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## **Functional Analysis and the Reappraisal of Faculty Papers**

### **Gregory Schmidt and Michael Law**

Many repositories at American colleges and universities hold the official records of their institutions as well as the personal papers of individuals. Archivists appraise these different materials—institutional records and personal papers—using separate theoretical perspectives. They tend to bring a records-management view of evidential value to the appraisal of institutional records and a curator's eye for informational and intrinsic values to personal manuscripts. There is one collecting category common to university repositories, however, that requires a hybrid approach. Falling between the two broad categories of university records and personal manuscripts are the papers of university faculty members. Studies of the holdings of university archives indicate that faculty papers are well represented in the archival record.<sup>1</sup>

Professional literature has lauded the retention of faculty papers in the holdings of university archival repositories for

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<sup>1</sup> Maynard Brichford, "University Archives: Relationships with Faculty," *American Archivist* 34 (April 1971): 176; Tara Zachary Laver, "In a Class by Themselves: Faculty Papers at Research University Archives and Manuscript Repositories," *American Archivist* 66 (Spring/Summer 2003): 160.

many reasons. Maynard Brichford argues that “in a broad sense the faculty is the university,” and that faculty papers “reveal professional interests and opinions that frequently clarify matters mentioned in official files of the president, deans, or departments.”<sup>2</sup> Francis Fournier ties the value of faculty papers to their ability to “fill in the gaps” of the university records-management program and to better understand the teaching, research, and community-service functions of the university.<sup>3</sup> While faculty papers fall into the category of manuscript collections, the breadth of topics within the papers, especially those outside of teaching, research, and community service, have made appraisal difficult and subsequent arrangement and description problematic.

Archivists perceive faculty papers as “large yet underused” resources, but few know how to approach them in a more useful way.<sup>4</sup> At the root of this dilemma is a general lack of sound appraisal guidelines for these papers. Without those guidelines and agreed-upon selection criteria for faculty papers, selection decisions are more difficult and the papers added to repositories are more likely to confuse both researchers and archivists. A survey by Tara Zachary Laver found that past archival practices at many large Association of Research Libraries (ARL) repositories involved archivists and manuscript curators accepting almost all faculty papers that were offered and keeping everything that was transferred to them.<sup>5</sup> Functional analysis, as expressed by Helen Willa Samuels in her 1992 book *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities*, may provide a mechanism for appraising

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<sup>2</sup> Brichford, “University Archives,” 178.

<sup>3</sup> Frances Fournier, “For They Would Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach’—University Faculty and their Papers: A Challenge for Archivists,” *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992): 59.

<sup>4</sup> Laver, “In a Class by Themselves,” 160.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 171; Tom Hyry, Diane Kaplan, and Christine Weideman, “‘Though this be madness, yet there is method in ’t’: Assessing the Value of Faculty Papers and Defining a Collecting Policy,” *American Archivist* 65 (Spring/Summer 2002): 57.

and selecting faculty papers, resulting in documentation of the institution and assisting archivists in addressing problematic collections.<sup>6</sup>

This article explores reappraisal of the Malcolm McMillan Papers at the Auburn University (AU) Special Collections and Archives. The exploration is meant to contextualize the long and multifaceted reappraisal process. That process can and should be approached one step at a time, addressing the most serious appraisal errors first, and reevaluating the process after each step. Though the McMillan Papers generate problems in terms of size, arrangement, and description, the first step in their reappraisal will correct the most fundamental problem: an unsound arrangement that has made the finding aid cumbersome and access difficult. The McMillan Papers have the potential, through rearrangement, both to fill in the gaps created by the university records disposition schedule and to document more fully the research, teaching, and administrative functions of the institution. Because the challenges presented by the McMillan Papers may be similar to those concerning faculty papers in other university repositories, the strategy we document in this study should help guide others in the profession who are grappling with such papers within their own repositories.

#### AUBURN UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY PAPERS

Though the official records of Auburn University fall under the appraisal guidelines set forth in the Records Disposition Authority for Public Universities in Alabama (RDA), the archives at AU has long collected non-university records and personal papers. The AU Archives Department was founded by the Auburn Board of Trustees in 1963 for the “purpose of gathering, organizing, and making available materials, manuscripts, and other archival materials on the history of AU and the southern Region.”<sup>7</sup> Over the past forty-five years, archival holdings at

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<sup>6</sup> Helen Willa Samuels, *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (Metuchen, N.J.: Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> Auburn University Board of Trustees, Board Meeting Minutes, November 1, 1963, Auburn University, Auburn, Ala., 395-6.

