



Be True to Your Archival Roots: Structuring Collections Access and Management during a Scandal

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Chronology of a Scandal



- ▶ November 2011 – Grand Jury Presentment with 52 counts of Sexual Abuse Charges Detailed; Convicted June 2012
- ▶ November 2011 – Ousting of Joe Paterno, Graham Spanier, Tim Curley and Gary Schultz
- ▶ July 2012 – Freeh Report Issued
- ▶ July 2012 – NCAA Sanctions Handed Down
- ▶ September 2012, 2013 and 2014 - Mitchell Reports
- ▶ Civil Trials
- ▶ September 2014 and January 2015 – NCAA Rescinds Sanctions



University Archives Mission Statement

- ▶ The Penn State University Archives is an administrative unit within the Eberly Family Special Collections Library dedicated to documenting the history of the University as an institution and as a member of the land-grant, higher education community.
- ▶ The archives supports teaching, research, service, and administration by developing and managing archival, manuscript, pictorial, cartographic, audiovisual, electronic, print and object collections. These resources have been judged to be of permanent value in recording the history of the University in its various roles and contexts.
- ▶ In addition, the archives also selectively documents the careers and activities of prominent faculty and alumni, supports an active records management program, manages the sports history archives of the University's intercollegiate athletics programs, and collects materials related to the history of the Centre County region. The Penn State University Archives is readily accessible to faculty, staff, students, alumni, higher education community, and general public.

Establishing Access Parameters



- ▶ SAA Code of Ethics – Access and Use: Archivists promote and provide the widest possible accessibility of materials...archivists seek to promote open access and use when possible...
- ▶ RULE #1 – Do NOT become part of the story
- ▶ RULE #2 – Collections are what they are...Archivists can neither create records that do not exist nor can they interpret the absence of explanations within records
- ▶ RULE #3 – If a resource is publically available, keep it available and provide access (web capture, research guides, hot links within finding aids)



User Communities Defined

- Attorneys
- Investigators – State, Federal, Criminal and Civil
- Reporters
- Documentary Historians
- Board of Trustee Members
- Accreditation/Regulating Boards
- Review Committees
- Faculty
- Staff
- Students

Access Parameters Delineated

- ▶ **RULE #4** – Open and Equitable access...within the context of their institution's mission
- ▶ **RULE #5** – Do NOT give in to bullies, bullying techniques, threats, coercion, or harassment (Identify advocates within the institution who will support your actions)
- ▶ **RULE #6** – Accurately define the scope of search criteria



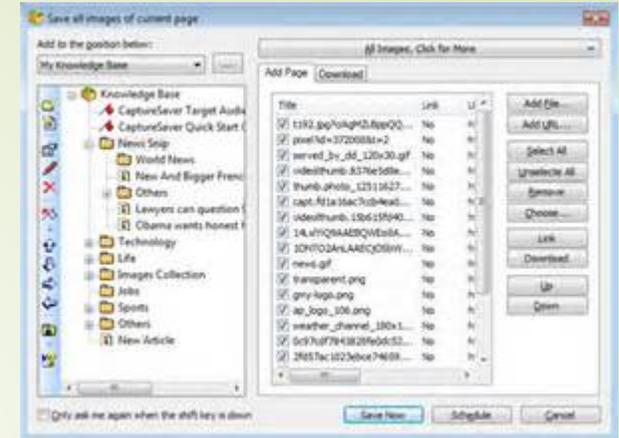


Record Groups Defined

- ▶ President's Office records
- ▶ Provost's Office records
- ▶ Senior Vice President for Finance records
- ▶ Intercollegiate Athletics records
- ▶ Police Services records
- ▶ Joseph Paterno papers

Facilitating Online Capture & Searching

- Identify key participants and trigger words
- Create and maintain an event chronology
- Understand media hierarchy, i.e.
 - Local newspapers/networks/sources including student publications and University Media Relations
 - State newspapers/networks/sources
 - The role of the Associated Press as a clipping service
 - News copying rather than creation





Perspectives and Editorial Content

- Student Reactions
- Faculty Responses
- Administrative Reports and Press Conferences
- Alumni Feedback
- Documentary Film making
- Reputational Risk Assessment/Damage Control
- Legislative Changes



Partners in Records Retention and Handling

- ▶ Office of General Counsel – Working in close parallel to respond to individual queries/litigation holds/subpoenas
- ▶ Office of Internal Audit – Be sure that the annual or routine audits include a question/s about records management and retention schedule compliance
- ▶ Office of Compliance and Ethics – Joint training to identify records management and retention as a necessary compliance operation
- ▶ Office of Risk Management – All records management and retention should operate in parallel toward lowering institutional risk

Lessons Learned

- ▶ Be True to your Archival Roots, Ethics and Traditions
- ▶ Understand Chain of Command within your Institution and throughout the impacted legal community
- ▶ Protect your Staff while they are attempting to do their jobs
- ▶ Be wary of myths and rumor-mongering
- ▶ When selecting resources, choose quality over quantity





Conclusion

- “The modern archives profession bases its theoretical foundation and functions on a set of core values that define and guide the practices and activities of archivists, both individually and collectively.”
- “Archivists provide important benefits and services such as...assisting in the process of remembering the past through authentic and reliable primary sources...”