AN EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION OF THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL: BASED ON A SURVEY OF UNC DEPARTMENTAL LIAISONS AND UNIVERSITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES

by

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Approved by:

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Advisor
This study describes a Web based questionnaire survey of departmental liaisons participating in the Records Management Program (RMP) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) as well as a telephone survey of 25 university records managers and archivists, leaders in the field of records management in higher education. These two surveys, an internal look at the operations of the RMP at UNC-CH and an external comparison with other university records programs, combine to give a comprehensive evaluation of the Program, examining its effectiveness and efficiency.

While the RMP with its small staff is meeting with great success the formidable challenge of scheduling the records of UNC-CH, it recognizes the need to expand its approaches to records management by including modules outlining the functionality of file series, as well as employing a records analyst to assist in the job of scheduling. Its liaison approach, while somewhat effective, has been met with, in some instances, resistance by liaisons who consider records management an insurmountable task. When compared with peer institutions, UNC's Records Management Program is doing well on all fronts with a small number of exceptions, namely a records center and additional staff to assist in the job of scheduling and to design workable modules for the ease of scheduling records.

Headings:

- Documentation --United States
- Files (Records)
- Records -- Management
- Records -- Management -- Case Studies
- Records retention
- Universities and colleges --United States --Archives
Introduction

Purpose of Study and Operational Definitions

The goal of this study is to determine if, in its formative years, the Records Management Program at UNC-Chapel Hill is on an acceptable and productive course. Are there areas in which the Program can be more effective and efficient in serving the University community with its given resources? How far afield is UNC’s Records Management Program, also referred to as the “RMP,” from trends and standards being set in the nation's archives and records management arena? To meet this goal and answer these questions, the review includes an internal Web survey of campus liaisons. Findings from the survey are used to gauge the liaisons' attitudes towards records management, the Program itself and its staff, as well as measuring their understanding of the principles and practices of records management. The study also includes an external overview of the state of records management in higher education by way of telephone surveys of leading university records programs.

The Records Management Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (also referred to as UNC-CH or Carolina) was born out of an NHPRC (National Historical Publications and Records Commission) grant in 1992. It was the largest single amount ever given by the NHPRC, to the tune of $450,000, including matching funds. The RMP was given the charge of creating what Susan Diamond defines in her book,
Records Management: A Practical Approach, as "a systematic assessment of records within each departmental unit on campus to appraise them for eventual destruction, for their administrative or legal value, or for transfer to the University Archives, should they be deemed of lasting value for researchers in documenting the institutional memory of the University. The purpose of records management is to take away the discrectional aspects of managing documents" (Diamond, 1995, 3). While the terms information management and information access are also seen in the literature (Owens, p. 22), for the purposes of this study Diamond's definition above will serve as the operational definition of records management.

A 1958 publication entitled Records Management Handbook #1: Managing Inactive Records may have been the earliest published work in higher education to use the term records management. In this document published by the Wayne State University, the archivist recognized the problem of inactive records as “records that have little or no current administrative value but that must be retained to meet legal and fiscal requirements in anticipation of future administrative needs, or because of historical significance. They contain important information, but, unlike active office records, they are seldom or never referenced” (Managing Inactive Records, 1958, p. 1). The booklet goes on to say that “the University Archives assists campus offices in the management of their inactive records” and recognizes that “the only logical solution . . . is to remove them from office file cabinets and transfer them to a secure central storage facility where they can be maintained economically and retrieved quickly when needed” (Managing Inactive Records, 1958, p. 2). A cost analysis is given comparing the higher cost of
in-house storage with that of Records Center storage, emphasizing the high cost of office filing cabinets and valuable office floor space (Managing Inactive Records, 1958, p. 3-5).

In his report of the Yale University Archives Record Survey, (1980) John Dojka outlines the goals of a university records program:

1. To assure the maintenance, protection, retention, and disposition of records in accordance with operational, legal, tax, government, and historical requirements.

2. To avoid costly use of office space and purchase of filing equipment.

3. To reduce time spent filing and retrieving records and to make them more readily accessible.

4. To insure that records which have outlived their usefulness are destroyed.

Marjorie Rabe Barritt, archivist at the Bentley Historical Library of the University of Michigan, discusses the functions of a comprehensive records management program in her article Adopting and Adapting Records Management to College and University Archives. Functions include evaluating and controlling the creation of records, forms, and filing systems; file maintenance; systematic records surveys; use of those surveys to develop retention and disposition schedules; the transference of inactive records to archives for permanent retention or to a records center or other storage facility for temporary storage; using micrographics for security, preservation, and/or space reduction; and the care of vital records. (Barritt, 1989, p. 5).

She hypothesizes that a comprehensive records management program has proven an elusive goal at many college and university archives, partially because of the development of these archives out of the manuscript tradition, and partially because a program of this magnitude requires greater institutional support than many college and university archives are granted. Many college and university records programs began as
manuscript collections. Some institutions’ records programs were separate from the university archives and were included in the statewide records system. It is a combination of the historical manuscript tradition of many pioneering college and university archives and the development of records management programs separate from archives at other institutions that tended to create an intellectual climate whereby collegiate archival and records management programs were seen as separate and distinct (Barritt, 1989, p. 6).

The decentralized nature of the university, the sheer number of departments, the lack of resources (namely a lack of staff and time to actively perform records management tasks in addition to other day-to-day responsibilities), and a lack of standards in the records management practices of higher education have posed many challenges and frustrations in bringing the entire university on board the records management bandwagon. To date, just over half of university departments have retention and disposition schedules written. Schedules or retention schedules are those documents that spell out a course of action to be taken with each file series of office records, and how frequently that action is to occur.

A records management program is staffed with personnel who operate the administrative, supervisory, technical, and clerical components of the operation (Robek, 1996, p. 11), overseeing the completion of file inventories, retention schedules, and the transfer or destruction of institutional documents. By using the term effective, in the internal analysis I am asking, "Is the program successful in getting compliance from the departments in writing retention schedules and following them annually?" By efficient,
I am referring to the RMP’s approach to its charge of managing institutional records—is the RMP making the best use of its time and/or resources?

_Liaisons_ are the individuals from each departmental unit on campus who are appointed to manage the records for their unit. A _record_ constitutes any kind of information communicated or created within the organization (other than unrecorded conversations) in a variety of formats including paper, microfilm, audiotapes, videotapes, photographs, slides, or any computer-readable medium such as computer tapes of disks, compact disks, or optical disks (Diamond, 1995, p. 1). The _in-the-trenches or liaison approach_ refers to pro-actively communicating with liaisons of the individual offices of a large organization, UNC-CH in this instance, to promote the principles of records management, and to act in an advisory capacity for campus liaisons.

In a bold move of support for institutional records, UNC-CH officials appointed an Assistant Provost for Records Management. Soon after a University Records Manager and a records assistant/office manager were hired to run the program. The authority to oversee a records management operation was given to the RMP under the auspices of a State Records Act (SRA), which says that records cannot be disposed of until a retention and disposition schedule has been approved. A university policy, a records management manual, and a letter of endorsement for the program by the University Chancellor combine to form a solid reinforcement of the SRA. Even with all these mandates, building a records management program of this magnitude has been an uphill climb for the records management staff. They have been faced with the challenges of getting the word out to campus departments, getting campus personnel to take stock in what they are saying, and getting actual compliance with these mandates as campus liaisons struggle
within their own departments with the task of records management. More often than not, this task is only a small portion of their overall responsibilities.

On the threshold of the new millennium, the RMP is re-examining its approach to records management and hired me to conduct a study of its operations. I have approached this analysis in two phases. The question being addressed in the first phase of the evaluation is, "Do findings show that the Records Management Program at UNC-Chapel Hill is doing an effective and efficient job with its in-the-trenches/liaison approach?" This internal look at the program was accomplished by a Web survey of UNC departmental liaisons. The second phase of the study asks, "How does the RMP compare nationally with peer institutions?" Data was attained from 25 telephone surveys involving model and viable records management programs in American universities for the phase two/external evaluation.
Chapter 1

Laying the Foundation and Literature Review

A literature survey has identified only four [known] attempts to evaluate records management activities in colleges and universities prior to this study. Only three additional surveys have addressed some aspect of college and university records management.

Prior to any records management analyses in higher education a series of archives-related surveys were conducted by the College and University Archives Committee of the Society of American Archivists. In the summer of 1949, 200 colleges and universities were selected to study the extent of archival awareness in U.S. and Canadian institutions of higher education. Eighty-four institutions replied that they had some sort of archival collection, but the picture was generally a bleak one (Burckel, 1982, p. 410). The most encouraging sign was that many institutions were considering establishing an archive (Burckel, 1982, p. 411).

Thirteen years later the committee expanded its survey in 1962 to include 350 institutions in an effort to determine trends in archival programs. While focused on archiving, this survey asked many of the questions this current study is addressing. Findings showed that of the 77% that responded, 113 institutions employed full- or part-time archivists; 70 reported the archives located in the library; 54 left the office of origin
responsible for preserving its own records; and 31 had no program for preserving institutional records. The committee took heart from the fact that 133 institutions were considering establishing an archive.

Four year later, in 1966, the committee undertook an even more comprehensive study of 1,156 institutions in the U.S. and Canada to ascertain if they had an archive, and if so, what the nature and scope of the operation was. While nearly half of the 1,070 that responded had an archive of some kind, only nine percent employed at least one full time archivist. Approximately 80% of the archivists reported to divisions of the library (Burckel, 1982, p. 411).

In 1972 the committee reported on 857 responses to a questionnaire sent out to nearly 1,400 institutions. Sixty three percent indicated they had an archival program. Many of the same questions were addressed in that survey as in the present study, such as administrative titles, reporting hierarchy, the founding date of the archives, staffing, and storage space (Burckel, 1982, p. 411).

Finally, the committee did a massive survey in 1979 to develop its Directory of College and University Archives in the United States and Canada, published in 1980. The directory listed more than 900 institutions with some form of archives, and a combined staff in excess of 1,600. It also reflected the fact the college and university archives comprised the single largest group of archivists by employer, at 40% (College and University Archives Committee, 1980).

A 1982 national survey of college and university archives was restricted to 95 randomly selected institutions from the 1980 Directory, comparing information about staffing, budgets, holdings, services, facilities, and problems. Interestingly, 90% of the
archives of private institutions were founded by 1916; but it was not until 1960 that the same percentage of public university archives were founded (Burckel, 1982, p. 414). Ninety percent are located in college and university libraries while a smaller percentage report to library administration, and even smaller percentages report to campus administration or the history department (Burckel, 1982, pp. 424-425). Well over half of all respondents have no paraprofessional or student assistants, and only 25% employ at least one FTE (Burckel, 1982, p. 415).

In the same study other questions were asked regarding processing backlog, cubic feet of material, and what materials archivists were in charge of collecting. Were these materials college- and university-related? What kind of finding aids were used--card catalog, container lists, or item-based finding aids? How are materials arranged on shelves? Were there open or closed stacks? Was there any fire protection equipment? Special keys separate from library or building master keys? Separate temperature and humidity controls in their stacks? Filtered fluorescent lighting as opposed to incandescent or unfiltered florescent lighting? What is the annual budget? How many are on the staff? Was staff responsible for exhibits and an oral history program? What kind of professional degrees does the archivist have? How does staff allocate their time between reference, preservation and conservation, appraisal and acquisition of records, supervision of staff, professional activities, and records management? What groups comprise your user community, and how many inquiries do you handle each week (Burkel, 1982, 420-426)?

Findings showed that approximately 60 percent of the respondents professed having no records management program on campus. Of these with a records program,
56% were administered by the university archives. Eighty seven percent of private institutions combine records management functions under the archives while the same is true for only 33% of public institutions, perhaps because public institutions traditionally must maintain more control over its institutional records because they fall under provisions of a state records act (Burkel, 1982, p. 22).

The first survey of records management programs in higher education was conducted in 1975, examining 26 colleges and universities. Findings concluded that 75 percent of the 23 respondents had some type of formal records management program (Harding, 1983, p. 55). The Association of Research Libraries conducted a survey in 1983, but considered records management as only one aspect of a broader survey of university archival activity, and included only 53 responses (University Archives…, 1984, p. 16).

In 1986, the Records Management Task Force of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers conducted the most comprehensive survey of records management in higher education in the 1980s. While the survey included 191 institutions, there was no attempt made to survey archivists or records managers, but rather it surveyed registrars and admissions officers, dealing mostly with student records (American Association of…, 1987, pp. 40-41).

The Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan conducted a survey of 12 peer institutions in 1988 to see how other universities “do” records management. The survey consisted of six large public and six medium-sized private universities. Questions were asked regarding staff, stack space, authorization for the programs (university policy, manual, state records act, etc.), scheduling of records, use of record
modules (campus-wide guidelines for specific types of records such as financial, personnel or student records), and other records management techniques (Barritt, 1989, pp. 7-8). It was found that most institutions surveyed adopt these techniques not to enhance efficiency, or to provide cost and space saving effectiveness, but rather to allow them to maintain a better cultural facility, focusing on the preservation of these records for research use (Barritt, 1989, p. 10). The study concluded that while a comprehensive records management program may not be a practical goal for many college and university archives, the adoption and adaptation of records management techniques offers institutions a better chance of meeting the challenge of adequately documenting campus communities (Barritt, 1989, p. 12).