AU have grown to include not only university records but also manuscripts, ephemera, photographs, and artifacts in a variety of subject areas. These subject areas are: the History of Auburn University, Agriculture and Rural Life in Alabama, Aviation and Aerospace, the Civil War, Twentieth Century Alabama Politics, Alabama Architecture, and Alabama Writers.<sup>8</sup>

While collecting policies are important tools for making appraisal decisions, the AU Archives, like most other university archives, has never addressed faculty papers in its published collecting policies. Despite this, among the approximately one thousand record groups in the archives are the personal manuscripts of fifty-six faculty members from a variety of academic disciplines. They range in size from less than one cubic foot (almost half of the faculty collections) to nearly one hundred; they average 6.4 cubic feet. The largest collection, at 96 cubic feet, representing 26.8 percent of the total volume of faculty papers held at the AU Archives, is that of former history professor Malcolm McMillan. Acquisition of faculty papers at AU occurs through both active solicitation and acceptance of offers from faculty or their estates. Acceptance of unsolicited materials depends on an evaluation of the faculty member's scholarly reputation, his or her record of service, and the contents of the papers. Preference is given to those records that document the topics highlighted as priorities in the AU Archives collecting policies, but guidelines do not exist to guide processing.

#### **THE MALCOLM McMILLAN PAPERS**

Malcolm McMillan was a faculty member in the Auburn University History Department from 1948 through 1978, chairing the department for the last fourteen of those years. He oversaw the establishment of the department's doctoral program and created a large body of scholarship regarding Alabama and southern history. He was active in the Southern Historical Association and served from 1968-1976 as the editor of *The Alabama Review*.

Deposited in the Archives in 1990, the McMillan Papers document his entire professional career at AU, including his scholarly research, his teaching, and the issues he faced as the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

head of the History Department. The papers also contain a considerable amount of personal material relating to McMillan's financial, family, and legal concerns. The research materials, comprising a vast majority of the papers, include extensive files of newspaper clippings arranged by topic, note cards, and hand-annotated published works referenced by McMillan. Most of his research materials concern Alabama, the Civil War, and southern history, topics important to the collecting policies of the university archives. There are also a large number of photographs relevant to McMillan's research interests.

Given McMillan's prolific scholarship, and his role in building the history program at Auburn University, it is not surprising that the archives was eager to acquire his papers. It is less certain how, once through the archives' door, the papers were valued and materials were selected for permanent retention. Processing and transfer documents in the AU accession file for the McMillan Papers indicate that fifty-three records boxes were received from McMillan's estate in February 1990. Given that the McMillan Papers are currently housed in fifty-three records boxes, it is safe to assume that the processing archivist disposed of nothing. The twenty-five large note card boxes received from the McMillan estate appear to have been directly transferred into ninety-seven archival note card boxes. With the exception of re-housing some of the materials into archival storage containers, the McMillan Papers were minimally processed.

The initial appraisal apparently concluded that the original order of the papers was sufficient to serve as its organizational framework. For example, proofs, annotated typescripts, and drafts of McMillan's most popular book, *The Land Called Alabama*, are distributed non-consecutively among sixteen of the fifty-three boxes. These same boxes also contain files of personal correspondence, lecture notes, newspaper clippings, conference programs, chapters from other books, and even an early draft of McMillan's will. Given the overall disorganization of the arrangement, the order that exists appears to have happened by chance. From what appears to have been a literal interpretation of the archival concern for maintaining original order, the McMillan Papers are stored in their "original disorder."

Box-level descriptions with phrases such as “research notes and some personal papers,” “news clippings and personal papers,” and “personal papers and some clippings” attest to the haphazard arrangement and description. Despite the problem with arrangement and the lack of any series organization, the material housed in the fifty-three records boxes is described at the folder level, making reference and retrieval possible. However, many folder descriptions use vague phrases such as “miscellaneous materials,” “newspaper clippings,” and “research notes,” offering few clues to the researcher as to the nature of their content.

### INITIAL REORGANIZATION

Deciding to engage in a reappraisal project begins with an evaluation of costs and benefits. Many archivists are cautious about such enterprises because of the time and effort they perceive them to take. While it is true that reappraisal cannot be done without allotting some staff time and resources, the reality is that it is a *longue durée* process, and not as intensive as is often perceived. As Mark Greene noted in a recent address, slight alterations in certain workflows can make incorporating reappraisal not only seamless, but quite beneficial to the overall completion of many archival goals.<sup>9</sup> It is also just as pertinent to ask what the cost will be of not incorporating some form of reappraisal into the workflows of any archives—maintaining collections like that of Malcolm McMillan that are minimally accessible.

An initial reorganization of the finding aid, as the first step in a reappraisal process, amounts to a “virtual reappraisal.” It reorganizes the finding aid by fitting the dispersed papers together into an intellectual framework. In the case of faculty papers, the framework of functional analysis works far better than traditional personal-manuscript arrangement methods. The reorganization calls for establishing series and sub-series based upon the functional categories outlined by the RDA, with additional series for those items falling outside of the scope of the RDA. Items that neither document the institution nor complement the manuscript side of the papers

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<sup>9</sup> Mark Greene, “I’ve De-accessioned and Lived to Tell about It: Confessions of an Unrepentant Reappraiser,” *Archival Issues* 30, no. 1 (2006): 8.

could be recommended for future evaluation and possible de-accessioning. By treating finding aids this way, the entanglements of physical reprocessing and the political dilemmas that come with de-accessioning are left until usage is clearly determined under the new regimen.

#### FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS AND *VARSITY LETTERS*

As theorists such as F. Gerald Ham have criticized past approaches which have led to collections of limited scope with poor reflections of their intended subjects, many in the field have turned toward emerging methodologies such as macro-appraisal, functional analysis, and the Minnesota Method.<sup>10</sup> The development of functional analysis as a tool for securing, analyzing, and valuing the records and papers produced by an institution has transformed the practice of institutional records appraisal. This transformation is manifest in the shift from a focus on the informational and evidential value of records to the valuation of the ability of records to document the functions of the institution. The archival community has largely accepted functional analysis as expressed by Helen Samuels in *Varsity Letters*, and incorporated it into the appraisal processes at university archives.<sup>11</sup>

Functional analysis methodology developed out of dissatisfaction with institutional records collected using traditional appraisal techniques. Rather than examining specific sets of records or specific locations in the institutional hierarchy to determine suitability for permanent retention, functional analysis shifts the appraisal focus toward a comprehensive understanding of the institution and its core functions. Institutional functional analysis as developed by Terry Cook and Samuels involves the thorough analysis of an institution—

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<sup>10</sup> F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge," *American Archivist* 38 (January 1975): 5-13; Mark A. Greene and Todd J. Daniels-Howell, "Documentation with 'An Attitude': A Pragmatist's Guide to the Selection and Acquisition of Modern Business Records" in *The Records of American Business*, ed. James M. O'Toole (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1997). The Minnesota Method is a top-down approach to appraisal. It places the various parts of a particular business on a scale from most to least in need of documentation and then applies four levels of documentation based upon that scale.

<sup>11</sup> Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 1.



for instance, Auburn University—before any records-selection decisions are made.<sup>12</sup> This analysis begins with a study of the institution’s mission statement, historical evolution, organization, and goals. Once a profile of the institution is generated, the core functions that define the institution and the types of records emerge. The institution is thus defined by its core functions rather than by its organizational structure. A focus on the functions that define the institution, rather than on the offices that produce records, allows for the selection of records according to the context in which they were created rather than by their content.<sup>13</sup>

Samuels argues that official administrative records “should not be considered a full and adequate record of the institution.”<sup>14</sup> Instead of thinking of functional analysis in the traditional sense (synonymous with a structural analysis), in which the archivist focuses on an institutional office within the hierarchy and determines its function, Samuels advocates that archivists understand what the institution does rather than who does what. With such an intellectual foundation, the records selector is armed with the “knowledge of what is to be documented and the problems of gathering the desired documentation,” and is ready to make informed selection decisions.<sup>15</sup>

Samuels addresses the broad range of activities occurring in a modern academic institution and distills them into seven general functions typically applicable to all universities: confer credentials, convey knowledge, foster socialization, conduct research, sustain the institution, provide public service, and promote culture.<sup>16</sup> Adequate documentation of the institution requires official and non-official materials, both of which

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<sup>12</sup> Terry Cook, “Mind Over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal,” in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. Barbara L. Craig (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 38-70; Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

should be “considered part of a common pool of potential documentation.”<sup>17</sup> For some functions, official documentation exists in an overabundance and the archivist must select the most valuable materials. For others, official documentation may be insufficient and the archivist must turn to the papers of individuals to achieve a proper documentation. Samuels considers the papers of faculty members, including lecture notes and course handouts, as valuable documentation, worthy of solicitation.<sup>18</sup> Since the publication of *Varsity Letters*, archivists and records managers alike have refined their evaluations of the importance of faculty papers. For example, Fournier’s 1992 article on faculty papers echoes Samuels’s assertion by noting that faculty papers are important sources for the documentation of the university’s teaching, research, community service, and internal maintenance functions.<sup>19</sup>

Laver’s survey on the collection of faculty papers at repositories in ARL libraries found that though faculty papers are common to most university archives, only twenty-two publications dating back to 1936 mention them as an aspect of archival collecting.<sup>20</sup> These publications, while discussing the collecting of faculty papers and the potential value they could have for use by researchers, rarely addressed the issue of appraisal and selection. A 1983 article by Frederick Honhart in *College and Research Libraries* was the first to propose selection criteria for faculty papers.<sup>21</sup> His three main criteria were: scholarly reputation, record of service to the university, and role in the community. Finding these three criteria still insufficient in making informed selection decisions, a 2002 article in *The American Archivist* by Tom Hyry, Diane Kaplan, and Christine Weideman discussed the application of modern appraisal theory and practice in the selection and appraisal of

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>19</sup> Fournier, “For They Would Gladly Learn,” 59.

<sup>20</sup> Laver, “In a Class by Themselves,” 160.

