Re-engineering Archives:

Business Process Management (BPM) and the archival quest for efficiency
“Hidden Collections” report

Key points

– Be flexible in applying cataloging/processing procedures
– Equal allocation of resources between related archival tasks
The Archival Business Process (simplified)

- Selection and Appraisal

Processing (Arrangement and Description)

- Collection Management
  - Preservation
  - Storage
  - Etc.
- Reference services
What is Business Process Management (BPM)?

- A management approach aimed at aligning all of the activities of an organization with its customers needs
- A holistic approach that looks at the entire business process rather than focusing on sub-components
The Archival Business Process (simplified)

- Selection and Appraisal
- Arrangement and Description
- Collection Management
  - Preservation
  - Storage
  - Etc.
- Reference services
BPM Tools

- Business Process Mapping
- Business Process Modeling
- Statements of Work
- Use cases
Relationship Maps
- show the customer-supplier relationships or linkages that exist between parts of an organization

Cross functional-process maps
- show how an organization’s major work processes cut across several functions.
Process Modeling

- General Process Charts
  - charts summarize the current process, the redesigned process, and the expected improvements from the proposed changes.

- Process Flow Diagrams
  - show movements of items from one activity or area to another on a picture of the facility
Process Modeling (cont.)

- Process Activity Charts
  - provide details to gain an understanding of the sequence of activities in the process.

- Flowcharts
  - graphically depict activities
Statement of Work

- Document describing the current process and the proposed process in graphical and textual format
Methodology

This project will rely on the PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT (PDCA) cycle in order to improve process management. Currently, we are in the Plan stage. During the Do stage, the Archival Appraisal Process will be implemented. During the Check stage, we will monitor process progress and evaluate how well we are meeting our time reduction and efficiency improvement objectives. Based on this evaluation, during the ‘Act’ stage, we will make necessary adjustments to the process design in order to maximize our BPM results.

Analysis of Current Situation

Current Process Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Name</th>
<th>Archival Appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process Owner</td>
<td>Gordon Deane</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Process Flow:

Appraisals are done at the end of each fiscal year and are reviewed by individual curators within the department. Limited documentation is maintained for appraisal decisions, though the Board of Curators has established a review policy for appraisals.

The policy requires that all accessions of greater than 25 linear ft. or with a value of over $2,500 be brought to the board for review. Materials that bear some political sensitivity, as well as those that would require a change in the standard contract, also require a review by the board.

The policy also requires that acquisition requests for materials valued at between $1,000 and $2,500 be approved by the curator’s supervisor. Once appraisals are made, there is often a lag in time between when the materials are acquired and when processing work is assigned.
Proposed Solution

In mapping archival appraisal activities, seven tasks were identified. These included tasks for the initiating curator, their supervisor, and the Board of Curators. The curator will begin the process by completing a document for newly identified archival materials. Once they have described the collection and have made an appraisal decision, a number of positive tests follow.

If the curator makes a positive appraisal and acquisition decision, and the decision does not require additional reviews, then a process is assigned. However, if a supervisor or board review is required, appraisal steps will need to be taken before the appraisal can be made. Conditions that would trigger additional reviews by the Board of Curators include: changes that are significant in the standard context, politically sensitive materials, and materials that are not typical for the collections. The Board of Curators must then issue an additional recommendation to the curator.

the supervisor or Board of Curators may allow the curator to provide additional description or reason for their appraisal.

If the supervisor or Board of Curators should make a negative appraisal or decline to acquire the materials, then the curator enters a disposition statement and the process ends.

Proposed Workflow

[Diagram of workflow process]
Use Case

- Allow description of sequences of events that, taken together, lead to a system doing something useful.
Perry Special Collections Use Case diagram (appraisal)
Benefits in the Perry Special Collections

- Reduced redundancies
- Simpler workflows that are easy to learn and automate
- Collections are “touched” by fewer individuals and are available for research faster
Re-engineering Archives

- Need to take a holistic view
- Need to focus on customer (patron) needs
- Need to pull ideas from other disciplines