

Drowning in Binders, Lost in Bytes: Project Management in a Large Hybrid Collection

DANIELLE EMERLING and TAMMI KIM

Abstract: Archivists commonly find themselves managing projects large and small, and for many entry-level professionals, their first position is often that of a project archivist. While projects can be effective ways to work on accomplishing specific outcomes, they can also go astray without proper planning. Projects risk failure as unnecessary tasks creep in, communication breaks down, and deadlines go unmet. To avoid drowning, archivists need strategies for managing these important endeavors. In January 2013, the Manuscripts and Archives Department at the University of Delaware Library hired two project archivists to process two congressional collections totaling more than 1900 linear feet and including approximately 400 gigabytes of electronic records. With two years to both implement electronic records policies and workflows and process the collections, they turned to project management as a means of remaining organized and keeping the project on track for completion.

This poster will explore some fundamental methods and tools offered through project management that can contribute to the successful administration of a project and show how the project archivists are applying these skills to this large, hybrid congressional papers project. It will highlight some basic concepts, such as understanding the project lifecycle, defining objectives, and creating a formal plan early in the process. Finally, it will provide criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of various project management software and tools at different stages in the project.

About the authors:

Danielle Emerling and *Tammi Kim* are presently affiliate assistant librarians at the University of Delaware Library where they are processing the senatorial papers of Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and former U.S. Senator Edward E. (Ted) Kaufman.

Emerling received her MLS with an archives and records management specialization and a master of arts in history from Indiana University Bloomington in December 2012. While completing her graduate degrees she worked as a processor on the Birch Bayh senatorial papers in the Modern Political Papers Collection at IUB Libraries and served as the EAD graduate assistant for the Indiana University Archives and the Lilly Library. Prior to her time at IUB, Emerling was a project assistant at the Chautauqua Institution Oliver Archives Center in Chautauqua, N.Y.

Kim received her MLIS with an archives specialization from UCLA in June 2011. Prior to joining the University of Delaware, Kim worked at the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies at the University Georgia where she assisted with accessioning and processing political papers including the official papers of former governor, Sonny Perdue, and House Representative, Ed L. Jenkins. Kim also coordinated the move of approximately 5000 linear feet of boxes from off-site locations to UGA's new Special Collections Libraries Building high-density storage vault.