

# ENGAGING COMMUNITIES: PUBLIC PROGRAMMING IN STATE UNIVERSITIES' SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

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**ABSTRACT:** Since 1978, when Ann Pederson published “Archival Outreach: SAA’s 1976 Survey,” no systematic attempt has been made to document the extent, challenges, and benefits of the archival profession’s outreach activities. To begin to address this gap, archivists at Georgia State University (GSU) surveyed special collections and archives at state universities nationally about their fund-raising, friend-raising, and educational public programming activities. This article describes some of GSU’s public programming activities and compares them with the results of the survey.

## *Introduction*

In her 1978 article, “Archival Outreach: SAA’s 1976 Survey,” Ann Pederson stated that “we must be responsive to the environments in which we find ourselves in regard both to the holdings which we accession and to the research needs we serve. How can we be the mirror of our times if we shut ourselves off from the larger society and its institutions, and how else can we guarantee the continuing existence and appreciation of our programs if we make little or no effort to educate the society we profess to document?”<sup>1</sup> Pederson and SAA’s Committee on the Wider Use of Archives’ survey was an attempt to document archival outreach activities across the United States. Those activities included exhibits, special events, workshops, publications, audiovisual materials, and on-site visits. As well as presenting the results of the survey, Pederson called for archivists to accept change and a new and growing clientele who would prove themselves not to be “mobs, vandals and thieves assaulting our doors.”<sup>2</sup> Since 1978, when the survey results were published, archivists have accepted and even welcomed their expanding and diversifying clientele, and they have been actively involved in outreach. However, although the profession has increasingly accepted the place of outreach in day-to-day archival practice, no systematic attempt has been made to document the extent, challenges, and benefits of those activities.

Archivists at Georgia State University (GSU) Library’s Special Collections and Archives participate in all aspects of archival practice, as they arrange, describe, and make available the materials housed at the university. Some of the archivists, primarily

those in charge of collections, provide outreach to students at GSU by teaching or coteaching bibliographic instruction and methodologies classes. From time to time, the archivists also provide instruction to students from other institutions.<sup>3</sup> Archivists reach out to the broader community via social media as well as attending community events. Public programming events, which are the focus of this article, are the most time-consuming outreach activities undertaken by the GSU archivists and also the most expensive.

In 2010, Georgia State University Library's administrators voiced concern over the cost of public programming, in terms of both time and resources. In response, the archivist for the Women and Gender Collections created a list of promised and actual donations of manuscript collections, oral histories, and financial support that had resulted from public programming events since 2005. She also sent a short questionnaire to a limited number of women-focused archival institutions asking for information about their public programming activities. Finally, she searched the professional literature for useful practical advice about hosting public programs. This research showed that special events are indeed a catalyst for increasing collections and support. The survey results and correspondence from the survey recipients demonstrated that other institutions are actively involved in programming and are interested in the results of any future survey.

### *Literature Review*

A review of archival literature from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia<sup>4</sup> produced only one survey pertaining to the subject of outreach, Ann E. Pederson's "Archival Outreach: SAA's 1976 Survey."<sup>5</sup> Generally, literature has focused on the developing theory that outreach activities should be an integral part of archival practice and not simply an add-on. For example, Elsie Freivogel has written extensively on the subject of outreach and educational programming. Her scholarship includes "Wider Use of Historical Records, Education Programs: Outreach as an Administrative Function" and "Making Sure They Want It: Managing Successful Public Programs."<sup>6</sup> Tim Ericson also calls for fully integrating outreach as an ongoing core archival function in his stirring "Preoccupied with Our Own Gardens: Outreach and Archivists," which came out of the 1990 Annual Conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists.<sup>7</sup>

Other archivists have written case studies about their programming activities. Subjects discussed in case study articles range from the creation of basic collection overview presentations, childhood and undergraduate instruction, centennial celebrations, hosting a presidential debate, and fund-raising events focused on a particular collecting area and donor set. They include Michael F. Cole's "It Only Happens Once Every Hundred Years: Making the Most of the Centennial Opportunity," P. J. Rettig's "Water Tables: A Case Study of a Successful Archival Fund-Raising Event," and Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, Yasmin B. Kafai, and William E. Landis's "Integrating Primary Sources into the Elementary School Classroom: A Case Study of Teachers' Perspectives."<sup>8</sup> Most recently, Larry Hackman's *Many Happy Returns: Advocacy*