<sup>21</sup> Friedrich Honhart, “The Solicitation, Appraisal and Acquisition of Faculty Papers,” *College and Research Libraries* 45 (May 1983).

faculty papers.<sup>22</sup> Their adaptation of the Minnesota Method, which includes functional analysis as part of its process, to the appraisal of faculty papers at Yale University provides an example of how selection criteria can be refined so that archivists can set appraisal standards and select the most valuable material. The authors discovered that in the past there were no real governing principles behind which faculty papers had been accepted or sought. The authors maintain that their application of the Minnesota Method “allows archivists to prioritize records creators and to determine different levels of appropriate documentation that correspond to the priorities.”<sup>23</sup> This six-step process incorporates documentation strategy, collecting policies, macro-appraisal, and functional analysis to form a “structural outline or skeleton” to which repositories can flesh out a method to suit their needs. The Yale policy prioritizes faculty by the functions in which they are prominent and then determines the level of documentation required. It has been successful in both prioritizing which faculty to solicit for papers and in limiting the materials accepted for processing to documents with specific faculty functions. In the case of the reappraisal of the McMillan Papers, initial solicitation and processing have already occurred, and the papers go far beyond the collecting boundaries set by the Yale team. Still, the emphasis on functions in both *Varsity Letters* and in the Yale policy can help inform a reappraisal and reorganization of the McMillan Papers.

#### REAPPRAISAL OF COLLECTIONS

Reappraisal is an issue in archival collection management well represented in the professional literature. The debate over the usefulness versus the dangers of reappraisal was ignited when Leonard Rapport championed it in 1981, and Karen Benedict followed with a scathing critique a few years later.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Hyry, Kaplan, and Weideman, “Though this be madness,” 57.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>24</sup> Leonard Rapport, “No Grandfather Clause: Reappraising Accessioned Records,” *American Archivist* 44 (Spring 1981): 143-150; Karen Benedict, “Invitation to a Bonfire: Reappraisal and De-accessioning of Records as Collection Management Tools in an Archive—A Reply to Leonard Rapport,” *American Archivist* 47 (Winter 1984): 43-49.

Because of either faulty original appraisal judgments or changes in modern appraisal standards, repositories hold records that even the most vocal opponents of reappraisal admit may be “records of dubious value.”<sup>25</sup> The debate rages on, however, over the need for shelf space and the possible consequences of de-accessioning materials to create it. Those issues, however, ignore the main points Rapport laid out in the beginning: use and engagement.

In his discussion of the usability of archival collections, Rapport challenged the very idea of permanence. Archives, he said, need to be much more fluid and dynamic.<sup>26</sup> While Benedict countered that a belief in the permanent security of their papers is what brings donors in and gives them confidence to deposit their records, Rapport and others argue that some records simply outlive their usefulness.<sup>27</sup> Allowing an archives to serve as a mere safe-deposit box for whatever a donor considers valuable puts the archives at a disadvantage. It serves researchers poorly, and weakens rather than strengthens the repository as a whole. Rapport felt that by remaining engaged with the entirety of the holdings, keeping them focused and relevant, and allowing them to be fluid, serves everyone better.<sup>28</sup> It was not, as opponents suggested, a callous and desperate search for more space. That misunderstanding has developed out of a failure to consider separately reappraisal and de-accessioning. The former may lead to the latter, but they are not, as Greene noted, one and the same.<sup>29</sup> Reappraisal, fundamentally, is a professional reengagement with archival holdings, regardless of whether or not any materials are de-accessioned.

For the purposes of the McMillan Papers, the debate about reappraisal and de-accessioning is not crucial. Rather, what is important is where Rapport and Benedict actually agree. Both subscribe to Benedict’s notion that if a collection’s value is questioned because of a lack of use, it may not be a problem

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<sup>25</sup> Benedict, “Invitation to a Bonfire,” 44.

<sup>26</sup> Rapport, “No Grandfather Clause,” 147.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>29</sup> Greene, “I’ve Deaccessioned,” 8.

with the records themselves, but with its access and reference.<sup>30</sup> If a manuscript collection is poorly arranged or described, and neither researchers nor reference archivists can make sense of it or easily access its materials, its use will suffer. She therefore suggested that revisiting the arrangement and description should be the first step in comprehensive reappraisal.<sup>31</sup> Only after giving a restructured manuscript collection enough time to prove its usability (Rapport suggests a full generation) can we more accurately value it, and begin to consider de-accessioning.<sup>32</sup> Whether reappraisal is undertaken for custodial or reference reasons, Sheila Powell notes that “reappraisal is, in the first instance, an appraisal issue” and that “reappraisal should take the form of a new appraisal, using knowledge gained since the original appraisal, and using criteria based on sound appraisal theory.”<sup>33</sup> By using the sub-functions of the Alabama RDA as a guide, it was possible to reappraise the McMillan Papers to retain the informational value while considerably improving the focus for the user.

