

Examining the Cost of Care on Archives Professionals

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Archivists are caregivers, taking care of dependents, loved ones, and relatives, young and old, healthy and sick. In their 2019 article entitled, “The Cost of Care and the Impact on the Archives Profession,” published in a special issue on diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency in the *Journal of Western Archives*, the presenters investigated the effect caregiving has on managing work responsibilities, professional engagement and development opportunities, as well as the long-term effects wages and the cost of affordable care have on caregivers. The article revealed several gaps in data, impeding greater understanding of the true direct and indirect costs of care for individuals in the archives profession. In January 2021, the presenters disseminated the Cost of Care Survey, reaching out to archivists across the United States, targeting email lists of national, regional, state, and local archives professional organizations. The survey collected data that addressed a number of the gaps identified in the original article as well as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic stay-at-home orders on caregivers. This allowed for a timely examination of how caregiving roles and responsibilities have changed since March 1st of 2020. The presentation will address the methodology employed for drafting and disseminating the survey as well as the partnership with a statistical consultant outside the archival field to develop the survey and interpret over 700 data variables from the 500 survey participants. Presenters will also discuss preliminary findings and analysis of the survey results, and share plans for publishing survey findings.

About the authors:

Alexis Braun Marks is the University Archivist at Eastern Michigan University. A graduate of University of Wisconsin-Madison, she previously worked as the Archivist at the Wright Museum in Detroit. She has held leadership positions in MAC and SAA.

Rachael Dreyer is currently Head of Research Services at the Eberly Family Special Collections Library, a part of the Pennsylvania University Libraries, a position she has held since 2015. Prior to joining Penn State, Dreyer worked as a reference archivist at the University of Wyoming’s American Heritage Center, as well as a local history librarian at the Chelsea District Library, Chelsea, MI. In addition to exploring the costs and impacts of caregiving on archivists, her research interests also include strategies for expanding equitable access to research spaces and services, as well as practicing collaborative curation models for rare books and archival materials.

Jennifer Johnson is Director of the Corporate Archives at Cargill, Incorporated. A MLS University of Maryland graduate, she previously worked at the U.S. Department of Energy and the Minnesota State Archives. A member of the 2011 Archives Leadership Institute, she has held leadership positions with SAA, MAC, and TCART.

Michelle Sweetser is the Head Librarian at the Center for Archival Collections (CAC) at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). Before joining BGSU in 2016, she served as the

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