*and the Development of Archives* brought together papers that describe the work of archivists who actively promote advocacy for archival collections and organizations.<sup>9</sup>

## ***Background***

Lacking from the literature is any practical “nuts and bolts” advice about programming activities or information about the breadth and scope of outreach programs in academic institutions across the nation. While the case studies describe the content of successful programs, they tend to focus on the importance of meeting the needs of the audience and do not discuss the management behind those public programs: the how, the who, and the how much. How are decision making, event space planning, equipment logistics, and publicity done? Who is involved in pulling an event together, including administrative, creative, development, and planning personnel? How much does it cost to invite and feed guests, and pay for speakers and equipment? And who pays for it? Furthermore, as noted, no comprehensive surveys have been reported since the one undertaken by Pederson in 1976. In response to this lack of available scholarship, GSU’s Women and Gender Collections archivist worked with the Popular Music and Culture Collection archivist to examine programming activities at GSU through a practical lens.

At the same time, they created a national survey to ask the questions that they most wanted answered: what types of public programming events are undertaken, who is involved in organizing them, how much do they cost, and how they are funded? The survey was designed to create a useful tool for comparing efforts at GSU with like institutions around the country. To that end, the survey was sent to special collections and archives within state-supported academic institutions. For the purpose of the survey, public programming included friend-raising, fund-raising, and educational events. At GSU, friend-raising activities are designed to let existing friends and, hopefully, new friends (including students and faculty) know about the activities and collections within Special Collections. Fund-raising activities are designed to raise monies to support existing endowments or to create new endowments, and the primary constituents are existing donors and their friends, peers, or colleagues. Educational programming includes workshops, symposia, and presentations that are more specialized and broadly promoted than regularly held bibliographic instruction classes, and the audience usually comprises students, faculty, interested researchers from GSU and farther afield, and the general public. This article provides case studies for all of these by highlighting the Women and Gender Collections’ annual friend-raising and fund-raising efforts and the Popular Music and Culture Collection’s one-time educational events.

## ***Case Studies: The Women and Gender Collections***

Established in 1995, the Women and Gender Collections at the GSU Library comprises three general collecting areas. The Donna Novak Coles Georgia Women’s Movement Archives documents the second wave of the women’s movement in Georgia, with

particular emphasis on the state's efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. The Lucy H. Draper Research Collection documents national second wave feminism and efforts to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. The Archives for Research on Women and Gender documents women and LGBTQ-centered activism, as well as women's activities at Georgia State University.

### **Friend-Raising: The Georgia Women's Movement Project Spring Event**

In 1998, an annual Spring Event was established, originally named for the founding director of the Women's Studies Department, who retired that year. The events, which generally take place in April or early May, highlight the Women and Gender Collections, and the themes of the events reflect newly acquired or opened collections or important women-centered anniversaries. A university videographer records each event, and the recording is placed in the Women and Gender Collections.<sup>10</sup>

The Spring Event and an accompanying exhibit are paid for using the endowment fund. The exhibits remain in place for a full year. Initially, the Women and Gender Collections archivist curated the exhibits, but gradually, other staff members have become involved, and for the first time, in 2012, two graduate assistants were given free rein to create the exhibit.

Attendance at the Spring Event varies widely, from 40 to 120. Based on feedback from invitees, the date, time, and theme of the events appear to affect attendance. Each year, the aim is to continue to attract long-term attendees, while also trying to bring new constituents into the fold. Providing variety in the themes of the events helps to do that.<sup>11</sup>

### **Friend-Raising: The Georgia LGBTQ Archives Project Outreach Events**

Established in 2011, the Georgia LGBTQ Archives Project brings together archivists, librarians, and activists from around the metro Atlanta area to raise awareness of the importance of saving personal history, to celebrate the role of LGBTQ citizens in Georgia, to link donors to collecting institutions, and to promote the appreciation of LGBTQ history. Participating institutions include the Atlanta History Center, Auburn Avenue Research Library, Emory University, the Fulton County Public Library, Georgia State University, and Kennesaw State University. GSU plays a central role in the project. The project is currently in the process of establishing itself as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. A Facebook page<sup>12</sup> serves as the project's "web page," members print basic promotional materials, and the local LGBTQ community's Rush Center donates the space for the project's monthly meetings. Public programming is irregular and ongoing.