In her article on the collection of personal papers, Mary Lynn McCree argues that the archivist’s “primary responsibility is to create a focused body of materials that informs the scholar.”<sup>34</sup> Since the McMillan Papers were donated to the Auburn Archives in 1990, only seven written requests have been made to use the materials in the collection. Six of those requests were related to the research McMillan had conducted for his speeches and publications on Alabama industrialist Daniel Pratt. The remaining request was for a transcript of a Civil War diary. Given that the materials requested from the McMillan Papers happen to be those which are the most logically arranged

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<sup>30</sup> Benedict, “Invitation to a Bonfire,” 46.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Rapport, “No Grandfather Clause,” 149.

<sup>33</sup> Sheila Powell, “Archival Reappraisal: The Immigration Case Files,” *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991/92): 104-116.

<sup>34</sup> Mary Lynn McCree, “Good Sense and Good Judgment: Defining Collections and Collecting,” in *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings in Archival Theory and Practice*, eds. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1984), 105.

and described, the analysis of its use lends some credence to Benedict's statement that "the lack of use by researchers may be due to poor finding aids or a lack of knowledge of the records."<sup>35</sup> Neither the finding aid nor the arrangement facilitates access to the contents. The problems with the McMillan Papers, and others like it, directly impact their usability and the cost to the repository for storage and reference.

#### **ALABAMA'S RECORDS DISPOSITION AUTHORITY AND FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS**

Functional analysis plays an important role in the RDA for public universities in Alabama. Much like the methodologies described in *Varsity Letters* and the Minnesota Method, an analysis of institutional functions forms the foundation of the Alabama RDA. Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their offices. In order to impose consistency in records maintenance across public institutions of higher education, the State Records Commission of Alabama in 1995 drafted *Public Universities of Alabama: Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority*. This RDA, issued by the State Records Commission under the authority granted by the Code of Alabama, attempts to apply institutional functional-analysis principles to the records-disposition activities of public universities in the state. As an administrative directive, it establishes the records-management obligations of the fourteen public universities of Alabama and advocates documentation of them along functional lines. By specifying both records and functions to be documented, the RDA serves as something of a bridge between structural analysis and *Varsity Letters*.

The authors of this RDA identify only one function of a public university in Alabama: "to provide education to its clients."<sup>36</sup> It is the identified "sub-functions" in the Alabama RDA which appear to coincide with the functions identified in *Varsity Letters* and which provide a template for appraisal of faculty papers. The seven RDA sub-functions in which the

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<sup>35</sup> Benedict, "Invitation to a Bonfire," 48.

<sup>36</sup> Alabama State Records Commission, 2005, "Public Universities of Alabama: Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority" <[http://www.archives.state.al.us/officials/rdas/Universities\\_aug05.pdf](http://www.archives.state.al.us/officials/rdas/Universities_aug05.pdf)> (accessed January 15, 2010).

public universities of Alabama may engage to some degree are admitting/expelling students, conveying knowledge, advising and assisting students, enforcing laws, evaluating performance and conferring credentials, conducting research, and administering internal operations. Differences between Samuels's seven functions and the seven sub-functions in the Alabama RDA occur in several areas, but they are minimal. Where Samuels incorporates the admission and advising of students into the conferring-credentials function, the Alabama Records Commission chose to address these activities separately. The Alabama RDA does not specifically address fostering socialization as a function, but the elements described by Samuels such as housing and student activities are reflected in the RDA's advising and assisting sub-function. The sub-functions listed in the RDA focus on function over structure and are initially identified and introduced in the RDA without any mention of the offices or departments from which documentation may originate. While the RDA is explicit in its retention and destruction recommendations for each series of institutional documentation identified, the university archivist has the authority to select for permanent retention those records that have otherwise exceeded their recommended retention periods.

Because the RDA addresses only the official documentary universe of the institution and the disposition of institutional records, the archivist at an Alabama public university is neither obliged nor encouraged by the RDA to pursue documentation that would be considered the property of individuals. This, however, can lead to significant gaps in the adequacy of the documentation. For example, the RDA's convey-knowledge section mandates for permanent retention only published course schedules, university catalogs/bulletins, and new course proposals. *Varsity Letters*, in providing a much richer exploration of the documentation available, lists non-official documentation such as faculty-committee reports, samples of students' work, instructor records, exam copies, and lecture notes as rich sources of documentation.<sup>37</sup> The university archivist may solicit these materials, common to faculty papers, through gift and deposit agreements. Under the function of administering

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<sup>37</sup> Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 64-72.

internal operations, the RDA requires permanent retention for finalized reports and publications documenting the management of finances, human resources, properties, and facilities. It also requires permanent retention of Board of Trustees minutes, high-level administrators' files, audit and accreditation records, and the minutes of university-wide committees.<sup>38</sup> The eleven documentation streams identified in this section appear to capture a comprehensive snapshot of university governance. Papers from those faculty involved in university governance may still give additional context to official documentation. Less comprehensive are the records-retention recommendations for documenting research. Only university research policies and the final reports and publications generated by grant-funded research are mandated for permanent retention. Because a large proportion of faculty research falls outside of these two streams, a comprehensive documentation of university research must rely on personal papers.

