a limited view of what a well planned records management program can do for this complex institution, called Loyola University.

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