The Georgia LGBTQ Archives Project's first public programming event took place in late spring of 2012 and was called "Out of Our Closets and Into the Archives." At this event, archivists from all of the local institutions talked to a packed hall about the importance of saving records, about their own collections, and about the donation process. A current GSU donor also talked about his experience. At the end of the presentations, attendees were given the opportunity to meet with the archivists. Within a week, GSU was in possession of two new collections and one new volunteer. In 2013, archivists from GSU were invited to attend a monthly meeting of SAGE, a local group

that serves older LGBTQ community members. At the meeting, the archivists talked about the importance of estate planning, and the effort resulted in a new collection. In March of 2014, another community organization, Prime Timers, allowed members of the project to present at one of their monthly meetings. At the most heavily attended session in the Prime Timers' history, archivists talked about donating papers and conducting oral histories, a researcher talked about his work with LGBTQ collections, and a donor recounted his experiences with Emory University. Shortly after the event, GSU's archivists received e-mails or phone calls from four potential new donors, and within two weeks, the archivists had met with all of them, conducted an oral history with one, and planned oral histories with all the others.

The project, working without a budget, has made great strides in the two-and-a-half years since it was established. Each institution has added to its LGBTQ collections, and the community has embraced the work of the project and is promoting it widely. The community also has embraced its own history and is passionate about saving that history.

### **Fund-Raising: Shero of the Year Event**

At the 2006 Spring Event, the Women and Gender Collections began to honor a "Shero of the Year." The "Shero" is a person who had impacted the collections in a meaningful way, and she would be asked to encourage attendees to donate to the collections' endowments.

After the third year of combining a friend-raising program with the honoring of a Shero of the Year, the Spring Event had become long and unwieldy. Since 2009, at the urging of some donor-advisors, two events are held annually: the traditional Spring Event continues to take place in April or May, and a Shero of the Year fund-raiser has been held at locations outside the library in the fall.<sup>13</sup> The fund-raiser is clearly advertised as that, and attendees are asked to make a monetary donation. A small advisory committee comprised of dedicated long-term supporters and the wife of the university president provides planning assistance for the fund-raiser.

Each year, the Shero of the Year is announced via a save-the-date e-mail. The e-mail includes a link to a blog page that serves as the official online announcement. A host committee is then established, and hosts commit to a \$250, \$500, or \$1,000 donation. In 2012, a fourth, \$1,500 level was added. A "giving" web page is created so that attendees and hosts can make pledges online, and remittance envelopes are included with the invitations for those donors who prefer to pay by check. All of the Women and Gender Collections' endowments are listed, so that donors can support the endowments that most appeal to them. To help donors understand why the collections require financial support, a table is set aside at the event to illustrate the cost of managing archival collections. Attached to one cubic foot of manuscript boxes and a CD-R audio interview with a transcript, are mounted signs that show the cost of processing manuscript collections and oral histories. Every year, the amount of money raised by the event has increased: 2009, \$12,000; 2012, close to \$22,000; 2013, \$36,000. The number of attendees has ranged from 70 to 120. Based on invitee feedback, it is clear that date and time affect numbers, as does the identity of the honoree. Since the event

takes place in the fall, political activity can influence numbers: local politicians are most likely to attend if the event is close to an election.

### **Case Studies: The Popular Music and Culture Collection**

The Popular Music and Culture Collection within the GSU Special Collections and Archives houses the papers of songwriter Johnny Mercer, and 2009 marked the hundredth anniversary of his birth. The Johnny Mercer Collections have a significant endowment from the Johnny Mercer Foundation, and a memorandum of understanding outlines various types of activities intended to promote the collection, music, and life of Johnny Mercer.

As part of the centennial celebration, the Popular Music and Culture archivist planned several educational events throughout the year, including a film festival, a four-part tribute radio show, and a two-day academic symposium that included a documentary film screening and concert performance.

#### **Educational: Johnny Mercer Film Festival**

A film festival was held with the goal of exposing students to the work of Johnny Mercer and the collections on campus. Four films for which Mercer had written music were selected for screening over a multiday period. The campus movie theater rented several films from the 1930s to the 1970s at no cost. Additionally, three university professors agreed to speak before each of the films. Unfortunately, the screenings were not well attended.

