

## **Strength in Numbers - Collective Advocacy in Demonstrating Archival Impact**

**AMANDA PELLERIN**

**Abstract:** Advocacy is a common work task for archivists, but it is a skill that is underdeveloped for many. How can archivists demonstrate the collective impact of archival programs that cultivate advocates not only internal but also, and importantly, external to the profession?

Archives are a distinct cultural heritage entity with a specific value to their parent institution and local community that can be measured, shared, and articulated. The Advocacy Committee of the Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education's (ARCHE) Archives Council is currently researching ways to measure and understand the economic, social, and political value of archival resources. The membership of the ARCHE Archives Council represents the area's numerous archival programs and supports coordinated efforts across the metro-area.

To show a wide impact, archival data collection can be gathered collectively across a commonality like geographies, subjects, or communities. In the fall of 2017, the Council's Advocacy Committee designed a preliminary survey for the membership in order to compile information on collecting areas, patron statistics, and connections to local communities or prominent individuals. The survey also asks about collaborations with allied professions through product creation, expenditures for archival supplies, and outsourced services. In the lightning talk presentation, the environmental context of our archival collective, the project's research methodology, and findings from the initial survey phase will be discussed. Follow up discussions and feedback on the process and next steps are welcome during the poster session of the Forum.

### **About the Author:**

*Amanda Pellerin* is the Access Archivist at the Georgia Institute of Technology's Special Collections and Archives. She assists the department in promoting the diverse archival record at Georgia Tech through new acquisitions, collection processing, descriptive records, and class instruction. Amanda supports access to archival holdings through archival advocacy, teaching with primary resources, and oral histories. She is the current chair of the Oral History Section and co-chair of the Public Services Assessment Sub-Committee of SAA's Reference, Access & Outreach Section.