The most recent study, conducted a decade ago by archivists Don Skemer and Geoffrey Williams at the University at Albany, State University of New York, was a broad-based national survey designed to analyze the state of records management in academe and to identify program characteristics. The study not only targeted archivists/records managers (i.e., those holding dual roles), but also office-centered records management programs in departments such as human resources, registrars, and finance. Their article, \textit{Managing the Records of Higher Education: The State of Records Management in American Colleges and Universities}," showed that approximately one third of the 449 responding institutions reported a campus-wide records management program, particularly at public institutions subject to state legal requirements for public accountability. The survey also identified widespread implementation of decentralized, office-centered records programs by registrars and other campus officials (Skemer, 1990, p. 532).
Skemer and Williams, in an effort to reach the widest group of individuals who were either in charge of or would know of an existing records management program, mailed out 1,532 four-page surveys and cover letters. Questions covered the nature and size of the institutions, the administration and policies of records programs, retention and disposition schedules, and records management operations and services. Respondents were asked to give overall impressions of their programs and to offer comments, which many did (Skemer, 1990, p.536-537). The survey data led to the belief that “while college and university archivists perform exemplary service in preserving institutional memory, and understand the benefits of records management to effective administration, they often lack the means and support to build viable, comprehensive records programs” (Skemer, 1990, p. 547).

There has not been a study that deals with a selected group of institutions in 25 years. Neither has there been any recent or exhaustive research on university records management activity in the past 10 years. Many of the surveys cited have been large-scale attempts to survey as many college and university archives and/or records management programs as possible, with mass mailings to institutions in the United States and some in Canada. The present study uses specific, exemplary programs as models, and aims to provide an informative look at the current state of records management in higher education. In addition, this review goes beyond the interviews with records managers, also examining the practices of an individual records program to see how it compares with peer institutions. The study also includes a survey of liaisons who are closely affiliated with that program's operations to give a more complete picture of its progress, successes and failures, both within the parameters of the university setting and nationally.
Chapter 2

Methodology

In the first phase of the evaluation, the methodology used in communicating with department liaisons at UNC-Chapel Hill was a Web-based survey. Due to the large number of records liaisons, or point persons for each office, approximately 500 throughout the campus, the records management and archives staff decided the Web survey would be the easiest to use, and would require the least amount of time and money both for the interviewer and the participants. The RMP created a listserv just prior to issuing the Web survey, for ease of communication with liaisons. The listserv greatly facilitated this survey, and has since been used to alert liaisons to additions made to the Records Management Program Web site, and to announce training sessions.

It took several weeks to design and fine tune the survey. There was excellent input from the records management staff, the university archivist, Dr. Helen Tibbo of the School of Information and Library Science at Chapel Hill, and from Dr. Ed Southern of the NC Government Records Branch. A timely workshop sponsored by the Odum Institute of Social Science Research at UNC helped to further shape the survey. Dr. Bev Wiggins of the Institute reviewed the survey and contributed much to its improvement.

There was a brief email message informing the liaisons about the questionnaire ("Please take a few moments to complete the survey so that the RMP can better serve
you..."), with the URL appearing on a separate line. Instructions advised those whose email was not hot-linked to highlight/cut/paste the URL into the address field of their Web browser. The Subject field read: "Records Management Liaison Survey."

There were two follow-up emails sent to further encourage participation. The second, sent the following week, was titled "Survey Reminder" to thank those who had already participated, and to serve as a gentle reminder to those who had not. The final email announced "Last Call" and gave a cut-off date and time, two days from that point. The emails and survey are found in Appendices A and B respectively.

The survey contained questions dealing with attitudes towards records management activities, attempting to determined how much time a person spends doing the records function of their job, whether or not records management is written into their work plan, and how much support they are being given by their superiors and others in their office for records management activities. Other questions addressed records management documents such as the manual, the general retention and disposition schedule, and the Web site. Are these user-friendly and can they be improved? Another section focused on the effectiveness of the RMP training sessions provided several times per year on a variety of topics. The last section of questions concentrated on electronic records, the degree of helpfulness of the RMP staff, and on giving the liaisons an opportunity to offer suggestions.

While the survey tool used provides quantitative data by giving the number of respondents per question and supplying percentages for each category selected, comment boxes were also provided after most questions to give liaisons a chance to expound on the issues or to give a bit more wiggle room in their response that the question may not have
allowed for. Hopefully this promoted some goodwill, as most people appreciate the opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions, whether they choose to or not. The most frequent responses were tallied and shared with the RMP and with the participants. They were grouped in the order of their frequency, with the most frequent responses being the strongest indicators of attitudes or beliefs regarding that particular topic. The participants' remarks, such as "We don't have time in our day-to-day operation for records management," "Why not have training sessions in different locations," or "The general schedule does not meet our office's needs," indeed added another dimension to the findings.

After the survey results were tallied, they were sent out to the liaisons, both in the body of an email, and as an attachment, for those who could not easily display or retrieve attachments and for those who preferred a better-organized document with page breaks. Liaisons were invited to review the results and participate in a group discussion. The email stated that the Records Management Program would provide drinks and cookies, and that they were to reply to this email with their preference of a morning break, lunch, or afternoon break.

Further encouraging them to attend was a statement assuring attendees that only the researcher would be present, without aid from the RMP staff. The message went on to say that the focus group would last one hour (or longer if they wished to stay) in an informal, round-table venue. "Here is your chance to talk about the results, particularly if you disagree with the findings, but also if the results simply reinforce your position on a given topic," the email said. After the RSVPs came in, it was determined that
lunchtime worked best for a majority. Another email was sent to the listserv announcing the date, time, and place of the group discussion.

There were nine who RSVP'd to attend, with seven actually in attendance. With their permission a tape recorder was placed against one wall so as not to be the main focal point on the table, to free up the interviewer from having to take detailed notes of the discussion. All had an opportunity to make introductions and to interject comments, with each saying a bit about the type of office they worked in and what their duties were outside records management, and how many people they handled records for, etc. They were emailed ahead of time with possible topics for discussion. These would be addressed if there were no further comments or observations the liaisons felt they wished to contribute first. Again, their comments were tallied with the most frequent comments shared with the RMP staff, and incorporated into the research as supporting rather than integral information. The themes discussed included how overworked they were, scheduling concerns, lack of financial and administrative support, file sensitivity, dilemmas encountered with faculty files, and debate over the manual, the RMP Web site, and training.

Interviews with two industry professionals were included in the study—one with Dr. William Saffady, a nationally renowned records management consultant, and one with Dr. Ed Southern, known throughout the North Carolina archives and records community as a records manager and former archivist, and who, at the time, was the Head of the State Records Unit, including the State Records Center for North Carolina. His current position concentrates on the development of new formats for state agency and University scheduling, and particularly electronic records scheduling. Both teach a
The last phase of the investigation examined 25 leading university records programs, in order to determine what kind of programs are in place in U.S. universities and what approaches they are taking to records management. How many offer a training program? Are programs using their Web site (do they have a Web site?) addressing frequently asked questions and examples of retention schedules in a more passive approach? How many are performing under a crisis-management approach? What percentage of universities use records analysts to do the work of scheduling?

Using model or established programs for the survey was necessary in attempting to cite records management trends, in determining what has worked and what has not, the size of the operation (number of staff), pro-activeness of the programs, and why some have succeed while others were not doing as well. The study also strives to document the relationship between records management operations and university archives in determining whether or not a unified approach is the answer to a more efficient program.

In establishing the sample pool of records managers, advice was sought from Dr. Helen Tibbo, professor in the School of Information and Library Science, the records management and university archives staff at UNC-CH, and Drs. Southern and Saffady. As insiders in the field of records management in higher education they would know which records programs were highly regarded in academe. From this starting point the core group of university records managers and/or archivists was interviewed then asked, as leaders in their field, what other institutions should be included in the study.
This approach was taken by James Collins and Jerry Porras in their study and subsequent book, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*. "We believed that these individuals, given their unique vantage point as practitioners atop leading companies, would have the most discerning and seasoned judgment in selecting other companies to study. Our select group, we reasoned, would have excellent working knowledge of companies of stature and longevity, keeping close tabs with activities in corporate America" (Collins, 1994, p. 12).

Again, time was spent with the records management and archives staff to design a useful and comprehensive survey. Drs. Saffady and Tibbo pointed out that telephone interviews would be the best way to assure participation, particularly since such an elite group of subjects were to be included. There were a couple of instances where surveys were completed electronically, where time constraints did not allow an extended phone call. These individuals were sent follow-up emails with clarification questions regarding the data they provided.

After ten university records managers were interviewed it was apparent that several more interviews would be necessary in order to fully assess the trends and best practices of records programs in higher education. Dr. Saffady had suggested calling eight to ten records managers, and if it was found that their responses were being widely duplicated, that it would not be necessary to include more than this in my survey. Each phone interview, however, disclosed new angles and shed light on new ideas, further illustrating the uniqueness of records programs throughout the United States.

This survey of university records managers would provide a more detailed report with varying types of data than what prior research had offered, to give an overall profile
of the state of records management in today's universities. Over twenty questions were asked dealing with scheduling, records storage, approaches records management, staffing, outsourcing, training, Web sites, professional affiliations, and electronic records. The data was entered into an Excel database as a visual aid to insure all the data was complete in every category, and to compute averages and percentages. Carolina's records manager was among the 25 surveyed, as its records management program is known in the field for having an operation solely dedicated to records management activities. Lastly, the program is measured against peer institutions for an assessment of what is happening nationally among university records programs.
Chapter 3

The Internal Survey: An Assessment of Attitudes and Opinions of UNC Departmental Liaisons

The liaison survey was sent out via Carolina's RMP listserv with a cover letter encouraging liaisons to take a few moments to complete the survey in order that the Records Management Program might improve its service (Appendix A). There was a 27% response to the survey, with 138 out of 500 liaisons providing replies. The first seven pages of the printed survey, found in Appendix B, show how many different answers there were each question as well as how many answered each question. The last seven pages show percentages for each question. A manual count revealed a total of 374 comments submitted by the participants.

A detailed breakdown of the survey is included in the following pages. These results were sent to the liaison listserv in an email attachment to apprise them of the overall sentiment expressed for the Program. Comments in italics were inserted to sum up the results of each question.
Records Management Liaison Survey Results

#1. How long have you been a records management liaison?

#2. How long have you worked in your current position?

Questions 1 & 2 are trying to get a sense of the turnover rate, and the rate of new liaisons participating in the Records Management Program. In #2, a total of 79% have been in their current position for over a year; but in #1, only 63% have been a liaison for more than one year.
#3. Are records management responsibilities written into your Work Plan?

- 55% no
- 38% yes
- 7% do not know

The 38% response is higher than anticipated, although this is something that RMP personnel can impress upon with the liaisons’ supervisors or department heads.

#4. Are you getting enough support from your director/supervisor/department to fulfill your records management responsibilities?

- 82% feel they get sufficient support
- 11% feel they do not get sufficient support

This is much higher than anticipated…good news.

#5. Number of Comments to the above question: 39

Positive feedback:
- Supervisor/Director is supportive. 8
- Liaisons perceive records management to be important. 6

Negative feedback:
- Not enough time or staff to devote to records management--too much to do already. 16
- I get very little to no support from director for records management activities. 6
- Liaisons perceive records management to be a low priority/non-issue. 6

There is a wide range of responses here, but throughout the survey the time factor is heavily cited—44 times in fact. Many liaisons lobbying these complaints were, however, hopeful that they would eventually get caught up or that they would have a slower season in which to process records. This shows at least some support for the principles of records management and a willingness to practice them, if only in theory.
#6. During a typical workweek how many hours do you spend on records management?

- 56% less than 1 hour
- 28% 1-2 hrs.
- 11% 3-5 hrs.
- 5% over 5 hrs.

The 44% that are spending at least one hour per week, is higher than anticipated. Perhaps that is because the retention schedules are currently being set up by several respondents. But in reality, it may very well take over an hour a week to perform records management activities.

#7. Number of comments to the above question: 27

Negative feedback:
Not enough time or personnel to devote to records management activities. 6

General Comments:
Clarification of time spent on records management activities: it is sporadic. 10
Update given on records management activities within the office. 10

RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULE

#8. Do you have a retention schedule for your unit?

Sixty-three percent of the sample respondents either have an approved schedule or are working on one. There are at least 38% of offices that either do
not have a schedule or do not know if they have one. This makes records management compliance through contacting, informing, and educating these “holdouts” a priority. [Those without a schedule skipped down to question 15].

#9. How satisfied are you that your retention and disposition schedule gives you all the information you need to manage your records?

