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Illinois Wesleyan Chapter of the AAUP

JANUARY 17, 2013

NEWSLETTER

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The Role of Faculty in Preserving IWU History, or, Reality is in the Eye of the Record (be)Holder

By Meg Miner

"Be nice to the archivist or she will erase you from history." That's what passes for humor among archivists, and it was one of the first things I read when I joined a professional archivists' listserv in 2003.

Not to worry, we archivists are guided by ethical standards that prevent this sort of thing from actually happening...or at least prevent it from becoming endemic. The sad fact of the matter is that most of us will never have power over the records of the people we actually *wish* we could erase from history!

Fantasies aside, though, it is quite accurate to say that archivists cannot preserve history that is 1) never recorded, or 2) never deposited in our care.

IWU's archives became my responsibility in late 2005. While familiarizing myself with its holdings and fielding initial questions about its history, I began to appreciate how "thin" an understanding can be gleaned from the bare facts and summaries found in our documentary history. Our records include major decisions made by the larger bodies involved in governance—Board of Trustees, Faculty Meetings and Student Senate—but the more involved I became in researching our history, the more I realized that much of the passion for our work that we often speak about was missing. Additionally, the types of research questions coming in were often from people who wanted to know more than the final results of decisions or the start and end dates of people who worked for or attended IWU.

Some of these historical details can be fleshed out by broadening the voices represented in IWU's records. In 2008, IWU's Cabinet adopted a Records Management Plan (http://www.iwu.edu/library/services/Documents/IWU_RMP.pdf) that gave me an entry point into discussions about how our records are created and what becomes of them. A fundamental principle in records management is identifying what must be kept as well as the intervals that other documents can be disposed of. In other words, we cannot (and really should not) keep every item created by every person involved in the operations of our campus, but it is sometimes surprising to find that people do not recognize the long term significance their daily work has:

- Students may think of the short term outcome of their organization's activities and not recognize their place in the record of student life.
- Staff may think the policy documents and reports they create can be posted on the Web without securing a copy of superseded material.
- Faculty may think of a syllabus for an experimental course as meeting their immediate needs and not of its perspective on our

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curricular growth or its evidentiary value when alumni must later prove the merit of a course.

Gathering such records is a start, but after spending even a short amount of time at IWU it becomes obvious how much of our heritage only lives in individuals' memories—people come here to work and stay here for a very long time! In reality, no amount of official documentation can flesh out the depth of people's experiences in creating our history or take into account the efforts of those who advocated for an outcome and lost.

History is written, as the saying goes, by the winners, and archivists have a responsibility "to actively document those whose voices have been overlooked or marginalized" (<http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics>). As an approach to securing such perspectives, and as a means for capturing some of the institutional knowledge locked in people's brains, I started an oral history program in 2009. All completed audio recordings and/or transcriptions are available at <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/oralhistory/>. A few more await final editorial approval by the interview subjects but to date, 35 interviews have been posted from the current initiative and 11 more oral history-types of recordings have been reformatted for Web access, transcribed and posted. When seeking out staff, faculty and administrators, my focus has been on people who are no longer actively employed by the university. It is my hope that these recollections will be uninhibited and that, when taken together with the official records of our institution, people's stories will increase the depth of our understanding. However, all IWU members, past and present, are eligible to participate.

The oral history program lacks the steady stream of interested student interviewers that I hoped for initially, so recommendations and volunteers from any in our community are quite welcome. Suggestions and volunteers for interview subjects are also appreciated.

Part of AAUP's mission is "to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good" (<http://aaup.org/about/mission-description>). I invite all who are reading this to consider the evidence of their contributions to IWU's governance and operation and its availability into the future. Anyone who would like to add to the University Archives' records or make suggestion on these record gathering initiatives may contact me directly at mminer@iwu.edu or 309-556-1538.

The Open Road, Part Two: Sharing and the Common Good

By Stephanie Davis-Kahl, member, IWU AAUP

It's that time of year when one is asked to have lunch with faculty candidates. I love being invited – I learn a lot about my colleagues over these "off the record" lunches. I hear about their take on our campus, our students, Bloomington-Normal, their hobbies. Indeed, one of the great things about being part of an academic community is that we are an interesting bunch, and we like to share what we know and what we believe – about teaching, about research, about the running group they belong to, the best place to buy wine and beer, you name it. We are an eclectic and fascinating crowd, and our work – individually and collectively – proves it.

Sometimes the luncheon discussions directly intersect with my work in the library. Case in point - at the most recent lunch I attended, one of my colleagues mentioned a brochureⁱ that our University Communications

Office had created about the Human Rights work on our campus, to showcase the work of the faculty and students involved.

I immediately remembered a discussion I had with Karen Schmidt, University Librarian, about creating a multimedia collection within Digital Commons to showcase artwork, papers, syllabi, interviews and other artifacts from the Human Rights efforts on campus. This has the potential to be a powerful and engaging resource, not only for us, but also for our community and for communities beyond Bloomington-Normal.

