Norwich University Archives and Special Collections Strategic Plan for FY 2019

Strategic Directions
Archives and Special Collections (ASC) is a department within the combined Library, Archives and Museum (LAM) department of Norwich University (NU). ASC’s strategic directions align with those of the LAM’s and NU’s. In additional to being guided by NU values, LAM staff members are guided by professional values and ethics.

LAM Vision Statement:
We aspire to be a thriving community that fosters life-long learning, sharing, and creativity.

LAM Priorities:
1. Enhance Library, Archives and Museum Instruction
2. Engage Students
3. Provide Equitable Access to Information Resources and Norwich University Cultural Heritage Materials
4. Share Unique Norwich University Collections with the World
5. Invest Strategically in the Library, Archives and Museum

NU Guiding Values
1. We are men and women of Honor and Integrity. We shall not tolerate those who lie, cheat, or steal.
2. We are dedicated to learning, emphasizing teamwork, leadership, creativity, and critical thinking.
3. We respect the right to diverse points of view as a cornerstone of our democracy.
4. We encourage service to nation and others before self.
5. We stress being physically fit and drug-free.
6. To live the Norwich motto, “I will try!” - meaning perseverance in the face of adversity.
7. We stress self-discipline, personal responsibility, and respect for law.
8. We hold in highest esteem our people and reputation.

Professional Core Values and Code of Ethics
Archivist are guided by the Society of American Archivists’ Core Values for Archivists and Code of Ethics for Archivists.
Archives and Special Collections Goals for FY 2019

Mission of the Norwich University Archives

The Norwich University Archives assumes an important role as the provider and preserver of institutional heritage and memory and as a resource for all those with an interest in Norwich University history.

Goals

ASC goals are based on the LAM strategic priorities. The following objectives are the steps to be taken to achieve the goals.

Goal 1: Enhance Library, Archives and Museum Instruction

Objective 1.1: Improve communication relating to archival instruction within the unit by establishing a regular series of meetings in which the exchange of information and the sharing of ideas relating to our individual instructional initiatives can be discussed. This will also be a forum to discuss innovative lesson plans or teaching techniques relating to archival literacy that we may learn about through professional reading, conferences, classes visited, etc. We may also find it helpful to invite guests from the faculty, the museum and the library to share in our discussions. This is an education program goal.

Who: MMG, KN, GW
Resources: None
Evaluation: A regular series of meetings will be established in which instructional initiatives, both real and potential, are discussed and, where practicable, implemented in the classroom.

Objective 1.2: Strengthen the ASC presence on the Kreitzberg Library’s LibGuides platform. Possible steps include creating an ASC-specific landing page; linking to the ASC website or guides within other existing library guides, such as those for history courses; creating a guide for faculty with sample primary source lesson plans; and creating new guides specific to frequently researched time periods or subjects, similar to the Civil War guide. This is an education program goal.

Action 1: Meet with John Holm and Claire Veach to review current status of ASC guides and discuss options for incorporating them more fully into the library platform.
Who: MMG, JHolm, CV
Resources: None

Action 2: In consultation with ASC staff and informed by discussions with JHolm and CV, determine which of the possible steps are most desirable.
Who: MMG, GW, KN
Resources: None

Action 3: Execute the chosen steps.
Who: MMG, possibly with contribution from other library staff if updating their guides
Resources: None

Evaluation: At least one concrete change to the ASC LibGuides presence will be executed.
Goal 2: Engage Students

Objective 2.1: In response to a suggestion that ASC publicize needs that classes might address, we will discuss and investigate some potential means of incorporating a service learning component into classes in which faculty are willing participants (for example, having students of the French or German languages transcribe and translate some of our French or German manuscripts). Some outreach to various faculty will be necessary. This is an education program goal.

**Action 1:** Flesh out the ideas for two service learning projects using foreign language manuscripts in the duVal Allen and Gus Nelson collections.
**Who:** MMG, KN, GW
**Resources:** None

**Action 2:** Reach out to faculty and present proposals (formal or informal) for service learning projects.
**Who:** MMG, KN, GW
**Resources:** None

**Action 3:** Design and execute service learning lesson plan(s) if deemed desirable and appropriate by faculty, or make a plan for further development in the future.
**Who:** MMG, teaching faculty as needed
**Resources:** None

**Evaluation:** Reasonable attempts will have been made to members of the Modern Languages faculty to interest them in this service learning class model and, we hope, at least one faculty member and his or her class will have participated in this initiative.

Objective 2.2: Enrich reference interactions with students in order to make the reading room experience more educational. This is a public service program goal.