![Satisfaction Bar Chart]

- very satisfied: 26%
- somewhat satisfied: 34%
- not very satisfied: 11%
- not at all satisfied: 4%
- have no opinion: 25%

#10. Number of comments to the above question: 17

Negative feedback:
The Schedule does not suit our needs very well. 5

General Comments:
Reported an update on scheduling activities. 8
Explanations given of the office’s scheduling procedures. 5

While 60% of liaisons are at least somewhat satisfied with their schedule (or the general schedule if they don’t have a specific one), there is room for improvement.

Several departments reported special needs that will require fine-tuning of the general schedule, and many liaisons are still not sure if all their records are covered in the schedule.
#11. Do you use your schedule at least once a year to help sort your files for destruction or transfer to archives?

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For those that have a schedule, nearly half are at least trying to use their schedule to manage their records, with a potential for 82% in the future. This is encouraging, but there is a need for getting a systematic effort in place. Perhaps a system of color-coded files would help. A phone call once a year would insure at least annual contact with departments to see what progress liaisons are making. A call would also act as a friendly reminder for liaisons to revisit their schedules. Perhaps stickers for their calendars could be sent in a letter reminding liaisons of Records Management Week.

#12. Number of comments to the above question: 12

Negative feedback:
Not enough time/staff. 4

General Comments:
Defining office filing procedures, and describing types of files in the office. 3

#13. Are there records in your unit that are not covered in the schedule?

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<td>39%</td>
<td>not sure</td>
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Liaisons need to familiarize themselves with their schedule, and more efforts can be make to make sure the schedule is meeting their needs. Clearly more training is needed in creating workable retention schedules. Wasting no time, the records management staff is already in the process of developing a leaner, more inclusive general schedule, and in developing modules for specific types of records. The constant progress
reports made on office schedules sounds suspiciously akin to rationalizations for not making better progress, but perhaps this is the first venue for many to give such a report.

#14. Number of comments to the above question: 10
Negative feedback:
We have special needs requiring special series. 4

General Comments:
Update on their Schedule. 3

ELECTRONIC RECORDS

#15. How certain are you that you understand which documents to print and save as paper documents from electronic formats such as email, floppy disks, and word processing?

![Pie chart showing percentages of responses to the question]

This is a troublesome area for the entire industry. Even experts like Saffady, who recently spoke here to this matter, do not have all the answers. Recommendations were made to get IT professionals on campus more involved in this issue. On the RMP Web site there are notes from a past training session on this, but there will be more things coming out as the University develops policy, as recommended by the subcommittee of the University Records Committee on Electronic Records.
#16. Number of comments to the above question: 16

Positive feedback:
I have a pretty good idea of what to save. 3

Negative feedback:
I do not have the time to do this. 3
Need more training. 3
I am unclear on electronic records retention policy. 3

#17. Are aware of the E-mail retention guidelines issued by the Provost’s office in January of 2000?

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<tr>
<th>64%</th>
<th>yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>no</td>
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This information is available on the Records Management Program Web site.

#18. Does your unit need additional storage space for inactive records that cannot yet be destroyed or sent to university archives?

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<th>53%</th>
<th>yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>47%</td>
<td>no</td>
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#19. Number of comments to the above question: 31

Positive feedback:
Do not presently need more space, but will in the future. 7
Do not need more space.  6

Negative feedback:
Yes, we need more space! 8
I do not know what I am supposed to keep—need better guidelines. 6
We need to make better use of the storage space we have; we would have more space if we followed the Schedule. 5

The shortage of storage space reported is higher than expected, which means better records management practices are in order, off-site storage is needed, or, most likely, both. This kind of data is great ammunition for getting a records center placed higher on the University’s strategic planning agenda. The Records Management Program is already meeting with the Facilities Department about finding a suitable
storage facility on or near campus. Architects are also being consulted to discuss plans for a University Records Center.

**TRAINING**

#20. Have you ever attended any records management training sessions sponsored by the Records Management Program?

- 74% yes
- 26% no

#21. How helpful were the records management training sessions in your work?

- 33% very helpful
- 46% somewhat helpful
- 5% not very helpful
- 3% not at all helpful
- 13% no opinion

#22. How useful were the handouts from the records management training sessions?

- 36% very useful
- 43% somewhat useful
- 4% not very useful
- 2% not at all useful
- 15% no opinion

#23. Is there anything the RMP could change (location, time of day, etc.) to encourage you to attend future training sessions?

- yes 20%
- no 80%

Again, this is information that lets the RMP know if it is on track. Overall, about three quarters of respondents have attended at least one training session, with only 20% suggesting they have conflicts with the training schedule. Seventy-nine percent report the training sessions and the handouts to be at least somewhat helpful.
#24. Number of comments to the above question: 44

Positive feedback:
I plan/will try to come in the future. 4

Negative feedback:
Location: Some want off-campus, some want to meet in other areas of campus, and some want in-house presentations for the entire office. 12
I don’t have enough time to attend. 4
It’s all a matter of timing. 3
Feed us! Food and drink encourage attendance. 3
Better subject matter…sessions are dry/boring. 3
Afternoon is better. 3

#25. Are there additional training topics you would like to see addressed by the RMP?

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<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>81%</td>
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#26. Number of comments to the above question: 23

Positive feedback:
No suggestions at this time. 5

Negative feedback:
Various individual topics recommended. 20
Fundamentals of setting up a filing system: developing the Schedule. 5
I can barely keep up with my workload as it is (not enough time for meetings). 4

#27. The RMP Web site (http://www.unc.edu/depts/recman/) provides the most up-to-date information about the Program. How often do you use it?

Use of Records Management Web site

[Chart showing frequency of use]
Just over half of respondents (58%) have used the Web site. It is helpful to know what forms of communication work best.

#28. Does your unit have a records management manual?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63%</td>
<td>have a manual</td>
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<tr>
<td>17%</td>
<td>do not</td>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>are not sure</td>
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The manual is available on the RMP Web site.

#29. Have you contacted the Records Management office for assistance in the last year?

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<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64%</td>
<td>have not</td>
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Either folks are laying low, just too busy with other things, or the RMP is doing a satisfactory job in providing adequate information; or perhaps a combination of these factors exist.

#30. How helpful was the records management staff when you contacted them?

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<tr>
<td>72%</td>
<td>very helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>somewhat helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>no opinion</td>
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#31. Number of comments to the above question: 10

Positive feedback:
Mr. Holt has been very helpful. 5
Staff is eager to assist. 5

Negative feedback:
Still haven’t found time to do records management and all my other duties. 4
#32. Overall, how helpful has the RMP been to you and your unit in addressing the records management issues that are most important to you?

Overall Helpfulness of RMP

63% have found the Records Management Program to be at least somewhat helpful, which validates the Program's existence. Only 4% perceived the RMP as unhelpful. The rest, 34%, have no opinion, which shows apathy for records management.

#33. Do you have any suggestions as to how the RMP can better serve you?

11% yes
89% no

#34. Number of comments to the above question: 7

Positive feedback:
We hope to have more time in the future to devote to records management. 6
I look forward to learning more about this. 4
I can see the value in maintaining a proper Schedule. 3

Negative feedback:
I have not had enough time/resources to devote to records management. 3

General Comments:
I'm still new at this. 4
Misconceptions Noted from Liaison Comments

Some liaisons are misguided by poor records management practices. Here are a few examples, in bulleted phrases, of some of the misconceptions taken from the comment boxes in the survey. Commentary is in italics:

- In a typical workday I don't have time to fritter away on records management. If I'm doing my job 8 hours a day, there is no time for extraneous activities.

  *Records management is perceived as an "extraneous" activity, when in fact, it is the only activity in one’s Work Plan that is mandated by the State.*

- I keep the items I think are important and discard the rest [without reference to a records retention schedule].

  *Liaisons are not properly informed as to what constitutes an official, vital, or archival record, and are, perhaps, making poor judgment calls.*

- Records management is a moot point since there is no storage facility to handle outgoing paperwork.

  *Liaisons are using the storage issue as an excuse not to practice records management, instead of making theirs a more productive work environment by weeding their files of useless records.*

- I do not think any paper documents should be saved. We are in the year 2000 where servers being backed up should be adequate.

  *While this sounds good in theory, until a university policy is in place with a failsafe method of preserving electronic documents, paper and microfilm/fiche are de rigueur as storage media, not to mention being state law, under Chapters 121 and 132 of the "General Statutes of North Carolina." Also regarding electronic records:*
• I print and save everything.

_This shows a lack of decision-making skills for what constitutes an official record._

• We have an empty four-drawer filing cabinet for archival material.

_Number one, expensive office file drawers are not an efficient and parsimonious use of state funds, and number two, all archival documents should go to the archives where they can be properly stored, kept together, and finding aids and catalog records created to know what exists, to give researchers due access to these materials._

• I have not followed the Schedule yet, but will do so when we run out of room.

_This is a prime example of crisis management. Obviously, there is still much education and enlightenment necessary to bring about good records management practices._
Chapter 4

The Liaison Discussion Group: Detailing the Results of the Survey

The purpose of the liaison focus group was to get some feedback on the survey, in a relaxed environment, which would encourage comments that the limitations of a Web survey would not. Operating under the premise that some people express themselves better verbally, while others communicate better in writing, liaisons were encouraged to attend the discussion group—that this was their chance to take exception with these findings, should they so desire. Perhaps the discussion would incite other thoughts, feeding on comments made over lunch, and add a new dimension to the survey findings. This would also provide an opportunity for liaisons to just “vent—to be heard—or to hear what other liaisons are experiencing. There were seven in attendance out of the nine who RSVP’d. The low turnout is a resounding indication of the low priority given to matters concerning records management. Perhaps it was an indicator of how overworked and overwrought campus employees are as well.

Again, the most resounding theme throughout the luncheon was, “I don't have time for this.” Sixteen separate statements of how overworked they were and how many hats they wore were documented. Their levels of frustration ranged from moderately high to very high. No one was completely comfortable with the current state of their records. Most made it clear that records management presented the largest obstacles compared with all their other duties, and because of that, it has a lower priority. All were interested in future discussion groups, provided they were fairly infrequent.
The meeting commenced with a welcome, an introduction, and a few words about the evaluation of the Records Management Program at UNC-Chapel Hill, and how the research was progressing. All went around the room with introductions, telling what their jobs entailed, how extensive their records were (i.e., how many people’s records they were in charge of), and the status of their records storage. This was a good foundation for discussion, and all seemed interested in the various types of work each person did.

For such a small group there was a good cross section of the campus, with units of varying sizes represented. One worked for a department of 10 faculty and 25 graduate students. Another had 2 1/2 bosses and was in charge of 2600-2700 student records. Another managed records for 12 persons. "We have about 200 faculty and staff in my division, two secretaries, and one person doing the records management," said another. Some had nine, others had three FTEs in their unit. Several who came had been employed by the university 12 years or more. One had been there two years, and another just two months. "I'm trying to learn all I can about this."

All seven liaisons in attendance resoundingly stated how overworked they were:

- *I keep telling someone I want a hat rack...I wear 20-30 hats. Is anyone here also the Emergency Management Coordinator for their unit? (three hands go up).*

- *I usually have about a two week window in October or November when I can worry about it.*

- *Frank was at our office and we had a very nice meeting and I went back to my office, the pile was like that [way high], and the notebook on records management is sitting on my bookcase. It is reproachful. Maybe August I'll have some time to devote to it.*

- *Before I can do anything with the Schedule I’ve got a whole stack of orders waiting to be filled.*
• I have a dual appointment which is supposed to be half-time in each department but each of my bosses need a full-time secretary at a minimum.

• I have chair files from two different chairs and can’t even start on that until I get through my own piles.

• If I just had an assistant to go through and set up the file list for me…

• What happens is that they decentralize “this and that” and it ends up on your desk and goodbye records management.

• It would take me 6 months just to survey the file drawers in each office and find out what everybody is keeping.

• It’s a battle just figuring out what needs to be done. I haven’t a clue what’s in those file drawers.

• I’m not sure if I can hope for getting any help on this. This could literally be a part-time job, 20 hours a week [records management] for someone. They’re so stingy I don’t think I could ever get a temp to help.

• I have more than I can ever do. If it weren’t for the student assistant I have some of the year I would completely lose my head. I’m hopeful that eventually we’ll get to the place where the schedule will dictate things, and that it’s nice and organized and we know what to do with it and it just runs itself with some tweaking here and there. But to get it up and running is very difficult.

• We’re standing on this side of the chasm and the records are on that side of the chasm, and there ain’t no bridge!

• I’ve got a pretty good idea of what it is that I probably ought to be keeping, but, I don’t have the time--I’ve never gotten beyond the point--I remember the first boilerplate schedule I got. It was the week before we moved, and my boss flung it across the desk at me. His family was in the middle of a health crisis and we were all trying to keep our heads above water and not asking him to think about anything because we couldn’t. And it hasn’t gotten a whole lot more beyond that. Frank came over and we had a very nice visit. My boss said to me, “This is all very nice. You’ll take care of this [records management] won’t you?” But what I’m taking care of is paying all the bills and figuring out how on earth to get to the end of the year and not run a deficit…I’m not doing records management.