#### **REAPPRAISAL USING SUB-FUNCTIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE RDA**

In his roles as teacher, scholar, and department head, Malcolm McMillan created documents that conform to three of the seven sub-functions identified in the Alabama RDA for public universities: conveying knowledge, conducting research, and administering internal operations. Though teaching is stated in the RDA to be the "primary activity" of the conveying-knowledge sub-function, the university records recommended for permanent retention do little to document adequately this activity.<sup>39</sup> For documenting the sub-function of conveying knowledge, the RDA recommends that university course schedules, annual bulletins containing course and curriculum records, and records from the library and archives be retained.<sup>40</sup> Samuels argues that the general curriculum serves as only a guide to faculty, and capturing what was taught can be a difficult task. Lecture notes and course handouts, to Samuels, "provide important detail and should be solicited along with other

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<sup>38</sup> Alabama State Records Commission, "Public Universities of Alabama," 2-1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 2-4.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 1-5.



materials gathered from faculty members.”<sup>41</sup> The McMillan Papers include materials used in the classroom, including lecture notes, presentations, visual aids, and student work.

McMillan’s record of scholarly research is well documented through the publication drafts, research notes, and correspondence found in his papers. The RDA, not concerned with faculty papers, has a narrow focus in documenting the function of conducting research at the university. Only research activities that have been funded by grant money are subject to RDA documentation requirements. For grant-funded research, the RDA recommends for permanent retention any final reports and publications generated which document procedures, steps taken, and research results.<sup>42</sup> Samuels, discussing the appraisal of faculty papers, notes that the record of the research process can be voluminous and may contain article reprints, photocopies of manuscripts, note cards, photographs, and objects of every variety. She argues that in making retention decisions, the archivist must consider the potential reuse of the data by other scholars.<sup>43</sup> Though the RDA does not address faculty papers, McMillan’s record of scholarly research is a rich documentation of non-grant-funded research at AU and complements the goal of documenting the institution.

The administration of internal operations, as defined in the RDA, includes “office management duties such as communicating and corresponding” and “managing human resources.”<sup>44</sup> Though the RDA does include required reporting by departments to the Board of Trustees in the documentation of sustaining the institution, Samuels recommends also collecting the records of senior officers, including department heads. McMillan, as department head, documented many activities that fall under the broad rubric of sustaining the institution. The McMillan Papers contain significant material documenting his governance of the history department, including finances, personnel, and the creation of the doctoral program in history,

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<sup>41</sup> Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 65.

<sup>42</sup> Alabama State Records Commission, “Public Universities of Alabama,” 3-12.

<sup>43</sup> Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 124.

<sup>44</sup> Alabama State Records Commission, “Public Universities of Alabama,” 1-6.

an important milestone for the department. The records are rife with privacy issues, including tenure-review papers for History Department faculty and deliberations made during hiring and firing decisions. Reappraisal decisions must consider legal issues surrounding privacy ahead of concern for documenting the university. Though some of the material is already marked as “sealed for privacy,” a more thorough reappraisal for selection would result in the removal of a significant portion of the remaining personnel-management files among the papers. While a large proportion of the McMillan Papers can be appraised and organized along institutional functional lines, there are materials within them that fall outside of the concerns of documenting Auburn University. For appraisal of these documents, collecting policies are more relevant than functional categories. In his work as the editor of the *Alabama Review* and in his service to professional historical associations, McMillan created papers corresponding to AU Archives collection policies on Alabama history. They appear to be worthy of retention in a series not related to institutional functions. Additional materials to be arranged in a non-institutional-related series include family genealogical papers, personal correspondence, and documentation on McMillan’s business, financial, family, and legal activities.

By conducting a reappraisal for arrangement informed by the institutional functional analysis categories in the RDA, the archivist can set in motion a new, more logical organization. The expansive McMillan Papers divides into five series: Teaching Activities, Research Activities, Administrative Activities, *Alabama Review* Editorship, and Personal Papers. Though the first three series fall under the activities he undertook as an AU faculty member and could conceivably be combined, each corresponds to a different functional area of the university. The size of the manuscript collection and the range of McMillan’s research and teaching activities necessitate that research papers and teaching activities fall into series by themselves. Materials for the first series, Teaching Activities, can be appraised according to their value in documenting the function of conveying knowledge. Course notes, visual aids, and any other materials used in the classroom are worthy of consideration in enriching the minimums set forth in the RDA. Because of the current lack of series organization and the limited utility of box

titles, the full range of McMillan's research activities is difficult to ascertain. The Research Activities series, with topical sub-series, facilitates access by archives users and documents the function of conducting research. Research files in the McMillan Papers contain tremendous amounts of newspaper clippings and published articles. These folders are not merely labeled by broad topic, but specifically address particular events, industries, people, and places within the broad categories of Alabama history, Civil War history, and southern history. The main problem with the research files is that there is almost no discernible order to them. Folders on similar topics are scattered throughout the boxes. For example, files containing research on Alabama governors can be found in fifteen of the fifty-three records boxes. Birmingham-related research files are scattered across twelve boxes. A reappraisal along the lines of documenting research activities will allow for sub-series arrangement within this area and could lead to the imposition of an intellectual reorganization within a new electronic finding aid. Physically rearranging the research materials, while helpful in terms of making reference and retrieval more efficient, may not be worth the trouble if a reappraisal enables archivists virtually to reorder the papers through a series of electronic finding aids. These finding aids will present to the archives user cohesive and logically arranged records even though the physical arrangement remains as it was.