#### **Educational: Johnny Mercer Tribute Radio Programs**

The GSU student-operated campus radio station, WRAS, has a free-form program on Sunday afternoons open to any student wishing to present a program or set that is not part of the station's regular rotation. The Popular Music and Culture archivist approached the station manager about doing several Johnny Mercer tribute programs over a period of four Sundays. While the station is not generally involved with faculty or programs directly related to collections or course work, the staff was open to increased faculty involvement. The archivist created four two-hour programs, selecting music from the collection that highlighted four major aspects of Johnny Mercer's career—music for theater, music for film, performance as a vocalist, and host of his own radio shows. A student with an interest in Mercer-era music who worked at the station was involved with the program and broadcast.

A few weeks prior to their broadcast, radio advertisements promoted the programs. A scripted voice track was prerecorded, and music selections were added to the programs. While time consuming, the programs were created in this fashion to assure the accuracy of the historical content and the professionalism of the presentations. These prerecorded programs could be reused in the future by making minor edits.

#### **Educational: "Popular Music in the Mercer Era" Symposium**

The largest event during this centennial year was a two-day academic symposium titled "Popular Music in the Mercer Era, 1940–1970." In addition to the symposium, a premiere screening of the *Johnny Mercer: The Dream's On Me* documentary film

and a concert featuring the music of Johnny Mercer by Joe Gransden, Liz Wright, and the Georgia State University Jazz Band were held in the evenings. The events were open to the general public and free to symposium registrants, while the concert was ticketed for attendees who did not register for the symposium. The event was held on a Friday and Saturday to accommodate students and faculty, as well as the general public. The budget allowed for the symposium to be catered. The registration for the symposium filled up several days prior to the event and the Friday sessions were well attended, while the Saturday sessions, especially the afternoon sessions, were not as well attended. The sessions were recorded and made available online in the GSU institutional repository after the completion of the symposium. A screening of the *Johnny Mercer: The Dream's On Me* documentary film was hosted on Friday evening. Unfortunately, a week before the screening, the film had been shown on the television network Turner Classic Movies, which may have affected the screening's attendance. Prior to the concert on Saturday evening, a reception was held for symposium attendees and invited donors, guests, and the university Emerita Association. The concert performance was almost completely sold out.

### *Public Programming Survey*

The survey, while related to outreach activities in general, consisted of questions pertaining directly to conducting public programming events. The survey results from all of the sections covering the three types of public programming events—friend-raising, fund-raising, and educational—are consolidated in this analysis.

#### **Methodology**

The goal was to gather information about public programming activities at state-funded universities similar to Georgia State University. To do this, the archivists used *Wikipedia's* “List of State Universities in the United States” to identify all of the special collections and archives to be surveyed.<sup>14</sup> The archivists developed a set of 23 questions (see appendix) pertaining to public programming events within special collections and archives. Those questions were repeated in three different sections based on the type of public programming event: fund-raising, friend-raising, or educational. This division also allowed the survey taker to skip a section if it did not apply to his or her institution. Using Zoomerang as the online survey tool, the questionnaire was sent to 446 institutions early in June 2012, followed with a reminder in mid-June of the June 30 deadline. For the following discussion, the authors collated and analyzed the survey data and reported them along with their own public programming events experiences.

#### **Results**

The survey resulted in a 25 percent response rate. Eighty-four percent of the respondents were from special collections and archives. Eight percent were from special collections only, and 8 percent were from archives only.

The results for friend-raising and fund-raising appear to be skewed, as some institutions view the activities as one and the same. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents

reported that they conduct fund-raising events. Only 22 percent of the respondents conduct any type of friend-raising events. This discrepancy may be attributable to the professional backgrounds and/or philosophies of the staff who are involved with these events. At GSU, for example, while archivists see clear distinctions, the university's development officers do not distinguish between them. Seventy percent of the respondents conduct educational events.<sup>15</sup> This is not surprising, considering that the institutions surveyed are academic.

The frequencies of events in each category were similar, ranging between one and four events per year that are a combination of annual and one-time occasions. One institution reported hosting 10 fund-raising events each year, and one reported 15 to 20 events. It may be assumed that larger institutions are able to host more events, whereas smaller institutions with less staff host fewer events. The majority who hosted fund-raising events had both annual and unique one-time events.