**Action 1:** Public service staff will identify areas where the reading room experience could be enhanced for students. Staff will rely on existing information from their own observations and researcher feedback surveys initially but may also consider the feasibility of continuing to collect more information directly related to the reading room experience going forward. Our checklist of Primary Source Literary Outcomes may also be used to help identify those primary source learning objectives that we more frequently address in the reading room than in the classroom.
**Who:** GW, MMG
**Resources:** None

**Action 2:** Archives staff will use the analysis of areas for improvement in the reading room experience produced by public service staff as the basis for a discussion of areas to focus future efforts on. From this discussion, each staff member will choose a topic related to enhancing the reading room experience to focus some professional development time on.
**Who:** GW, MMG, KN
**Resources:** None
Action 3: Over the course of the year, archives staff will share what they learn and use their findings to decide whether to make changes to existing procedures.

Who: GW, MMG, KN

Resources: None

Evaluation: At least three possible areas for improvement designed to enhance the reading room experience for students will be identified. Additions and alterations will be made to reference and reading room procedures if appropriate and sustainable.

Objective 2.3: Capitalize on the existing digital display screens to create more interpretive content that will better educate and inspire library users with our collections. Approaches to making the content more interpretive may include more explanatory labels; using material pulled from across collections to present a theme or narrative; or highlighting the context around material from a single collection. This is an outreach program goal.

Action 1: Devise a content schedule for the year.

Who: MMG

Resources: None

Action 2: Create and upload interpretive, educational digital exhibits throughout the year using Canva, Appspace, and other digital tools as needed.

Who: MMG

Resources: None

Evaluation: Digital display content will be rotated monthly during the academic year (August-May).

Goal 3: Provide Equitable Access to Information Resources and Norwich University Cultural Heritage Materials

Objective 3.1: Finding aids will be assessed and enhanced or modified. This is a collection management program goal.

Action 1: Public service staff will monitor researcher demand in an effort to identify finding aids that are opaque or otherwise difficult to navigate. The identified finding aids will be presented, as they are discovered, to Kelly who will, with public service staff’s advice enhance or modify these finding aids to encourage access.

Who: KN, GW, MMG

Resources: None

Action 2: in order to enhance and deepen access to complimentary historical collections, PastPerfect (the Sullivan Museum’s collection management system) will be installed on Kelly’s computer and John Hart will coach Kelly in how to effectively search the database to locate information on objects that might supplement the Archives existing finding aids within CONTENTdm.
Who: KN, JHart  
Resources: None  

Evaluation: Finding aids will be identified, assessed, and enhanced or modified.

**Objective 3.2:** A multi-year plan will be put in place to reduce the remaining photograph backlog as well as any other processing backlogs we identify. This is a collection management program goal.

**Action 1:** Archives staff will review processing backlogs to identify areas of the collection where more immediate processing attention is needed and revisit progress in these areas as a group several times over the course of the year. Already identified projects with oversize photographs and student records will be initial goals to be completed in FY19. Timelines for any other processing projects will be created by the end of FY19.  
**Who:** GW, KN  
**Resources:** None

**Action 2:** The remaining student records transferred to archives by the Registrar’s Office will be interfiled into existing series of permanent academic records and student files.  
**Who:** GW, work-studies?  
**Resources:** None

**Action 3:** Large oversize photographs will be reprocessed. These photographs were moved and rearranged by workers in the library basement during the library’s renovation and need to be re-inventoried and housed.  
**Who:** GW, work-studies?  
**Resources:** None

**Evaluation:** Processing backlogs will be reduced.

**Goal 4: Share Unique Norwich University Collections with the World**

**Objective 4.1:** Create a plan outlining strategies, objectives and assessment of all digital functions and projects in archives to replace our digitization plan from 2013. This is a digital program goal.

**Action 1:** As a group, archives staff will review our digitization plan from 2013 for insight into how well it has guided the development of our digitization program over the last five years and to identify areas where it may have failed to provide guidance. This will also be a stage where staff can discuss what we may learn from similar plans produced by other archives.  
**Who:** GW, KN, MMG  
**Resources:** None

**Action 2:** Each of the main components of our digital program will be identified and progress reports generated summarizing their history and measurable outcomes to date.  
**Who:** GW  
**Resources:** None
Action 3: Feedback about digital priorities will be solicited from users of archives. This will also be a stage to consider the possible impact of future trends towards archiving of born-digital formats.
Who: GW
Resources: None

Action 4: Archives staff will review feedback about priorities and information gathered on the components of our current digital program as a group. From the available information we will attempt to estimate current time commitments for all staff and evaluate the sustainability of different priorities suggested by feedback. A consensus will be reached on top priorities, strategies, and objectives for the digital program.
Who: GW, KN, MMG
Resources: None

Evaluation: A replacement for our digitization plan from 2013 will be created.