• It’s not a question of motivation. I’m getting more motivated and interested in it, but I just don’t have the time. I’m feeling overwhelmed with all the student workers I have to supervise and the things people hand me and say, “Do this.”
There were many challenges cited by the liaisons, both within the parameters of their job--office politics, employee dynamics and such--as well as in the challenges posed by the task of records management. There much of decision-making involved in managing office files, and many were finding that they did not have the proper training and/or experience to make sound decisions regarding disposition of their office records. Here are some of the comments expressing the frustrations brought about by these challenges.

**Scheduling Concerns**

- There are discrepancies between what I think needs to be kept, what is sensitive, and what my boss or committee member feels needs to be kept.

- Can you condense it [the schedule] by printing the repeating phrase just once at the beginning? Less verbiage to wade through, less daunting for beginning liaisons.

- I find all manner of things in file cabinets. How do you schedule things like a pillow, or a coffeemaker or a cross-stitch picture?

- There are problems determining who has the original record and which records we keep.

- That first schedule they sent was **IN-clusive**, boilerplate…pages and pages and pages. And it wasn’t immediately clear that we could wipe out a bunch of these items.

- The schedule doesn’t really reflect our filing system.

- We need at least two schedules, one for larger departments and one for smaller units.

- There are so many categories that don’t pertain to us.

- It would be nice if the schedule were broken down into sections like for academic records, grades, etc., so that you don’t have to read through 20 pages to figure out one little line…

- We have an excellent filing system--it’s 40 pages long. The problem is, the schedule and our filing system had no resemblance to each other. It seems that everything in our files is correspondence.
• Even sorting out what to keep and what to throw out is such a monumental task. I think that having liaisons and increasing awareness is certainly a step in the right direction, but there might be other steps to take.

• Sorting out what needs to be kept, and for how long, and what needs to be tossed is helpful.

• New employees are grossed-out by the amount of old records sitting around.

• The junior member of a department is the one most likely to get dumped on with the liaison job. And it’s the stupidest person for the job.

• I was wondering if the RMP has some leverage as to how they administer the schedule so that it could be more user-friendly.

• This document could scare someone.

• Yea, and it’s already a scary topic!

**Lack of Financial and Supervisor Support**

• The other thing is that no one ever approaches the legislature about it. The legislature passed a law that says you have to save all this, but they’re the same folks that think my boss can get by with a half a secretary. Legislators have no idea how hard we’re already working and how impossible it is to keep meeting more and more demands.

• It’s not so much that my boss doesn’t have a good attitude about my doing records management. “Sure, do what you want—that’s great.” But they’re the same ones who are telling me I need to get this, this, and this done too!

**Dilemmas with Faculty Files**

• It’s easy enough to convince staff or directors that records management needs to be done. But no one is approaching individual professors and researchers. They have free reign. All I hear is, “It doesn’t matter anyway because it’s my intellectual property.” These are the same professors who are doing research that gets stored for years. They’re the same professors who are directors of undergraduate studies who have a file on every student in addition to the file in the office. And no one is instructing the professors in how to handle their records. Do you think they’re going to listen to their secretary? They’ll tell me it’s none of my business. I’m stuck!
• And the professors think their syllabuses are their intellectual property, and we’re supposed to save these in a file somewhere. It’s like, okay, is this intellectual property or not?

• Yes, they need to know that their accomplishments are an important part of the University’s history, too.

• We need the schedule to spell out everything a faculty member needs to save for the archives. This would be ammunition we can use to show them and to say, “This is not your intellectual property.”

• Yes, what should and should not go in a faculty file is very hazy. For SPA files it’s more clear; but for EPA...

• Another thing that worries me are the vituperative comments found in faculty files. I don’t know if I want to read what’s in some of them! You get nasty stuff in some of these files when professors don’t like each other. It’s all in their files.

The Manual

• And the manual…I’ve not even cracked the pages of the manual.

• It was created in the early 90s; so again, it could be updated to be more user-friendly. It’s laden with legal terms.

• I don’t even read my office manual. We don’t have time for these things. Don’t ask me to read a voluminous manual—I don’t have time. Would you like me to spend my evenings reading it at home?

• How searchable IS the manual on the Web?

The Web Site

• I’m never quite sure where things are on the Web site…if the labels could be a little clearer it would help. I wasn’t sure if some of the things from the survey were in the Web site or not.

• I wasn’t either. There are some broad headings and I’m not sure what’s in those boxes.

Training

• Let us meet somewhere where we can bring coffee! I’m not joking about this. If you were to take an informal poll, and not look at what’s written on the evaluation forms, but from people walking out from the training session, I think that what you would find is #1) “First thing in the morning--no coffee.”
• For anyone who has been to at least two training meetings, do we have to sit for an hour and listen to the same thing over and over again to get 10 minutes of new material? Does anyone agree with me? They’re registering everybody for these classes, so why not ask, “Have you been to an introductory class before?” And if not, tell them, “I’m sorry, you need to attend the introductory class first.

• I would like it [training] to be more structured.

File Sensitivity

• One of my students saw search committee file folders about people who are working here now. Not good. She didn’t even get it that she wasn’t supposed to be reading that. How to keep some files off limits is a problem.

• That’s the danger using a junior person to do the filing.

• My husband came across a file of his once, here on this campus, saying why he didn’t get a promotion. Now that is awful. That’s terrible. They need to have a section of records that have limited access. We need to be trained to be careful.

• I don’t even want to look at my own file. I don’t have the nerve to. Are they even required to keep those?

• Yes, they’re grad student records that are supposed to be kept 60 or 75 years.

• I don’t think people need to see [archived records of] what goes on in some of these faculty meetings. For instance, “We found that female secretaries under 30 work best.” [laughter all around]

• Yea, but that’s great social commentary! That’s our history!

Other Day-to-Day Challenges Faced by Liaisons

• There’s an assistant provost in our office who’s worked all over campus. She’s clearing out her files and I know she’s throwing stuff away that she shouldn’t, but I just don’t have time to deal with all that. I don’t know how to approach her/him about it, and she doesn’t want to be bothered anyway. No one has ever told her anything about records management. She has no concept.

• I don’t think that people realize this is mandatory. My boss has said at a meeting that this isn’t voluntary, it’s mandated. I don’t think people are aware of this.

• Electronic formats--how do I make my bosses print out their relevant emails?!
Are Liaisons the Best Approach to Records Management?

• Records analysts would solve the time problem. You'd have to meet with them initially but then they could work independently while “life went on” for all the other things that have to be done in our offices. They also would have additional authority, like auditors do re budget files, and so compliance might be greater. However, outside analysts might create problems, too, like depts. feeling bound to a schedule they didn’t create, privacy issues with student records, etc.

• Maybe a combination of tactics would work: the liaison would have the day-to-day responsibility for records, could make changes to the schedule, etc., as is the case now. But if she needed help getting started, authority to "whip the office into shape," or insight into a specific situation, she could call on one of a team of analysts who went from office to office and specialized in RM issues. I think Frank would like to fill this role—he met with my bosses and was very clear about the need for RM—but he is just one person and can be at best a salesman for the theory. In my combined scenario, he’d continue the "evangelizing" and run the program, liaisons would be the ones in the trenches, and in between would be analysts as resources. Ideally, I could call or email the RMP with a quick question and get an answer within half a day, or I could request an analyst for anywhere from a day to a week. Sometimes analysts would be advisors, and sometimes they would be doing the heavy labor of sorting and filing; it would depend on the dept, the availability and appropriateness of student labor, and other factors.

Constructive Comments and Suggestions

• It would be helpful if the RMP could give us some statistics to go by, a standard or model formula; and give these stats to the department directors showing that “X” number of employees generating records requires one liaison working app. “X” number of hours on records management per week (or month). This would help put things into perspective. Some offices have 200 people generating records, some have 20. And yet both have one liaison working part time on records management. There has got to be some educating of the directors and some equity regarding the liaison’s role so that we have the time and resources to do this right.

• You’re supposed to send records to the archives during a particular week of the year, which I’m not even aware of when our week is, but it has nothing to do with when I have time to do the job. Hopefully they’re more worried about getting the records than when they get them.

• I do think that we need to generate as much top down support as we can for records management so that those of us who do the work get the encouragement to carve out the necessary time and get the imprimatur of the boss when we go pestering the intermediate staff. That’s the level on which I think emphasizing the legal responsibility might help.
• For those of us trying to do the work, some more plain English guidelines and schedules will help. I look forward to hearing more--and perhaps to another discussion group.

• When my supervisors ask about certain documents it makes me realize that I am the only one that knows. It made me realize that so much depends on us, to preserve these things.

And in response to the meeting was this fitting, closing comment from one of the liaisons:

God, just the chances for problems are amazing!

**Observations from the Comments**

It was heartening to see how engaged the liaisons were in the discussion and that they all wanted to participate and share their experiences and frustrations. The group evolved from an objective discussion into more of a support group. They realized the value of peer support as the work or records management is often a thankless task. It became clear that more training was needed in determining file series, how to work with the schedule and make it work for them, what constitutes an archival/historical document, and how to handle vital records. There were some sticky situations described regarding their reluctance to do their job effectively when it meant telling their superior or fellow employee what they should be saving and transferring or what they should not be pitching.

Another problem that is consistent with most universities is that the day-to-day maintenance of university records is assigned to the newest or lowest ranking staff member, as this is not a particularly challenging or enjoyable task. Little time or encouragement is given to instruction and to familiarizing new staff with office files.
Oftentimes there is not one person to whom questions on these matters can be refereed.

"This results in job frustration and high turnover," says Dojka in his *Report of the Yale University Archives Record Survey* (Dojka, 1980, p. 27), leaving novices to make important decisions about the fate of official records.

Just as there were several notable misconceptions of records management practices revealed from the comments in the survey, the discussion group proved to be no exception:

**Misconceptions About Records Management Practices from the Focus Group**

1. *S/he’s clearing out her files and I know she’s throwing stuff away that she shouldn’t, but I just don’t have time to deal with all that. I don’t know how to approach her/him about it.*

   Liaisons have a responsibility to at least advise people in their work area, even their supervisors, that there is a law and a university policy in place regarding records management. Some UNC employees, liaisons included, have no clue that they’re not supposed to dispose of records without an approved schedule.

2. *My boss feels that if the records don’t exist, they can’t be used against us. And I want to throw it back at him too, saying “Yea, But, you can’t use them for defense either.”*

   The overall feeling in the records management industry is that the fewer records you keep, the fewer problems, legal, spatial, and otherwise, you will encounter. This liaison was arguing to keep records beyond their administrative/legal disposition period. By doing this, however, the records can become a liability for the office. Provided the records were kept for their legal limit, if the evidence does not exist to bring potential harm to the university, then the less harm they can do.
3. New employees are grossed-out by the amount of old records sitting around. I’m thinking some of it’s old, but I can’t even send it away to the archives, because if we lost it, we’re the only place where it started.

If everyone felt they had to be the sole guardian of all their historical/archival office records there would BE no University Archives. Materials stand a much better chance of survival stored in the UA than in each respective office. For one, there would be a box list or finding aid to say what files exist. Catalog records for archival collections make access for researchers possible. It would be a terrible hardship for a researcher to have to go all over campus trying to pull essential data together.

4. You’re supposed to send it to the archives during a particular week of the year, which has nothing to do with when I have time to do the job.

The archivist can work with liaisons in setting up a transfer time of year that best suits each department, if timing/work load is a factor.

5. Perhaps some of the legal stuff could be put on the Web site which people may or may not visit…

It is on the Web site!

6. I don’t think people need to see [archived records of] what goes on in some of these faculty meetings. For instance, “We found that female secretaries under 30 work best.”

and

If you want me to see a professor’s file, you’d better give me three weeks to sort it out [for sensitive information] first!

Liaisons should not be the ones making decisions about what is ethically acceptable in someone’s file. Sure, some insulting or malicious statements may be found in the minutes of a faculty meeting or in a student’s file. But this should have no bearing
on a liaison's decision to include it for transfer to the archives. Files of a sensitive nature can be closed, or off limits for 70 or more years, under the archivist's discretion.
Chapter 5:
Interviews with Records Management Consultants

I had an opportunity to visit with Dr. William Saffady, renowned records management author, consultant and professor, when he delivered a talk on electronic records at UNC during the spring of 2000. Dr. Saffady suggested the RMP at Chapel Hill re-examine the liaison approach in light of the small staff and huge number of departments, advocating the idea of a university records analyst to get us caught up with writing all the retention schedules. When the university records manager brought up the funding issue, Professor Saffady proposed that the analyst could work in one department at a time, with the cost being shared by the University, the Records Management Program, and/or individual departments; or the analyst could be totally funded by the departments. Meanwhile, the university records manager would assist with all the new schedules and continue working on his various training, committees, modules, and other projects.