At GSU, experience shows that the theme is extremely important because it establishes the foundation for the event. Archivists must ensure that materials in the collection are adequate and appropriate to support the scope of the activities and that the subject matter is attractive to a broad audience. Additionally, for educational programming, they must examine the current field of scholarship to determine if scholars are available to participate in the event. For example, in the initial planning for the "Popular Music in the Mercer Era, 1940–1970" symposium, recent scholarship was surveyed, and it was deemed unrealistic to have a full two-day symposium focused solely on Johnny Mercer, so the scope was expanded to include all popular music during his era. Based on this defined scope, appropriate scholars were solicited to be guest speakers and a call for papers was posted to numerous Listservs.<sup>16</sup>

The survey showed that themes for all types of events are closely related to the collections and institutions they support. This is certainly true at GSU, as seen with the Spring Events described previously. Among survey respondents, themes or topics for fund-raising events include a focus on a particular collection, preservation how-to workshops, anniversaries, or events related to alumni. Themes or topics for the friend-raising events are all related to established collections or recent acquisitions, and activities include lectures, exhibits, and celebrations of milestones or anniversaries. Themes or topics for the educational events are usually related to a particular collection or exhibit, or are dictated by a university department and its curriculum. The events include research methods and bibliographic instruction,<sup>17</sup> tours, presentations by donors or patrons, author series events with a focus on a recently published work by a faculty member, how-to events related to genealogy research or preservation techniques, and events at which retirees identify artifacts and photographs.

The target audience is closely tied to the theme that has been selected. Respondents reported that students and faculty are present at all types of programs to some extent, and donors and the general public are much more likely to attend fund-raising or friend-raising events than educational programs. The target audiences for fund-raising events are primarily donors and the general public, but in over half of the instances, faculty and students are also included. At GSU, the audience for the Shero of the Year Event includes all of the individuals on the Women and Gender Collections general mailing list, but it expands each year to include the contacts of the Sheroes and/or their

friends. As a result, the pool of potential attendees increases each year, as the mailing list expands. Respondents' target audiences for friend-raising events are similar to fund-raising events, but with an increased emphasis on students and faculty. The target audiences for educational events are primarily faculty, students, and the general public, with less of a focus on donors.

Respondents reported that, while the methods for advertising are similar for all types of programs, the degree to which on-campus publicity is disseminated is greater for friend-raising and greatest for educational events. To publicize the fund-raising events, institutions incorporate a variety of traditional methods, including departmental newsletters, mailings, formal invitations, as well as promoting through campus media outlets and local newspapers and radio stations, and utilizing more modern methods such as websites, Listservs, and social media. They utilize the same publicity methods and outlets for fund-raising as they do for friend-raising events, although friend-raising events appear to elicit more communication across campuses. Methods and outlets for publicizing educational events include traditional print and electronic media such as student newspapers, publications, newsletters, and flyers (campus media outlets); websites, e-mail, Listservs; and social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs.

Respondents reported that the number of attendees varies greatly, with 15 being the lowest and 300 to 400 the highest. The average is between 20 and 50. Through experience, the archivists at GSU know that the theme greatly affects the number of attendees: the more relevant the theme is to the lives of the invitees, the more likely they are to make the effort to attend. For example, the Popular Music and Culture archivist recently hosted an event celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the Georgia Old-Time Fiddlers Conventions which was well attended because the regional emphasis and subject matter reflected an important part of the cultural heritage of the audience members. They could relate directly to the subject matter either because their ancestors participated in the original fiddlers conventions or because they play fiddle themselves. Likewise, the 2013 Women and Gender Collections' Spring Event focused on *Doe v. Bolton*, the often-forgotten Georgia sister case to *Roe v. Wade*. The audience, many of whom have long bemoaned the neglect of their state's landmark case, was the largest in the history of the event.

Of course, other factors can contribute to attendance. For example, the Johnny Mercer film festival was poorly attended across the board. Despite banners on the GSU Library's homepage, announcements on History and Communication Department Listservs, promotional flyers placed throughout campus, and the GSU movie theater's own marketing methods and outlets, some screenings had no attendees. In hindsight, two important factors played a role in the poor attendance: the content did not appeal to students and the time and location were not conducive to student attendance.