Objective 4.2: Use ASC social media to promote our educational initiatives. This is an outreach program goal.

Action 1: Create a social media plan for the year outlining strategies for highlighting educational initiatives on the Facebook page.
Who: MMG
Resources: None

Action 2: Implement the social media plan throughout the year.
Who: MMG
Resources: None

Action 3: Create and present to ASC staff a brief report reflecting on the success of this initiative, preferably including some statistical measures, and assess whether to continue this strategy.
Who: MMG
Resources: None

Evaluation: A social media plan for the year will be created and implemented, and an end-of-year report presented to the rest of the staff.

Goal 5: Invest strategically in the Library, Archives and Museum

Objective 5.1: Review the new SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force’s Revised Guidelines for Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries to ensure ASC remains in compliance with professional standards and best practices for measuring holdings. This is an administration program goal.
Who: KN, GW, MMG
Resources: None
**Evaluation:** The SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force’s Revised Guidelines for Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries has been reviewed and alterations to our present means of measuring our holdings has been discussed and, where appropriate, altered or otherwise implemented.

**Objective 5.2:** Establish a collaborative relationship with the SMHC around the 5th floor exhibit spaces. This is an administration program goal.

**Action 1:** Meet to discuss past and current strategies employed by ASC staff to fill the 5th floor exhibit spaces and opportunities for SMHC involvement.
*Who:* MMG, KTM
*Resources:* None

**Action 2:** Develop a plan and schedule for filling the 5th floor exhibit spaces in a way that will balance appropriate use of staff time with providing high-impact content.
*Who:* MMG, KTM
*Resources:* None

**Action 3:** If deemed appropriate in accordance with the plan developed, install new content in the 5th floor exhibit spaces.
*Who:* MMG, KTM
*Resources:* Possibly a small amount of financial resources for exhibit supplies

**Evaluation:** A collaborative plan will be developed by ASC and SMHC staff for how to address the 5th floor exhibit spaces moving forward.

**Objective 5.3:** Form a collection development committee within the library. As a large gift from General Gordon R. Sullivan is expected, weeding the library collection will become a necessity and processes stood up to manage this and other gifts. Kelly’s role in deselection will be an important component of the work of this committee. This is a collection management program goal.

*Who:* GS, KN, other library staff
*Resources:* None

**Evaluation:** A collection development committee will be formed and processes for handling large gifts will be developed.

**Objective 5.4:** Establish and maintain a means of lasting and meaningful communication between the Archives and the Museum. This is an administration program goal.

**Action 1:** As custodians of significant university assets with similar missions, the staffs of both the Sullivan Museum and the University Archives will establish a regular schedules of meetings in which ideas can be exchanged, mutual concerns discussed, etc.
*Who:* KN, All Museum and Archives staff
*Resources:* None

**Evaluation:** A regular schedule of meetings with the staffs of the museum and archives has been established
Action 2: As heads of historical collections units within the LAM, establish a regular schedule of one-on-one meetings with John Hart, Director of the Sullivan Museum and History Center.

**Who:** KN, JHart  
**Resources:** None  
**Evaluation:** A regular schedule of meetings with John and Kelly has been established

**Objective 5.5:** Review NUaN Academic plan as a team in order to better understand and anticipate the future direction of the University as a whole and any potential implications and opportunities for ASC in particular. This is an administration program goal.

**Who:** KN, GW, MMG  
**Resources:** None  
**Evaluation:** The NUaN academic plan was reviewed and potential implications and/or opportunities for ASC identified. This review may help inform the future direction of the unit.

**Objective 5.6:** Reorganize ASC in order to more closely resemble the structure of the museum with more direct reporting to the Head of the University Archives and Special Collections. This is an administration program goal.

**Who:** KN, MMG, GW, GS  
**Resources:** None

**Action 1:** Review and revise all position descriptions of members of the staff of ASC in order to align positions within the new organizational structure and to ensure workloads are appropriate and balanced accordingly.

**Who:** KN, GW, MMG  
**Resources:** None

**Action 2:** Solicit necessary approvals for the structural changes within the Norwich University Archives and Special Collections.