One of the reasons that AAUP's *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* resonates with me is because of the emphasis on "the common good." I expect we may all have different ways of thinking and acting on that ideal of something good for all of us, but for me, it's about sharing knowledge – illuminating the good work that's being done on this campus, showcasing the stories so others can learn from and build on them, and most importantly, making it open to all. My goal in the work I do with Digital Commons @ IWU, similarly to my colleague Meg Miner, is to show the rest of the world how distinctive we are through our individual and collective efforts to create a community that values teaching, scholarship and creative activity and learning. To this end, Digital Commons houses a collection of WGLT interviewsⁱⁱ with faculty about their research, and also is the home for the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence speechesⁱⁱⁱ. A number of faculty have already contributed some or all of their work to Digital Commons through SelectedWorks,^{iv} and several of those pages include links to student research they've advised. What better way to demonstrate the connection between teaching and research than by sharing the product of the faculty-student collaboration that we value so highly on this campus?

Sharing our work – whether it's artwork, or a post-print of a scholarly article, or an exemplary student paper – contributes to the ideal of the common good. By sharing our scholarship and creative activity, we also communicate who we are as individual scholars and artists. We demonstrate the meaningful ways that teaching and research inform one another, and how we engage students in the questions we ask and the process of exploring those questions.

If you're interested in including your own work, or the exemplary work of your students in Digital Commons or SelectedWorks, please contact me for more information. Please also consider attending the forum, "Exploring Open Access," next Tuesday afternoon at 4 pm in the Henning Room.

Teaching and Learning

By Joerg Tiede

The Report of the Dec. 10, 2012 SPBC Meeting notes the creation of "work groups" to "update the Strategic Plan" of Illinois Wesleyan University. The work group charged with updating the Teaching and Learning section of the Strategic Plan contains six members: two faculty, the Provost, the Chief Technology Officer, the Dean of Enrollment Management, and a member of the Board of Trustees. The composition of this work group is highly problematic from the perspective of shared governance as promulgated in the *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*, which was jointly formulated by the AAUP, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards in 1966 and is still widely considered as the authoritative definition of "shared governance" in

American higher education. There are two significant problems with the composition of the work group.

First, the work group contains too few faculty members. Having two faculty out of six members is insufficient for a committee charged with modifying the strategic plan with regards to teaching and learning. These areas fall clearly into the "primary responsibility" of the faculty. The areas that fall into the primary responsibility are defined in the *Statement on Government* to include "curriculum, subject matter and instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life that relate to the educational process". As the statement notes, in these areas, the administration and the board should "concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail." A committee in which the faculty has only two of six members is not set up to represent the "judgment of the faculty". It has been claimed that the faculty status of the provost (and perhaps the member of the Board) are relevant here. Neither is serving primarily to represent the faculty of IWU but the administration and the board, respectively. At a minimum, the committee should contain a majority of faculty members.

Second, while arguably a case could be made for the membership of the Provost, the Chief Technology Officer, and a member of the board on this work group - although I would prefer it to be non-voting - the membership of the Dean of Enrollment Management represents an intrusion of the non-academic side of the administration into matters of curriculum and instruction. The Office of Admission may have information to provide that could inform strategic planning with respect to teaching and learning, as may, for instance, the Career Center. The importance of communication among the different constituents within the university is stressed in the *Statement on Government*. While communication between the faculty, which has primary responsibility for curricular matters, and the academic and non-academic administration is important, membership on the work group not only allows such communication to occur but gives the Dean of Enrollment Management a vote in the outcome of this deliberation, which goes far beyond simply considering the expertise of the Office of Admission, which is not in either teaching or learning. It is essential that the Dean of Enrollment Management be removed from the work group.

Upcoming Events

January 22. "Exploring Open Access" led by Stephanie Davis-Kahl. At 4pm in the Henning Room.

February 12. Reading Group Meeting: Michelle A. Massé and Katie J. Hogan (eds). *Over Ten Million Served. Gendered Service in Language and Literature Workplaces.* SUNY Press. 2010. At 4pm, location TBA.

February 19. A discussion of the university's proposed intellectual property policy led by Stephanie Davis-Kahl. At 4pm in the Henning Room.

February 20. A presentation on IWU's Faculty Handbook led by Lynda Duke and Joerg Tiede. At 4pm in the Henning Room.

February 25. Non-Org presentation: From Complaint to Case to Investigation: Committee A by Joerg Tiede. At 12 in the Davidson Room.

ⁱ Human Rights at Illinois Wesleyan, <http://issuu.com/illinoiswesleyanuniversity/docs/human-rights-book/16>

ⁱⁱ WGLT Collection, <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/wglit/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Honorees for Teaching Excellence, http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/teaching_excellence/

^{iv} SelectedWorks Gallery, http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/sw_gallery.html