Professor Saffady indicated that to date, there is no industry standard regarding electronic formats. Each institution must formulate its own policy to safeguard the loss of institutional memory. And because this danger is so great, due to a lack of uniformity in formats, a university-wide policy to handle electronic records needs to be a high priority. To make this campus-wide effort possible, Dr. Saffady advised the need for
more cooperative ventures with the Information Technology (IT) department so that the full burden of electronic records management does not fall on the records management program. IT supports the gathering and disseminating of information, but other than increasing memory capabilities on computer hard drives, they offer no solutions. The RMP exists to provide information, education and support for records management activities, but the responsibility for electronic records management should be shared with electronic information professionals (Saffady interview, 2000).

Who is taking responsibility for managing all this data? Information management requires the help of each and every office on campus, with the help and cooperation of the university’s IT community. The entire way of thinking about managing electronic records will change once we get the campus IT team involved on the receiving end of records management. Since they are responsible for allowing the campus to create and store information, should they not also be involved in the decision-making on how to preserve and migrate this information? Could they not design and develop a records management system for the University along with the electronic formats policy? If this is too big a task, there are software packages for electronic filing that IT could install, and implement as a part of the policy. Data is continually backed up, and the IT staff should be able to migrate the data to any new format that comes along.

Saffady observed that there are a lot of good things happening at UNC with training and educating University personnel, meeting with various units on campus, and with customizing schedules. He was impressed with the amount of constructive brainstorming and policy-making that is going on in the sub-committees. Because the program is still in its formative years, there is a lot of time and energy spent in
committees, in training, and in staff meetings. He warned against setting expectations and a demand for substantial results too high at this early stage.

All these issues take time--time spent away from the actual work of scheduling. However, the RMP can look at ways to increase productivity, through standardization of procedures, streamlining wordy forms and documents (namely the schedule and the manual) and/or an increase in staff. Program staff needs to look realistically at what the proper and most efficient roles can be for the Records Management Program, given its current levels of staffing and funding.

Saffady agrees that more time spent developing user-friendly modules for Retention and Disposition Schedules versus more time spent on training is a trade-off. He encouraged the program staff to put a higher priority on developing the modules, those similar sets of records such as the personnel records modules that records manager Frank Holt is developing, into a standardized, linear, electronic format (Saffady interview).

I had several occasions to meet with Dr. Ed Southern, Head of the State and University Records Unit for the State of North Carolina. Dr. Southern is somewhat familiar with the program at UNC, having worked with the RMP in developing schedules and policies. He reinforced some of my overall impressions, that with a program this size we need to take a more realistic approach with what we are trying to accomplish. The Program either needs more personnel, or it needs to get the general schedule to work for it, so that the RMP can act more in a customer support capacity than in a training and records analyst capacity. “Make sure the general schedule is widely distributed and
maintained, and work on a consulting basis for schedules not captured in the general schedule,” he recommended. (Southern interview).

Dr. Southern said that personnel in the State Department of Cultural Affairs are more open now to an abbreviated, column-like format for the general schedule than they have been in past administrations, rather than the traditional narrative format found in Appendix C. He offered to participate in a brainstorming session with the records management staff in revising the Schedule. They agreed, and the meeting took place in late June. Work has begun on a more user-friendly version of the general schedule, based upon the *Standard Schedules for State Agency Records* found in Appendix D.
Chapter 6

The External Survey:

Examining Trends and Best Practices in 25 Selected
American University Records Management Programs

It is one thing to take an internal look at a university records program in seeking to improve its operations. But this can only be effective to a point. It takes a broader look, beyond its day-to-day boundaries, in order to observe what methods other university programs employ to come up with a series of best practices. Benchmarking with comparable industry professionals provides the external dimension necessary to assess the trends of an industry. This also makes for a more comprehensive evaluation than what an internal assessment only can provide.

Professor William Saffady suggested telephone interviews of ten university records managers to see what they were doing with records management (see survey questionnaire in Appendix E). He conjectured that after contacting ten institutions I might begin to see enough evidence of similarity that this would be a sufficient pool (Saffady interview, 2000). In doing so, however, the more records managers that were called, the more diverse the data became. At this point it was decided that a more accurate study necessitated including at least twice as many viable records management programs, above all, using those programs touted as leaders in the field by industry
professionals. After exhausting all of these, it was also recommended by Dr. Southern that I take a look at Appalachian State and East Carolina Universities, as both have active records management programs in place, with a high rate of compliance.

Below is a listing of the universities included in the survey:

1. Appalachian State University
2. Clemson University
3. Cornell University
4. East Carolina University
5. Georgia Tech
6. Harvard University
7. Indiana University
8. Kansas State University
9. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
10. Michigan State University
11. Ohio State University
12. Penn State University
13. UCLA
14. University at Albany, SUNY
15. University of Delaware
16. University of Florida
17. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
18. University of Michigan
19. University of Missouri System
20. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
21. University of Pennsylvania
22. University of Virginia
23. University of Washington
24. University of Wisconsin at Madison
25. Yale University

While this study attempts to show how UNC compares with other institutions in records management, it will also show the difficulty in doing so, as I have discovered there are few if any industry standards in place. I felt it important to include UNC as one of the 25 programs in the study, as theirs is a viable, stand-alone program.

What I have discovered is a variety of approaches and a wide range of operations including hierarchy, staffing, storage, and program functions. Some areas indeed show
marked trends, while other issues and practices are handled quite differently from institution to institution, making it difficult to identify best practices.

**Authority for Programs**

Most states have some sort of code or State Records Act (SRA) that requires all state agencies to keep official office records for a specified number of years, with instructions in place for disposal or transfer of these records. Of the institutions surveyed, only four (16%) are in states not requiring State records compliance. Some institutions have more than one basis of authority for the management of university records. For instance, four programs surveyed operate in tandem under both the SRA and a university policy.

The most cited document of authority for a university records program was a university policy (17 out of 25, or 68%) followed by a state records act (44%). Others cited either a letter of endorsement (in some instances annually) from the university chancellor or president, a manual or handbook, program Web site, and/or a mission statement.

1. University Policy 17  
2. State Records Act (SRA) 11  
4. President’s Memorandum/Chancellor’s Letter of Endorsement 3  
5. Web Site 2  
6. Archives Handbook  
7. Program Mission Statement

The average age of the records management programs polled is 18 years. The youngest (but certainly one of the more proactive) programs has officially been in existence for one year, and the oldest program in the survey began 37 years ago. A study
of all American universities most likely would show that any systematic practice of
records management is but a “good idea” and far from becoming a real practice.

The records management field then, is still in its fledgling, formative years in
higher education. It is a field whose ideals and practices are slow to evolve and
disseminate. Records management programs are even more slowly infiltrating the line-
item budgets of institutions of higher learning. Dr. Everett Rogers discusses this pattern
of slow infiltration in his book, Diffusion of Innovations. He refers to an innovation as:
An idea, object, or practice that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of
adoption (Rogers, 1995, p. 11) whose successful rate of adoption is characterized by its
relative advantage over the idea it supercedes; its compatibility with the existing values
and past experiences of potential adopters, its ease of understanding and use, the degree
with which an innovation may be easily experimented; the degree to which the results of
an innovation are visible; and the degree of change which occurs from the old
conventions to the newer ones, which can be greatly influenced by the depth of the
learning curve (Rogers, 1995, p. 15-16).

The infiltration process, or the diffusion of innovations is the planned or
spontaneous process of effectively communicating a new idea through certain channels
and getting it adopted into an organization or a social system over time. It is both a social
process involving social change, as well as a technical matter, with material/physical
objects and their information base (Rogers, 1995, p. 5). Most innovations diffuse at a
disappointingly slow rate, as evidenced in the failed attempts of U. S. public schools to
introduce the use of the metric system, the adoption of solar energy, contraception in
third world countries, and the eating polished rice.
Likewise, the idea of a campus-wide program for the destruction and transfer of administrative records is an idea that has been slow to diffuse in American institutions of higher learning. It could take another decade or two before a majority of universities are practicing records management, with a dedicated staff for this purpose.

**Records Management Reporting Structures**

Just as university structures are wide ranging, so too is the administrative hierarchy of university records management programs. The following is the list of administrators to whom the records managers/archivists surveyed report:

1. University Librarian 8
2. University Archivist 3
3. Head of Special Collections/Rare and Manuscripts Collections 3
4. Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs 2
5. Assistant Provost for Records Management
6. Associate Dean for Technical Services
7. Associate Dean of Libraries
8. Associate Provost for University Relations
9. Associate Vice Provost for Management Services
10. Corporate Financial Services
11. President’s Office
12. Vice President and University Secretary (one position)
13. Vice Provost for Libraries, Computing, and Technology

The most consistent protocol for administrative reporting was to the University Librarian, or Library Director, at 32% (eight programs). But if you combine all the titles for Vice President, Vice Provost, Associate Dean, Assistant Provost, or Dean into one category, this figure adds up to be the highest percentage, 36% (nine programs). Of course, it is what follows that makes these titles distinctive. Twelve percent of records managers report to the University Archivist (three programs) and the same for reporting to the Head of Special Collections. If you compare reporting lines inside the library to
those outside the library department, seventeen report to libraries (68%), and eight report outside the library (32%).

Seventeen of the records management programs surveyed are combined with university archives, while eight have their own separate programs. Some would argue that it is a good thing to be united with the archives, as records management functions are important in determining what ends up in the archives. One university archivist/records manager notes that he “cannot envision one [program being] independent of the other. Historically and typically, inactive [temporary] records are shunned by archivists. Here, we have both inactive and active records.”

Others would argue that having a separate program shows that records management is an important function in its own right, showing support from university administration. Separate programs usually have more staff dedicated to these functions than in a combined operation.

John Dojka promotes the organization of a joint Archives and Records Management program, recognizing that each records management component had a direct linkage to an archival activity:

> As archivists, our unique position in respect to the records of an institution allowed us to become the catalytic agent in rationalizing the production and flow of records within that institution, thereby saving substantial sums in both direct and indirect expenditures as well as increasing the institution’s administrative efficiency. Selectively adopting records management elements into our archival program, even if we did not go into a full-scale program, would enable us to do our jobs as archivists more thoroughly, more effectively, and, in the long run, at a lower cost (Dojka, 1980, p. 36-37).

There are other university records programs that have different administrative and physical unions. Some R.M. programs are combined with the Records Center and its
staff. One of the 25 surveyed is combined with Supplies. Another is aligned with the university’s Microfilm Library. While some universities assign the job of commandeering records to Legal Counsel or Internal Audit, one university’s Records and Resource Management program is charged with the subpoena function, coordinating the requisition of records for the entire campus. “Whenever records are needed for audit or legal reasons, they come through our office, like a central clearinghouse. We contact the appropriate department and make sure they get the right records to us. It’s easier for all involved. We assure the procedure is properly implemented, and that the correct records are called forth.”

**Partnering with Other Campus Agencies**

Records Managers were asked with what other campus offices and organizations did they work closely. Here are the results:

1. Internal Audit 12
2. IT (Information Technology)/IT Task Force 10
3. University Archives 7
4. General Administration/Counsel 6
5. Human Resources 6
6. Legal Counsel 3
7. Campus Records Review Board/Univ. Records Committee 2
8. Facilities Department 2
10. Registrar 2
11. Schools of Information and Library Science 2
12. ARMA (American Records Management Association)
13. Capitol and Space Planning Office
14. Institutional Research
15. Office of Public Disclosure
16. Pilot Offices that test the Schedule

The survey shows a trend for working closely with universities’ internal auditors (12 or 48%), and ten programs collaborate with universities’ Information Technology
departments or have formed IT task forces to address storage formats and the ever
increasing electronic records dilemma. All but one program that was not combined with
University Archives showed a close working relationship with the University Archivist,
both in terms of training and in developing workable retention schedules. Twenty-four
percent, or six programs, reported a close working relationship with the General
Administration/General Counsel, the universities’ highest level governing body. The
same percent work closely with the Human Resources office, through which many offer
their records training classes and workshops. Other programs work with the universities’
Legal Counsel, the campus Records Review Board or a University Records Committee,
the Facilities Department for transferring and storage of records, the Registrar’s office to
address the voluminous amount and sensitive nature of student records, and a Policy
Review Board or University Rules Coordinator.

**Program Names and Administrative Titles**

There is a wide variety of titles and program names in the records management
field, pointing to a lack of consistency. For those institutions that have both a
Director/Head of archives and records management, as well as a full time individual who
oversees the day-to-day functions of the records management functions (nine programs),
I have included both titles:

1. University Records Manager  4
2. Records Manager 3
3. University Archivist  3
4. Director of Records Management  2
5. Records Coordinator  2
6. Agency Records Manager
7. Assistant Provost for Records Management
8. Assistant University Archivist
9. Associate Head, Collections and Records Manager
10. Associate University Archivist for Records Management
11. Chair, Department of Special Collections
12. Director of Records Management and Archival Services
13. Director of University Archives and Records
14. Director of the University Archives
15. Director, Records and Resource Management
16. Director, Records Management Services
17. Director, University Archives and Records Center
18. Director, University Records Program
19. Head, University Archives and Records Program
20. Records Officer
21. Supervisor of Campus Records and Microfilm Library Services
22. Supervisor, Subpoenas and Records
23. Univ. Archivist & Campus Records Officer
24. University Archivist & Records Manager

Of the university records managers surveyed, (this being the most frequently cited title, above) there were 24 different administrative titles. Other more commonly used titles include Records Manager and University Archivist at three apiece, and Director of Records Management and Records Officer at two apiece. Half the administrative titles, 12 in all, have the words Archival, Archivist, or Collections as a portion of their title, showing strong ties to the university archives function. Over half the individuals surveyed (13 or 52%) perform dual roles as the university archivist and records manager. Sadly, this shows a common lack of institutional support for records management as a solitary, important operation of the university. This puts a huge burden on these archivists and their available resources to effectively secure and identify all the campus records that can comprehensively document the vital functions and history of an institution.