**Who:** GS, KN  
**Resources:** None

**Evaluation:** A new organizational structure within the Norwich University Archives and Special Collections will be formed and implemented, position descriptions revised to reflect changes and approvals for the restructuring granted by the Provost. All professional staff will now report to the head of the unit.
Review Mechanisms

Performance Indicators

Each objective includes an evaluation as a performance indicator. Objectives are the steps to be taken to achieve the archives’ goals that are aligned with the LAM’s strategic priorities. The following goal metrics will be used to monitor the archives’ progress towards meeting those long-term goals.

Goal Metrics:

1. Enhance Library, Archives and Museum Instruction
   - Total number of group instruction sessions and total attendance each fiscal year.
   - Total number of collection units accessed for instructional use
   - Time utilization (defined as total hours used divided by the total hours for the reporting period, expressed as a percentage) of the Archives Instruction Room

2. Engage Students
   - Total number of reference transactions with students each fiscal year

3. Provide Equitable Access to Information Resources and Norwich University Cultural Heritage Materials
   - Total number of reference transactions each fiscal year
   - Total number of collection units accessed each fiscal year
   - Total number of page views on archives websites each fiscal year
   - Total numbers of new collections or collections enhanced by new accessions

4. Share Unique Norwich University Collections with the World
   - Total number of items added to the Norwich University Archives’ digital collections each fiscal year
   - Total number digital files downloaded from Norwich University Archives’ digital collections each fiscal year

5. Invest Strategically in the Library, Archives and Museum
   - Total linear footage of collections
   - Chronological progress of the NU Serial Indexing Project

Key Plan Review Dates

- January of 2019 review status of plan objectives
- March of 2019 review LAM strategic directions
- June of 2019 final review of the plan
Appendix A – Situation Analysis

Appendix A includes an analysis of the ASC’s organization and its environment. By being aware of internal strengths and weakness and of external trends and developments, the ASC can improve its operations and plan better.

SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths**: characteristics of the archives that give it an advantage over others.
- **Weaknesses**: characteristics of the archives that place the archives at a disadvantage relative to others.
- **Opportunities**: elements in the environment that the archives could exploit to its advantage.
- **Threats**: elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the archives.

**Strengths**

- Wide array of cross-disciplinary collections
- Deep dedication to the educational mission of the university
- Archival instruction naturally supports the university’s emphasis on unique experiential learning experiences and high-impact practices
- Strong intellectual control of collections and staff knowledge of institutional history
- Strong service ethic and commitment to sharing our collections
- Spirit of innovation and collaboration
- Strong online presence and sizable digital collections comparative to other university archives

**Weaknesses**

- Competing priorities place strain on our small staff
- Physical location makes us seem inaccessible/invisible
- Opaqueness of archival work, collections, and procedures (rules are intimidating)
- Lack of clarity about the distinction between ASC and SMHC results in identity confusion, particularly impacting donor relations
- Non-climate controlled environment is unstable for the collections and uncomfortable for staff and researchers
- Challenges establishing and maintaining regular communication with LAM colleagues

**Opportunities**

- Overall institutional interest in legacy/tradition
- Alignment with the NUAN academic plan
- Cross-LAM educational initiatives and collaboration
- Develop stronger relationships with campus stakeholders such as the Undergraduate Research Program, Honors Program, CGCS, and the Office of Admissions
• Work more closely with the Office of Development to pursue financial support from donors

**Threats**

• Low priority of the University Archives and its programs both within the LAM and by upper administration
• End of the bicentennial and new university-wide focus on the future may cause some to lose interest or to believe staff and/or programs no longer needed
• Instability of the university’s financial environment is a threat to both financial and human resources
• New president in 2020 may not take as much interest in NU history as the current president
• Lack of a strong, proven advocate in a senior leadership position
• Challenges with getting students to engage deeply and critically with the collections
• Unpredictability of acquisitions, especially acquisitions that are out of our control, can result in sudden unexpected strain on staff time, storage space, and financial resources
• The long-term societal shift towards born-digital records for formats, record series, and publications collected by the University Archives. Born-digital records present different challenges and infrastructure needs than those posed by analog records
• User expectations regarding the digital availability of archival collections do not reflect the proportion of collections that can actually be made available online given financial and legal constraints

**SWOT into Action**

**Strengths:**

The archives expects to maintain and build upon its strengths. Objectives 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1 seek to enhance, increase or accelerate our already strong online presence and intellectual control of collections. Goal 1 reflects our support of the educational mission of the university.

**Weakness**

The archives will work to reduce its weaknesses. Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 5.2, and 5.4 reflect attempts to improve communication and increase collaboration both within ASC and with colleagues in other LAM departments.

**Opportunities**

The archives will invest its resources on select opportunities. Objective 5.5 is an example reflecting that investment.

**Threats**

The archives will seek to mitigate its threats/risks.