Of the final three series, Administrative Activities, Professional Outreach, and Personal Papers, only the first aligns with a university functional area. Folders within the McMillan Papers referring to his administrative activities account for only about 2 percent of the folders listed. These folders, containing correspondence between McMillan and university administrators, documentation of departmental meetings and deliberations, and the general management of department activities, help to highlight the evolution of the department. During the initial appraisal, folders containing private information were physically moved to a separate box and those containing accessible administrative documentation were left in their original locations. The usability of the administrative series would be greatly enhanced by an imposed intellectual reorganization.

The proposed series locations of materials common to the McMillan Papers will be:

Table 1

<b>Institutional Related</b>		
<i>Teaching Activities Series</i>	<i>Research Activities Series</i>	<i>Administrative Activities Series</i>
Class lecture notes	Article and book manuscripts	Intra-departmental memos
Visual aids	Research notes	Intra-university correspondence
Student output	Scholarly correspondence	History Department self study
Course notes and handouts	Photographs from research	History department files
Correspondence w/ students	Research photocopies	Faculty resumes and vita
Grade books	Newspaper clippings	Doctoral program proposals
Recommendations	McMillan Vita	
	Research expense sheets	
	Research travel forms	
<b>Non-Institutional Related</b>		
<i>Professional Outreach Series</i>	<i>Personal Series</i>	
<i>Alabama Review</i>	"Personal" files	
	Financial documents	
	Legal and tax documents	
	Last will and testament	
	Genealogical research	
Alabama Historical Commission	Personal correspondence	
	Scrapbooks	

One last consideration is how to restructure the great volume of photographs in the papers. The folder descriptions for photographs are sufficiently detailed, and describe either personal or research photos. This division between personal and research photos can, in the proposed reorganization, correspond to sub-series divisions within the research and personal papers series. As the vast majority of photographs concern Birmingham, these photographs could be organized into a research sub-series. The remaining photographs, including personal vacation and family images, can be placed in a personal sub-series and may be reevaluated later for possible de-accessioning.

The entire restructuring process for imposing order on these papers can initially be done through the finding aid. Great strides in the development of Encoded Archival Description (EAD) open numerous avenues for increasing the usability of individual manuscripts. Merely digitizing the finding aid increases its accessibility. Providing a controlled vocabulary brings an entire world of online researchers into contact with the holdings. Moreover, if university and non-university records are both digitized and put in EAD format (a project currently underway in the AU archives), they can more easily link together.

Imposing the RDA order and providing more concise series and sub-series containment sets is vital to EAD processing of faculty papers like McMillan's. At a time when many institutions are moving toward digitization and the use of EAD, reappraising faculty papers makes perfect sense. As well, applying the RDA guidelines for initial levels of containment eliminates much of the guesswork about aligning series and sub-series.

The papers are divided into those records that fall under institutional and non-institutional related series. The RDA categories then provide subsequent containment levels for institutional-related records, and traditional manuscript headings provide the rest. For instance, it transforms the original finding aid, as seen in Table 2, without physically altering the papers at all.

Table 2

<b>Original finding aid: (no series information)</b>	
Box 21	Alabama Civil War
	Abernethy, Thomas P. —The South in the New Nation, 1789-1819, Bibliography
	Hollifield Fund
Box 21	Term Papers in the History of the Old South
	Papers Read and Books Reviewed
	Personal Letters
	McMillan Family Tree
	Chapter II—"Alabama's First Inhabitants" (from <i>The Land Called Alabama</i> )
	Pratt, Daniel
	Doctoral Program
	Summer Appointment, 1968
	McMillan's Last Will and Testament—One of Many, 1975
	Photocopies of Various Newspapers
Box 22	Selma Ordnance—Navy
	Class Notes—Recent European History
	Personal
	Notes on Birmingham
	Pidhainy, Oleh
	<i>Alabama Review</i>
	Brochure on Birmingham, 1947
	20th Street—Birmingham
	"Birmingham Illustrated"—1913
	Rea, Dr. Robert R.—Chairman of Graduate Studies in History
	State Chamber of Commerce—Textiles
	Park Pictures—Birmingham
	Textbooks I Was Writing with Tyree Johnson
<b>Newly proposed finding aid:</b>	
<b>Institutional Series</b>	
<b>Series 1: Administrative Activities</b>	
<i>Sub-series 1: Program Management</i>	
Box 21	Doctoral Program