Like the administrative titles, there is a wide array of program names as well, with 15 separate names for the 25 programs. Bearing in mind that not all the universities surveyed have a stand-alone records management program, I have listed below the names
of the overall program, where there was not a separate records component. If the
program is a separate records management program, or has a records component, the
name of that program or component was given:

1. Records Management 6
2. University Archives 4
3. Records Management Office 2
4. Records Management Program 2
5. Archives and Records Management Services (ARMS)
6. Institute Archives and Special Collections
7. Records and Resource Management
8. Records Management Service
9. Records Retention Guidelines
10. Retention of University Records
11. University Archives and Records Center
12. University Archives and Records Management
13. University Archives and Records Program
14. University of XYZ Archives
15. University Records Program

Many of these program names were taken from their Web pages, and when this was not
obvious, or when there was no Web site, the head administrator supplied the name.

*Records Management* was cited most frequently with six recurrences, or 24% of the
program names. The next in common usage is *University Archives* with 16%, or four
citations. *Records Management Office* and *Records Management Program* were each
used for two different programs.

**Professional Affiliations**

Since there was such an array of practices in this newly emerging field of records
management, it is worth taking a look at what percentage of the archivists and records
managers surveyed belong to the foremost professional organizations in the field, ARMA
(American Records Management Association) and SAA (Society of American
Archivists). It is in these professional organizations that best practices evolve into standards in the field. The operating principles are born in each respective archives and records program, but it is in the coming together of professionals that ideas are discussed, and where new, workable solutions are shared and later experimented with in the workplace.

ARMA membership dues are $115. per year, whereas SAA membership is based upon annual salary:

- $65 : Retired
- $70 : Less than $20K
- $90 : $20K-$29,999
- $110 : $30K-$39,999
- $135 : $40K-$49,999
- $160 : $50K-$59,999
- $180 : $60K and over (SAA Web page)

Some university archivists that wear both hats as Records Manager/University Archivist, choose to belong to SAA, as it is more established, and more firmly rooted in academe. “Founded in 1936, the Society of American Archivists is North America’s oldest and largest national archival professional association” (SAA home page). Thirty-eight percent of its 3,400 members is comprised of college and university archivists.

ARMA memberships show a heavier slant towards corporate membership, as it is firmly rooted in corporate America. The organization began in 1914 as the Warren Filing Association. In 1927 it was renamed the Chicago Filing Association, and later the Records Management Association of Chicago. The first annual conference was held in 1955, and the American Records Management Association was formed in 1956 (ARMA Web site). According to the membership directory there are 330 ARMA members listed
with Universities in a membership of about 10,000 individuals. (ARMA Membership Directory).

Forty-four percent (11) of the records managers surveyed are ARMA members, while sixty percent (15) surveyed belong to SAA. Four of these, or sixteen percent, belong to both professional organizations. Five records officers surveyed, or twenty percent, belong to neither organization. As earlier stated, 17 of the 25 records programs in the study are unified with the university archives. Of these 17 unified programs there were 15 individuals who perform both archives and records management functions.

Below is a breakdown of professional memberships according to job title/function:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archivist/Records Manager</th>
<th>Records Manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARMA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAA</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For those surveyed with dual roles, 73% (11) belong only to SAA, and only 20% (3) belong to ARMA, including the individual that belongs to both. This shows that when given a choice, archivist/records managers are five times more likely to belong to SAA than to ARMA. Of the individuals surveyed who work only in a records management capacity, 64% belong to ARMA, with four of the eleven, or 36% belong only to ARMA, and three of the eleven, or 27% belong to both ARMA and SAA. Another 27% belong to neither association. Excluding those, 85% belong to SAA, and 23% belong to ARMA.
Staffing

In taking a look at the staffing of a university records program, there is a wide gamut of practices regarding the number of full and part time personnel who work with campus records. In most of combined (archivist/records management) programs, the archives staff works both with transient and archival records. In compiling the data for this category I made certain only to get the percentage of time devoted solely to the records management function in order to accurately compare them with the individual records management programs. Eight programs, or 32% polled do not even have a full time employee devoted to records management. Five of these programs have an equivalent of less than one full time employee per program. Conversely, one university reports 31 full time and seven part time employees—clearly the largest program in the nation. The next largest university records program has about a third as many on staff, with ten full time and five half time employees. Here are the average numbers of employees for all 25 programs:

3.16 Full Time Employees + 3.04 Part Time Employees = 4.21 Full Time Equivalencies

If you take away the top one from the equation, since the highest figure reflects a program with more than twice as many employees as any other, and also drop the bottom one, as the lowest figure reflects but three part time employees equaling one half of a position, here are those results:

2.09 Full Time Employees + 2.87 Part Time Employees = 3.06 Full Time Equivalencies

The last set of figures comes closer to resembling the average university records program staff. The three full time equivalents reflect, in most instances, a Records Program Manager, a Records Assistant/Office Manager, and a Records Analyst or
Records Processor or Trainer, depending upon the approach each program takes to scheduling records.

**Approaches to Records Management**

There are several different schemes used by records management programs in setting up campus files and in scheduling office records. One such method is the records analyst approach—hiring staff to work with each office in setting up records series with disposition statements for each series. This approach requires a larger staff, as the records management program is doing most of the work, most of the scheduling.

Another approach is to train point persons from each office to do the task of scheduling records for their office. I call this the liaison approach. This method usually requires more time up front with repeated training sessions, office visits, or answering telephone inquiries. But ultimately, the majority of the work of scheduling is done by these point persons, or liaisons.

There is a new wave of scheduling by modules or functions, also known as the functional approach. This practice addresses the functions of a given office, and tries to capture records to document office activities by designing modules that include similar series of records. These may include such series as personnel records or financial records, which offices can use as a model into which they can plug those types of records series. The functional-modular approach makes it easier for offices to determine what records they have and how to treat each series of records, rather than relying on a general schedule that may not address all the functions of an office.
Early support for the functional approach was offered by Thornton Mitchell in his 1979 presentation to the Society of American Archivists entitled *Appraisal*. “It is probably more important to relate the records to a particular function than it is to relate them to an organizational component because there may be no relationship between the organization and the function” (Mitchell, 1979, p. 8). In her book *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities*, Helen Willa Samuels states, “The size, scope, and pace of modern institutions require a new kind of organizational structure . . . requiring an alteration in appraisal practice that focuses the analysis on what organizations do rather than who does it” (Samuels, 1992, p. 5). Samuels warns against the inclination to focus attention on the individuals who generate official records, as this runs the risk of narrowing the scope of activities and the evidence needed to document the institution—a more holistic approach (Samuels, 1992, p. 6).

For one records manager surveyed, the functional approach “specifically spells out to folks what we want to document. These are not schedules per se. There could be one or twenty-one offices using the same ‘Schedule.’ This approach is much easier for us, not having to write schedules for over 1000 offices.” Some examples of these functions include Publishing, Budgeting, Student Work, Payroll, Athletics, Student Organizations, and Campus Construction and Renovation. This institution leads the pack in the functional approach with 42 functional modules.

While all the above approaches are pro-active ones, the last approach is not. It is more of a passive/reactive approach, whereby departments call the records office when they are in a space crisis mode of operation. The records program acts in an advisory capacity, but relies on the general schedule to answer as many questions as possible.
Most of the programs using this approach suffer from a lack of university support, having to work with small staffs and few resources. Many of them have a general schedule on the Web that they hope offices will consult, but they do not have the time or resources to enforce this or to see which offices are participating in records management practices and which are not.

Four programs use the records analyst approach to records management. Three programs use a passive/reactive/schedule-on-the-Web approach. Two programs practice the functional approach. And one program relies on the liaison approach to scheduling university records. Thus far, I have only mentioned ten programs, or 40%, practicing a solitary approach to records management. The remainder of programs surveyed utilize a combination of approaches, which suggests that this is preferred to relying solely on one method of records management. Perhaps some departments need more assistance than others. Some departments may be short staffed and need a records analyst. Others may prefer to handle their own records.

Here is the breakdown for the 60% that practice multiple approaches:

- Functional-Modular/Liaison/Records Analyst 3
- Functional-Modular/Passive-Reactive 3
- Functional-Modular/Liaison/Passive-Reactive 2
- Liaison/Passive-Reactive 2
- Liaison/Records Analyst 2
- Functional-Modular/Records Analyst 1
- Liaison/Functional-Modular 1
- Passive-Reactive/Records Analyst 1

Below, each solitary approach used has been broken down from the combined methods in order to calculate which singular approach was most widely employed. Due
to the amazingly close results, we can surmise there is not yet a trend or best practice in university approaches to records management:

- Records Analyst Approach 8
- Functional-Modular Approach 7
- Passive-Reactive Approach 7
- Liaison Approach 6

To further illustrate a lack of standardization in the jargon of the records management field, there are myriad designations for the departmental/organizational point person responsible for the records of that unit:

1. Coordinators
2. Departmental Records Coordinators
3. Liaisons
4. Records Authority
5. Records Coordinators
6. Records Custodians
7. Records Management Coordinators
8. RM Coordinators
9. RMCs

When asked if those who were not using liaisons had ever tried using them in the past, 79% had not. But for the three who had, one records manager admitted that it was a lot of work for a small staff. Another tried using coordinators twice, but spent so much time updating the liaison list they had to stop. A third admitted that the liaisons just ignored them, since they were a private institution with little means to mandate records scheduling. That institution had to go the records analyst route in order to have an effective program.
Scheduling

Another inconsistency in the records management field is how programs are scheduling office records, and what these schedules are called. Many programs have multiple names for schedules with either abbreviated names, or designations for different types of schedules—differentiating between a *General Schedule* and a *Customized or Specialized Schedule*. Some universities have their own unique schedule name. I have substituted *XYZ* in these instances. Some of the schedules listed below may not appear to be retention and disposition schedules, but are nonetheless:

1. General Schedule/s 5
2. General Records Schedule/s 4
3. Records Retention and Disposition Schedule/s 4
4. Records Retention Schedule/s 4
5. Retention Schedules 4
6. General Records Retention Schedule 2
7. Retention and Disposition Schedule 2
8. The Schedule/s 2
9. Common Schedules
10. Customized Schedules
11. Departmental Record Schedules
12. Departmental Schedules
13. General Records
14. General Records Retention and Disposition Schedules
15. General Retention & Disposition Schedules
16. Generic Schedule
17. Model Records Disposal Authorization for Academic Units
18. R&D Schedule
19. Record Series
20. Records Disposition Schedules
21. Records Retention and Destruction Schedules
22. Records Schedules
23. Retention Authorizations
24. Special Records Schedules
25. Specialized Schedules
26. State of *XYZ*’s General Schedule for Colleges and University Records
27. State Schedule
29. *XYZ* Schedule
30. *XYZ* General Record/s Schedule
There is such a wide range of terms used in the field of record management that there appears to be little in the way of standard industry jargon. Even the most commonly used terms such as the General Schedule/s, Records Retention Schedules, Records Retention and Disposition Schedule/s, or Retention Schedules were only used by four or five programs, or 16-20% of the programs. However, just as the Wayne State Archives Records Management Handbook suggested 42 years ago, for those that have a records management program, the retention and disposition schedule is still the preferred method of selecting records for transfer to the archives or to the records center (Managing Inactive Records, p. 6). Twenty-two out of 25 surveyed, or 88%, use some type of R&D schedule. This is one of the more significant trends or best practices observed in the study.

Of these 22 programs, 18 records programs, or 81%, use a General Schedule as a model schedule for university offices. Some programs use a general schedule as a basis for scheduling office records, adding distinctive file series to this to create Customized or Specialized Schedules. Other programs try to make the General Schedule as comprehensive as possible, as each office record series has to somehow plug into the schedule. Many programs, due to a lack of staff to go to the effort of customizing schedules, put their general schedules on the Web and leave it up to the offices to schedule their own records, with the records management office acting only in an advisory capacity. “We’re basically on the honor system here,” says one university records manager. “I help office assistants with their schedule when they phone in. Offices are not supposed to destroy any records until I review their destruction form.”
Seventeen of the records programs, or 77%, use a *Customized Schedule*, or a schedule that reflects the different series of each individual office. Some series will be common with other campus offices, but others will be unique to that office or program. More specifically, the majority of programs that use schedules, or 59%, use both a general schedule *and* a customized schedule (13 out of 22). Five offices (23%) use only a general schedule, admitting to not having the resources, time or personnel, to customize schedules. Four offices (18%) take the opposite approach and customize every schedule from scratch (i.e., not based on a general schedule).

