

Manuscripts and Archives at the University of California: Benchmarking Collections, Backlogs, and Processing Practices across Repositories

LAUREL MCPHEE, AUDRA EAGLE YUN, KATE DUNDON, COURTNEY DEAN, ELVIA ARROYO-RAMÍREZ

Abstract

The [Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing in the University of California Libraries](#) has been an influential resource for archivists nationwide since its publication in 2012. This research project seeks to understand the *Guidelines's* impact on backlogs, collection management policies, and day-to-day archival practices over the last dozen years across the UC Libraries, by taking a fresh look at current practices, collections, and perspectives. Our research will assess how the *Guidelines's* strategies for managing materials, accessioning, and processing have or have not been effective.

Our research will answer the following questions: (1) What elements of the *Guidelines* have been successfully adopted in archival collections management at the UC over the last ten years?; (2) Has a systemwide mandate for efficient processing helped UC libraries cope with significant backlogs?; and (3) If not, what are the practical barriers to implementation of efficient processing and successful collection management?

About the authors

Elvia Arroyo-Ramírez, Digital Archivist, UC Irvine. Elvia is transitioning to a new role as digital archivist at Special Collections & Archives at the UC Irvine Libraries. Previously she was the assistant university archivist there and worked with students, faculty and staff to preserve and document the campus history. In her new role, she will be responsible for developing workflows to accession, process, preserve, and provide access to born-digital collections.

Courtney Dean, incoming Associate Director, Acquisitions and Collections Control in Special Collections, Yale Library. (Formerly Head, CFPRT and Interim Coordinator, Collection Management at UCLA Library Special Collections). At UCLA, Courtney provided oversight of collection management technical services work, as well as a program designed to equip emerging UCLA scholars with the skills to effectively engage with primary sources. In 2014, she co-founded the Los Angeles Archivists Collective. Courtney is an active member of SAA and the Archival Workers Collective.

Kate Dundon, Supervisory Archivist, UC Santa Cruz. Kate Dundon is the Supervisory Archivist for Special Collections & Archives at University of California Santa Cruz where she oversees archival processing, accessioning, collection management, and born-digital stewardship programs. Prior to this, she held positions at Occidental College Library, New York University Law Library, and the New York Public Library. She earned an MA in Archives and Public History from NYU and an MLIS from Long Island University.

Laurel McPhee, Supervisory Archivist, UC San Diego Library. Laurel is the supervisory archivist within the Special Collections & Archives Program, where she collaborates with a team

of librarians, manuscript processors, and specialists who work to make collections of personal papers, organizational records, unique visual resources, and digital objects preserved and accessible. She is a co-author (with other members of this research team) of the 2020 version of the *Guidelines*. Laurel earned her A.B. from Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts and her MLIS from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Audra Eagle Yun, Head of Special Collections & Archives and University Archivist, UC Irvine. Audra is the author-editor of *Archival Accessioning* (2021); co-author of the *Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing in the University of California Libraries* (2012; 2020) as well as a contributor to the 2019 revised Statement of Principles for Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS). Audra's work focuses on community-centered archives partnerships, archival collection management, and feminist leadership.