<i>Sub-series 2: Departmental Faculty</i>	
Box 22	Pidhainy, Oleh
Box 22	Rea, Dr. Robert R.—Chairman of Graduate Studies in History
<b>Series 2: Teaching Activities</b>	
Box 22	Class Notes—Recent European History
Box 21	Summer Appointment, 1968
Box 21	Term Papers in the History of the Old South
<b>Series 3: Research Activities</b>	
<i>Sub-series 1: Alabama</i>	
Box 21	Alabama Civil War
Box 21	Chapter II—"Alabama's First Inhabitants" (from <i>The Land Called Alabama</i> )
Box 22	Notes on Birmingham
Box 22	Selma Ordnance—Navy
Box 22	State Chamber of Commerce—Textiles
Box 22	Textbooks I Was Writing with Tyree Johnson
<i>Sub-series 2: The South</i>	
Box 21	Abernethy, Thomas P.—The South in the New Nation, 1789-1819, Bibliography
<i>Sub-series 3: Daniel Pratt</i>	
Box 21	Pratt, Daniel
<i>Sub-series 4: Unidentified Research Materials</i>	
Box 21	Papers Read and Books Reviewed
Box 21	Photocopies of Various Newspapers
<i>Sub-Series 5: Photographs and Images</i>	
Box 22	20th Street—Birmingham
Box 22	"Birmingham Illustrated"—1913
Box 22	Brochure on Birmingham, 1947
<b>Non-Institutional Series</b>	
<b>Series 4: Professional Outreach</b>	
<i>Sub-series 1: Alabama Review</i>	
Box 22	<i>Alabama Review</i>
<i>Sub-series 2: Alabama Historical Commission</i>	
<b>Series 5: Personal Papers</b>	
Box 21	McMillan Family Tree

Box 21	Hollifield Fund
Box 21	McMillan's Last Will and Testament—One of Many, 1975
Box 22	Personal
Box 21	Personal Letters

Such a reorganization is the perfect marriage of technical advancement and employment of more stringent guidelines. It will, for the McMillan Papers and any other sets of similar faculty papers to which it is applied, be a huge step forward for both streamlining manuscript collections and documenting the university.

### CONCLUSION

Institutional functional analysis, though oriented toward the official records of the institution, can be useful when appraising most faculty papers. While this reappraisal of faculty papers used functional analysis as expressed in the Alabama RDA, university functions in *Varsity Letters* are suitable for most institutions and can serve as a guide for similar repositories appraising or reappraising faculty papers. Given the relatively narrow range of official AU documents required by the RDA for permanent retention, McMillan's personal papers fill in documentation gaps, especially in the areas of conveying knowledge and conducting research. All saved correspondence relating to use of the papers points to its informational value to historical researchers. The reappraisal of the McMillan Papers may not change the kinds of users who wish to access the materials, but it may increase their numbers and their ability to make use of the records more efficiently.

It is clear from even the most cursory glance at the McMillan material that much of it could be considered for de-accession. If Rapport's projections hold, nearly 90 percent of any given collection is not worth enduring retention. Bulk reduction may be in the McMillan Papers' future. However, the initial goal for this article and project was not to reduce its size but to improve arrangement and thereby increase access, use, and reference of the material.

While the RDA specifically does not apply to faculty papers, we believe it is possible, and preferable, to consider the functions of the university when appraising faculty papers.



Using functional categories as part of the appraisal framework will allow for a greater degree of uniformity when appraising, selecting, and processing future acquisitions of faculty papers. The archivist must also take into account archival collection policies, areas identified as under-documented, and political implications of the appraisal decision. As faculty papers are frequently collected by archives, they should be addressed in archival collection policies. Serving as an explanation to potential future donors of what areas within faculty papers are most valued by the archives, a collection policy would identify the selection criteria that will be applied to all acquired collections.

Relying too heavily on institutional functional analysis does not inform the reappraising archivist about how to approach the parts of the records unrelated to institutional functions. Making selection decisions only on the criteria of how well the material documents institutional functions ignores the collecting policies of the archives and may lead to too narrow a selection focus. With the McMillan reappraisal, the collecting policies for the AU Archives played a role in the decision to add a non-institutional series. Were AU faced with a crisis in available shelving space, prioritizing the research materials by topic would be the only way to reduce bulk. This activity may best be accomplished by soliciting the participation of those to whom the subject matter in the papers is most relevant. For the McMillan Papers, a reappraisal informed by a consideration of both the institutional functional categories identified in the RDA and the collecting policies of the AU Archives works best. A reduction in the size of the manuscript collection will be secondary to the objective of creating a series of useful finding aids. Even without physically reordering the papers, which would be helpful but an overly large use of limited processing resources, presenting the contents of the holdings in an EAD-formatted electronic document, with a controlled vocabulary and organized by the series proposed will improve accessibility and establish a framework for future accessions of faculty papers.

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