Three offices (12% of the programs surveyed) do not use a traditional schedule at all. One program monitors the pace of inactive records through communication with campus departments. Only their upper level administrative records get transferred to temporary storage. Another program does not use traditional *schedules*, but has adopted a functional approach, where offices find the functional modules that apply to their office, and plug into those. The other institution is also building modules, going to a functional approach, having abandoned the old schedule formats from prior decades. It is only accessioning financial records from the finance module they created, with plans to do other modules in the near future.

Schedules even look very different from institution to institution. Based on the interviews, a higher percentage of university records schedules use a more narrative format (11 of the 22 programs, or 50%), followed by 27% (six) that use a columnar or tabular format. A few programs use elements of both the narrative and columnar formats (five/23%). Some programs indicated that they were redesigning their schedules and moving towards a more columnar, or less wordy/more user-friendly format.
One question asked was how many approved schedules were on file, trying to get a sense of whether programs were scheduling by single office units, or by department or school. Only one program had approved schedules in the single digits. Six programs had approved schedules in the double digits (32% of records management programs), leaving twelve programs with the number of approved schedules in the triple digits (63%). This would lead one to believe that the majority of universities surveyed are scheduling individual campus units. If we drop the highest and lowest figures (765 and 2), which in both instances are far off the norm, we come up with an average of 200 schedules on file per university records program. Including all figures, there is a median of 220 approved schedules per institution. Six records managers surveyed had no idea how many offices had schedules or were transferring records.

Regarding the percentage of campus offices not practicing records management (i.e., without approved schedules), 32% of records managers surveyed (eight) had no idea, and no way to get such a figure. Many institutions have difficulty identifying all the offices, programs, and organizations in existence on campus. And when a new campus unit is formed, there is no procedure in place to alert records management programs about this. At UNC-Chapel Hill for instance, the only listing of all the campus agencies is the UNC print and online directories (containing duplicate information). This is a non-authoritative source, as it sometimes lists programs by an unofficial name or lists them under a departmental umbrella that makes it difficult to locate them.

Of the seventeen respondents who have a “good idea” what percent of offices are not participating, the average is 32%. On the highly successful end, three institutions report 99-100 percent compliance. On the low end, two institutions report 10% and 18%
compliance. Even if we drop these more extreme figures we come up with an average of 31% of campus offices who are not participating in the records management programs. Despite the odds that many records programs face, they are getting some cooperation and some good results. But participation, i.e. having a schedule, does not insure that it is being implemented. So there always remains a margin for improvement.

To make scheduling easier for offices, and moving towards a more functional approach, many records officers (16 or 64%) are designing modules for specific types of records such as financial records, student records, or personnel records. These modules will assist offices in defining their file series instead of having to sort through a lengthy general schedule when looking for a particular type of file series. Five institutions (31% of the 16) only have one module in place at this time. Of these five, three are for financial records and two are for personnel records. As you will see below, these are the most popular modules used by university records programs. At the other end of the spectrum, one university has gone to an entirely functional approach with 42 modules created. Taking away the extremes (with one at the low end and 25 at the high end), the average number of modules, for those who use them, is eight. If you include the high and low extremes, the average number is nine modules.

Below is the combined alphabetical listing of all the modules identified by this study—47 individual modules in all—with the most commonly used modules listed first:

1. Financial/Accounting Records 14
2. Human Resources/Personnel Records 12
3. Student Records 11
4. Administrative Records 7
5. Buildings/Construction/Facilities Records 7
7. Project/Contract/Grant/Research Records 7
8. Academic/Course/Curriculum Records 6
10. Galleries/Libraries/Museum Records 4
11. Planning & Budget Records 4
12. Auxiliary/Convenience/Food/Services Records 3
13. Payroll Records 3
14. Publication/Publishing Records 3
15. Electronic/Email Records 2
16. Executive and Management Records 2
17. General Services Records 2
18. Information Systems/Technology/Computing Records 2
19. Internal Audit Records 2
20. Medical Records 2
21. Real Property/Equipment/Supplies Records 2
22. Affirmative Action Records
23. Association/Board/Committee/Council Records
24. Athletic Records
25. Bursar/Cashier Records
26. College and University Records
27. Corporate Records
28. Correspondence Records
29. Forms Records
30. Fund Management/Investment Records
31. General Records
32. Governmental/Community Relations Records
33. Insurance Records
34. Labor Relations Records
35. Legal Records
36. Mailroom Records
37. Motor Vehicle Records
38. Patent & Trademarks Records
39. Pension Records
40. Purchasing Records
41. Recruitment Records
42. Risk Management Records
43. Sales and Revenue Records
44. Student Organizations Records
45. Tax Records
46. Unofficial Records
47. Vacant Position Applications Records
Storage

Another challenge faced by university records programs is the storage of transitory records—records that are inactive and non-archival but that must be retained for legal or administrative purposes for a specified time period in the event they are needed. Only eight programs (32%) have a Records Center, however, about half of programs (twelve or 48%) have a designated storage area, usually space that is shared with other campus agencies. Two additional programs outsource storage for campus offices. This leaves only three programs, or twelve percent that offer departments no storage facilities at all.

Of the eight with records centers, three are on campus, two are off campus, and three have one records center on campus and one off campus. For those with designated storage areas, ten of the twelve storage facilities, or 83%, are on campus, one is off campus, and one university has inactive storage areas both on campus and off. If we combine all twenty programs with university-provided storage areas, thirteen are on campus (65%), three are off campus (15%), and four have storage facilities both on and off campus (20%).

The average age of university records centers is 16 years, with the oldest at 36 years. The next oldest records center is 29 years old. Two programs have only had a records center for one year. Four RCs feature tall storage, and five have special climate and/or humidity controls. One has a special alarm for water, and several feature a vault. Eleven of the twenty with storage space (55%) share that space with other campus departments, and of the twelve that have designated storage area(s) on campus, seven of
these share storage space (58%). Of the eight Records Centers, half share space with other departments.

The largest physical area of inactive records is 86,000 square feet. (As some records officers polled had square footage more readily than cubic footage, I am quoting the storage area in square feet.) The next largest follows with 80,000 square feet of inactive records storage. Both of these have twice the space as the third largest records center at 40,000. Of the eight records centers, the average square footage is 33,970 feet, and of the 12 programs with designated storage space the average square footage is 7,606 feet, for a combined average storage area of 20,788 feet of records. This shows that those universities with records centers have four-and-one-half times the amount of records storage as those without one. (In both instances, there was one program in each column that did not know the amount of storage space, so they were not factored in.) Whether the amount of inactive records drove the need for a records center, or whether having a records center drove the high utilization of this space is uncertain. Regardless, space continues to be a major concern for university records programs. The average storage area of all surveyed is at 82% capacity, with slightly more room for expansion for Records Centers only, which are at 73% capacity.

Twelve of the twenty-one programs (57%) that provide records retrieval service keep referencing statistics. The average number of annual retrievals of temporary records reported is 8,452 retrievals. However, since one records center logged over four-and-a-half times that of the next highest number of retrievals, the figure without that one is 2,840 retrievals. As the second highest figure is also inflated, at over twice that of the
next highest number of retrievals, without including the highest and lowest two figures
the average number of 1,974 retrievals per year.

In asking what kinds of records are not allowed into temporary storage, the most
obvious answer was archival records. However, practices range from “no restrictions” to
a litany of limitations. They include, in order of frequency:

1. Only what the schedule dictates 8
2. Duplicate materials 3
3. No restrictions 3
4. Books 2
5. Faculty publications 2
6. Journal articles/magazines 2
7. Medical records 2
8. Student records 2
9. Artifacts/memorabilia
10. Class rosters
11. Correspondence, routine
12. Donor files
13. Drafts (unless final is unavailable)
14. Faculty files
15. Faculty personal papers
16. Financial records (detailed ones like cancelled checks, receipts, etc.)
17. Galleys (unless final is unavailable)
18. Grade books
19. Hazardous materials
20. Newspapers
21. Personnel records
22. Reprints
23. Research notes/data if a summary is available
24. Research papers
25. Typescripts (unless final is unavailable)

Arguably, several of these could be lumped together into one set of records for
faculty files: class rosters, grade books, faculty personal papers, and faculty publications.
If so, this would be the second most cited, with a total of six types of record restrictions.
One records center disallowed anything that could potentially leak, such as containers
with genetically engineered mice, although paraffin boxes containing human eyes were permitted.

**Charging for Services**

The following section is an assessment of the fees imposed by university records programs. Only 20% of programs (five) charge for records retrieval from storage. Most universities absorb these costs. Two universities charge $1.50 per retrieval, and one university charges a flat fee for storage which includes unlimited referencing. One records program at a private institution has an elaborate set of referencing charges, including separate charges for files and boxes with separate courier and retrieval and return fees, telephone look-up/search charges, and $11.50 per emergency retrieval/delivery. Their records center operation more than pays for itself, with its surplus funds rolling over into the archives budget.

Six programs, or 24% of those polled, charge campus departments for the storage of inactive records. Those that charge by the cubic foot average $3.33 per cubic foot per year. Others impose "per box per year" fees ranging from $2.40 to $11.50 per box, with an average of $5.28 per box per year. Again, dropping the highest figure, as it is inflated compared with the rest of those surveyed (over twice that of the next highest program), gives a more realistic average storage charge per box per year of $3.20.

Other programs charge for microfilming records, transferring records, and one charges for transferring large shipments only. Two programs charge for photocopying, and four charge for boxes. The average box charge is $3.03 per box, with one program giving each office the first ten boxes then charging $4.00 for each additional box.
same program that had the complicated referencing fees, also charges for photocopying, preparing box lists, interfiling records, data entry of records per file folder heading, packing boxes for storage, and charges for each disposition authorization request. That program, however, is so successful in recovering funds for their services, that all the money goes back into the University Archives.

**Outsourcing**

Questions were asked about what kinds of outsourcing records programs were using and, where known, what kinds of outsourcing, if any, were taking place among campus departments independent from archives and records management programs.

As mentioned earlier, two programs outsource all of their storage—one with a state records center, which is conveniently located in the same town as that university, and one uses Iron Mountain, a nationwide company offering high density storage facilities with tall shelving units and cherry pickers. A third program outsources 20% of their storage—the overflow from their designated storage area. Two of the three that outsource storage, do their own reference work. Ten programs (40%) reported that some campus offices at their institution are independently contracting outside storage with private storage vendors.

Twenty percent of programs polled (five) are doing their own microfilming of records as a preservation and storage strategy, while twenty-eight percent (seven programs) outsource microfilming (one of these being COM, or Computer Outsource Microfilming), for a total of twelve programs, or 48% of programs that sanction the microfilming of records. Three universities report departments independently
microfilming their own records, with two others outsourcing microfilming, for a total of 20% of institutions with independent offices microfilming their records. Looking at all the institutions participating in microfilming, a total of 15 or 60% of universities microfilm records, either by records management programs, individual offices, or outsourcing.

Are some offices or programs using imaging/scanning or electronic/digital record technologies, and is this technology replacing microfilming? The latter is difficult to ascertain, although seven, or half of the institutions that microfilm, are also doing imaging, with an additional five institutions doing just imaging. To break this down, four records programs are doing imaging, one outsources large scanning projects, and eight institutions report independent departments imaging their own records, with three other university offices outsourcing microfilming. Adding all the institutions participating in imaging, a total of 12 or 48% of universities practice the imaging of records, either by records management programs, individual offices, or outsourcing--the same number that practice microfilming. Other services outsourced include microfilm storage (one program) and the shredding and/or destruction of records (three programs).

**Communication with Departments**

Eighty percent of the records management programs studied have some type of Web site. Three of the programs have Web sites that are only accessible via their university intranet. These aside, when searching for the records or records management functions from the university home pages, only 40% of these with Web sites, or eight out of the twenty, are easily found. The other twelve sites are buried in six or more layers of sites, requiring a concerted search effort to find them. Another regrettable factor is that
nine of the twenty, or 45% that have a Web site, do not have an up-to-date site. On a more positive note, of the five programs that do not have a Web site, three of these (60%), at least have a university policy in a Web document, accessible from the university home pages, endorsing and encouraging records management activities. This combines for a total of 88% of the programs surveyed having some kind of Web presence. Half (ten) of the records management programs with a web presence share their site with the University Archives.

Besides Web sites, what are other ways records programs communicate with campus offices? Here is a graph detailing methods of communication from most to least common:
The Internet, email, and the telephone are the most chosen forms of connecting with departments, due to their efficiency. This does not mean that they are the most effective means, however. Some offices may need more direct contact with records management staff before becoming motivated to work the scheduling of office records. Nearly half of the records management programs are using targeted mailings and training venues to reach campus units. About a fourth, or six out of 25 polled are advertising or writing articles in staff newsletters or bulletins and campus newspapers. Four of the programs have their own newsletter to promote awareness of records management activities. In addition to training sessions, some hold brown bag question-and-answer luncheons. One of the most unique and creative communication tools is the magnets being given out to campus departments by one university. Contact information for the records management office is on the magnets and encourages university employees to put them—where else—on their filing cabinets!

