

THEY DON'T TEACH PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN GRAD SCHOOL

How archives can combine ethical practices with modern Agile
project management methods

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OUTLINE

- Access to Collections (A2C) Project
- World's shortest overview of Scrum
- Lessons learned
 - Project structure and team dynamics
 - Relations between project and permanent staff
 - Change and the nature of term positions
 - Prioritization and automation

ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS (A2C) PROJECT

- Mid-2018 to mid-2021
- Six to seven project staff
- Overarching goals
 - Maximize access to the holdings of Smith College Special Collections
 - Modernize systems and processes
 - Treat our collections, our donors, and ourselves ethically

WORLD'S SHORTEST OVERVIEW OF SCRUM

- Small, close-knit team that fully participates in planning
- Work is conducted in short “sprints” (two weeks in our case)
- Each sprint includes an internal retrospective and a broader meeting to review work with stakeholders
- Daily 15 minute standups (or scrums)
- For an excellent primer, see *Scrum: A Breathtakingly Brief and Agile Introduction* by Chris Sims and Hillary Louise Johnson (Dymaxicon, 2012)

PROJECT STRUCTURE & TEAM DYNAMICS

- Regular retrospectives are valuable, even if you aren't using scrum
- The sanctity of the sprint cycle in scrum is one of its most important aspects
- Scrum is an excellent tool, but if parts of it aren't working, stop using them

RELATIONS BETWEEN PROJECT AND PERMANENT STAFF

- Avoid making things worse, even temporarily, until trust is established
- Always over communicate

CHANGE AND THE NATURE OF TERM POSITIONS

- Always have ideas for additional projects or expansions for existing projects on hand
- If your processes never change, you're doing something wrong
- Know when to cut your losses

PRIORITIZATION AND AUTOMATION

- Focus on systemic problems first
- Limit the amount of effort spent on improving temporary systems
- The true value of automation is as a force multiplier and positive feedback loop
- Sometimes brute force is the way to go

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QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND COMPLAINTS

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