**Training**

One way to communicate the ideals of records management to departments and to educate university employees in the art of scheduling office records is through training. Some programs, due to a lack of resources, must rely on the honor system with schedules, modules, or university policies online, and with each office expected to manage its own records. Other records programs take a more pro-active approach with their training programs. The survey shows that only half of the records programs polled offer some sort of training program (12 out of 25, or 48%). Nine out of twelve that do, offer training to all university employees (75%). Two records programs offer separate training venues
for liaisons and for all university employees. Only one records program offers training just for liaisons.

Frequency of training varies greatly, depending upon how long there has been a training program, and how many employees there are at a university. Annual training sessions are the most common (1/3 of all that offer training) and two programs provide training twice a year. One program offers training every other year, and the remaining programs offer training sessions six, seven, eight, ten, and twelve times a year. This makes for an average of 4.3 training sessions per year. Some basic training sessions last only an hour, while other, more advanced sessions, last up to three hours a day for three days.
If the electronic records category was combined with the email management category, this would tie with the basic records management course as the most frequently taught records management session. The comprehensive records management course has its own category since this is a half-day session covering both basic and advanced records management techniques. In addition to offering training, eighty percent, or 20 of the 25 programs surveyed make on-site consultations, showing a trend for service-oriented, pro-active records programs.

**Electronic Records**

Records programs are spending a great deal of time offering training sessions on electronic records. But how else are they addressing this volatile topic? Much of our institutional memory is being lost to electronic formats such as email, Web sites and floppy discs, as campus personnel are not taking the time to save and migrate electronic data or make print copies of official electronic documents. Web sites are being changed with no record of former versions. Emails are being deleted without concern for the policies they contain. Sixteen universities, or 64% have instituted an electronic records policy. A fourth of these policies are online. Some of these policies address email only. Two institutions surveyed that haven’t been very proactive in the scheduling of paper records have instead leaped ahead into the electronic formats arena, hoping to stay ahead there, in doing a better job with electronic records. The results below show the different ways universities are dealing with electronic formats, with the most common treatments listed first:
Some universities are focusing on specific aspects of electronic formats such as imaging and email, while two programs are doing nothing at all to address the electronic formats dilemma. Seven programs have addressed electronic formats in the schedule. Some university Web sites are being evaluated for long-term value. Other Web sites and electronic documents are being printed every six months and written into retention schedules. Some records centers accept all storage mediums, others do not accept discs or diskettes. In reality, who has time to look through the old media to see if it is worthy of migration? Professor Saffady recommends throwing out all the enigmatic floppy discs.
lying about offices. “There is a good chance you have a hard copy on file anyway,” he says (Saffady lecture).

Electronic records are fraught with concerns. The durability of media and the machines that play them are but fleeting technologies. In the race to the latest, the next high-tech device, no one is taking the time to make translation devices necessary to upgrade to the newest innovation. The Internet is based upon open standards—that is the only way it can operate as a global interface. According to the video Into the Future: On the Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age, the same concerns needed to be addressed regarding the migration and preservation of electronic records. We must take away the blinders that only allow us to see toward the future if we are to effectively preserve the present and the past (Sanders, 1997, video).

**Challenges That Lie Ahead for Records Management Programs**

Records program administrators were asked what they perceived to be their greatest challenges in the decade ahead. With an eye toward the future, 64% (16) of records managers listed Electronic Records as the number one greatest challenge their program faces. Other leading challenges given were lack of space, monetary and administrative support for records management, legal issues over campus records, needing more staff, and more adequate storage facilities. Some records managers cited the need for a central system of control, a more systematic approach to records management, better access to records, more compliance with mandates, developing modules for scheduling, the computer output microfilming (COM) issue, reassessing
program responsibilities, greater outreach programs and training. Below are the challenges referred to with the most frequent cited first:

1. Electronic records
2. Space
3. Staff
4. Budget/administrative support
5. Central system of control
6. Legal issues
7. Storage facility
8. Better access to records
9. Better storage environment
10. Complying with mandates
11. Computer output microfilming (COM)
12. Developing modules
13. Greater outreach programs
14. Program responsibilities
15. Review schedules
16. Systematic approach to records management
17. Training
18. Developing distance learning programs
Chapter 7

Assessing the Records Management Program at UNC-Chapel Hill: How Does it Compare Nationally?

This chapter will focus on how the Records Management Program at UNC-Chapel Hill compares with other university records programs. It was surprising to find such a wide array of practices among the programs surveyed—the presumed crème de la crème of university records programs. This makes benchmarking for best practices, or the comparison of programs where industry standards are sparse at best, seem rather an elusive task. But this section will attempt to bring some focus and perspective to this mission by examining each area of the survey.

Authority for Programs

The fact that at UNC-CH there is a letter of endorsement from the University Provost, a manual, and a university records management policy in addition to the State Records Act shows a strong commitment for the Records Management Program, which should make compliance easier than at many other universities. Three university records managers surveyed for this study were disgruntled over a lack of support to be a more proactive program at their institutions. Their university administrators were unwilling to hear their point of view, and had already made up their minds that records management
was not going to be a high priority for their university. This is not the case at UNC-Chapel Hill.

**Reporting Structures**

UNC-CH has the highest-ranking administrative title for records management in the study, *Assistant Provost for Records Management*, with a University Records Manager reporting to the Assistant Provost. This shows tremendous support from the University administration. The RMP is considered to be an important program, a line item in the University’s budget. This puts UNC above most university records programs, as it is in the 32% of programs in the study that reports to a higher level in the university hierarchy, giving these programs more credence than if they reported to the Librarian, who reports to the assistant provost. Strong support for Carolina’s RMP is very fitting historically, as the United State’s first National archivist was a UNC graduate, and because the UNC Archives predates the National Archives by four years.

**Partnering with Other Campus Agencies**

The Records Management Program at UNC-Chapel Hill is fortunate that it shares a suite of offices with the University Archivist. This makes for greater ease of communication with that program, and the two collaborate on many sub-committees and training sessions. There is tremendous support on both sides for what the other is doing, and both the University Archivist and the University Records Manager are aware of what needs to be done in their respective areas to make it easier for the operation as a whole.
Program Names and Administrative Titles

Both the administrative title used at UNC-CH, University Records Manager, and the program name, Records Management Program, are ones most frequently used by other institutions. This shows an awareness of and a desire to comply with industry trends.

Professional Affiliation

Carolina's records manager, is given university support for membership and attendance to ARMA events, and he is active in both the local chapter and national chapters. He is even on committees within these two, showing a commitment to being a contributor in shaping the trends and best practices of the industry.

Staffing

Considering its small staff of four, the Assistant Provost for Records Management, the University Records Manager, a Records Assistant/Office Manager, and a Records Analyst, UNC is doing an excellent job in having approved schedules for over 500 departmental units--and this, without even having the service of a records center to offer them.

Approaches to Records Management

As stated earlier, it is sometimes better to diversify one’s approach in an attempt to reach a wider audience. This is what the Records Management Program has done, in going beyond its initial liaison approach. They have recently added a records analyst to its staff, albeit a temporary position, to boost the number of approved schedules on file.
If this proves successful, and if offices will share in the cost of this service, this could become a permanent position. The university records manager is continuing to add more functional modules as well, for offices that do their own scheduling.

**Scheduling**

UNC’s program expends a great deal of energy in offering departments assistance in customizing each and every schedule, to reflect all file series in each location. This reflects a strong commitment to customer service and customer satisfaction.

The State of North Carolina’s general schedule guidelines are more succinct than they were when this project began. UNC will soon follow suit with a leaner, less narrative format after the State's model schedule has been completed.

The trend towards functional modules for scheduling office records has not gone unnoticed by the UNC-CH records manager. While there has only been one module completed for financial records, plans continue for developing others.

**Storage**

A university records sub-committee is currently looking for records storage space either on or near the UNC campus. It remains to be seen whether this will be an old or new, a shared facility or one dedicated just to temporary, inactive university records. This may prove to be wishful thinking, depending on the persuasiveness of other departments vying for new or improved facilities. However, with a new chancellor at the helm and the newly passed bond referendum for improvements to university facilities, the chances for getting a records center on the university planning agenda are much
improved. The RMP could argue that a records center would pay for itself with the fees it assesses for records storage and retrieval.

**Outsourcing**

The RMP at Carolina is not doing any outsourcing, which can be viewed as both good and bad. The good part is that it is taking care of its own with its microfilming operation, and is heavily involved in the study of electronic records and imaging matters. But the lack of outsourcing of services like storage and records retrieval shows a lack of initiative in forcing those who need these services to find them on their own.

**Communication with Departments**

UNC’s RMP does an excellent job of communicating with campus departments. They have set up a listserv that is active in apprising campus liaisons of new records management developments and training opportunities. There is a Web site, phone calls, office visits, targeted mailings, and announcements are made in staff and campus newspapers. In comparison with other program Web sites, UNC’s program scores high. The RMP has a Web site devoted solely to its Program rather than sharing a site and site menu with the university archives. It is easily found, and has been updated in the past year. While it loses points for style and design being rather bare boned and all text, it is functional.

**Training**

Chapel Hill is in the minority of programs that offer a true training program, with six or more sessions a year. This is two sessions more than the average program offers.
The RMP is continuing to expand its course offerings as well, going beyond the basic records management workshop and getting into more specific areas such as scheduling and filing, student records, archiving and historical records, and electronic records. There is a training sub-committee that plans new course offerings and helps to refine the ones already in existence.

**Electronic Records**

UNC’s records program is facing the challenges of electronic records head on, with sub-committees focusing on retention of electronic formats and solutions to the dilemma. The RMP brought in a nationally renowned figure to address the University community to raise awareness of the electronic records debate. They are putting together a set of imaging guidelines for the offices that choose to do this on their own.

**Challenges That Lie Ahead**

Securing a storage facility for inactive records and creating more modules as guidelines for scheduling were cited as the Program's highest priorities for the coming years. While these were not ones most frequently cited, each program has different needs and concerns it must address to be more effective and efficient.
Chapter 8

Conclusion

The most obvious challenge for the RMP that I have encountered in this study has been a lack of resources, namely departmental liaisons to devote adequate time to this activity. Part of it is an unwillingness to tackle what to most seems like an insurmountable task. I have heard repeatedly from the staff how over-extended they are with little reserve time to perform their records management duties in addition to their other day-to-day responsibilities. It's not enough to have a State Records Act, a university policy and an endorsement from the Chancellor's office. Getting people to comply involves making on-site visits, developing a training program, and sometimes bribing employees with refreshments!

Amazingly, the records management staff has remained committed and forges ahead. Even amidst this evaluation process they are reassessing their methodologies and taking a pro-active approach to the ceaseless challenges that records and information management present. I am happy to report that already the Records Management Program staff is addressing some of the issues raised by the results of this study and are making some procedural changes to make it easier for offices to comply.

New modules are being written. New and improved training sessions are being offered. A records analyst has been hired to begin working with campus offices in
compiling file inventories and in scheduling records. The prospect of a university records center is a possibility as they work with the Facilities Department in locating either a suitable building on or near campus, or property nearby upon which to build. There are many committees and sub-committees working on matters such as liaison training and development, and electronic records and imaging guidelines. The RMP at Chapel Hill is continuing with its liaison approach, forging new relationships, and identifying new campus offices and organizations.

Since this study began, the RMP at Chapel Hill has evolved from its singular liaison approach into a combined liaison/analyst/modular-functional approach. This broad-based, multi-faceted scheme better serves the campus community. Some offices need more help than others, but wish to remain sovereign in the handling of their own records. The user-friendly modules work well for these offices. Others would just as soon have someone else come in and do it. Some liaisons find the ongoing training opportunities empowering, as well as a unifying experience with other campus liaisons.

Because the Program is still in its formative years and is immersed in committee work, training, and other outreach venues, there is going to be a lot of time spent away from the actual work of scheduling. In other words, there may not be as much evidence of approved schedules as there will be in the future. In realizing this, it is important that university administrators not place expectations of the Program too high at this stage, but to continue is show of support and encouragement as the RMP persists in making improvements and in experimenting with new ways.

It is hoped that this study will benefit the records management community in higher education. These probings demonstrate a plethora of ways university records
programs can address the many issues surrounding institutional records. Perhaps those who read this will try a new method or approach mentioned in this study. One university records officer stated “I'm really looking forward to seeing your results -- we're in the process of seeking long-term funding for the program, and it will be good to see where we are in the scheme of things.” The amount of time and support those interviewed have given to this study is very much appreciated, and demonstrates a high degree of interest on their part to be a part of such a study and to benefit from the results.

Records management is an important component of any university employee's job: preventing the clutter of dated and perhaps useless or inactive records. University records programs have come a long way on the road to educating campus communities as we see more and more programs beginning the often thankless but ever important charge of capturing and preserving the history of their institution. Future employees and researchers will benefit exceedingly from their efforts.
References