While the theme of an event heavily influences the interest of attendees, the location has practical implications for planning and attendance. If a venue is difficult to find, get to, or access, numbers will be seriously affected. GSU, for example, is scattered around downtown Atlanta, its library buildings are not accessible from the street level, and once in the library, visitors have to deal with strict security. Solutions to these problems can be as simple as providing attendees with detailed directions to campus and clear signage once on campus. Alternatively, archivists can seek out nontraditional

locations for events. For the “Popular Music in the Mercer Era, 1940–1970” symposium, a major obstacle was locating a proper on-campus venue. Since the screening of the documentary film and the concert were to be held at the Rialto Center for the Arts on the GSU campus, it seemed reasonable to have the symposium in the same venue. The main drawback was that the eight-hundred-seat auditorium was more than appropriate for the screening and concert, but too large for the symposium. Without a traditional meeting space in the venue, the lobby of the Rialto Center for the Arts was utilized for this purpose. While not ideal, this arrangement allowed the entire event to be held in one location, alleviating the need to transport attendees between the daytime presentations and the evening film screening and concert.

The survey shows that while the location of fund-raising events varies, three-quarters of friend-raising and educational events take place within the library, with the remaining quarter outside the library, either on or off campus. The locations of fund-raising events are evenly spread out among the library, special collections and archives, other facilities on campus, or off campus entirely. Seventy-three percent of the respondents indicated that they hold friend-raising events in the library. The remaining events are held elsewhere on campus or off campus. The vast majority of the educational events are held in special collections and archives or the library, while 27 percent indicated that they hold events at another facility on campus, and 18 percent are off campus entirely.

The overwhelming majority of respondents reported that events of all types last approximately two hours, although a few educational programs last a full day. The timing of events varies widely, though the trend is for weekdays or evenings during the spring and fall semesters. For fund-raising events, the season, day of the week, and hour vary. The majority of respondents reported hosting events in the spring and fall. While some events are held on weekends—both Saturday and Sunday—weekdays are more common. Some reported afternoon events, but evenings are most popular, in particular midweek evenings. The majority of friend-raising events are held during the spring or fall semesters on midweek afternoons or evenings. Some are also held on Friday afternoons or evenings, or Saturday evenings. Not surprisingly, scheduling of educational events varies greatly. However, the vast majority are held during the semester sessions on weekdays—particularly midweek. Some events are held on Saturdays. While some respondents reported day-long events, most reported that their events are limited to two hours. The Georgia LGBTQ Archives Project has successfully timed its events to coincide with prearranged and monthly meetings. An audience and the size of that audience are guaranteed, and the location and time are already ascertained.

Respondents reported that the majority of fund-raising events are catered and that alcohol is provided. Almost half (43 percent) of the friend-raising events are catered and half (47 percent) include alcohol. Catering for educational events varies widely. Forty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that none of the educational events are catered; 42 percent indicated that some are; and only 6 percent indicated that all the events are catered. Not surprisingly, 76 percent of the respondents do not serve alcohol at the events, but conversely 24 percent actually do.

Administrators are always concerned with the cost of events, and without their willingness to loosen purse strings to allow archivists to play host, events cannot

happen. Among the ways respondents mentioned to keep costs down are seeking out cosponsorships across campus or in the local heritage or business community or asking for discounts from caterers who support a collection. At GSU, one of the Women and Gender Collections' donors arranged for discounted alcohol for fund-raising events, and at LGBTQ Archives Project events, food is provided potluck style by the members of the host organizations. According to the survey, the cost of fund-raising events is significantly higher than the costs of friend-raising and educational events. Catering is the greatest cost for fund-raising events. This is also the case with friend-raising events, but the expenses are considerably less. While a few institutions reported that they spend more than \$2,000 on events, the average is between \$500 and \$1,000 per event.<sup>18</sup> In GSU's experience, the cost of the event does not always reflect the success of the event: the LGBTQ Archives Project events have no direct costs, but have resulted in increased collections, greater support, and new visibility for the archival institutions around the state. The majority of educational events do not have any direct costs associated with them. When costs are associated with an event, they are related to catering and/or publicity and range from \$50 to \$300.

Though many respondents indicated that donor endowments or development funds pay expenses for fund-raising events, some reported that library funds or sponsorships from corporations and businesses pay directly for events. Attendance fees and grants were also listed as sources of funding. Expenses for both friend-raising and educational events are paid for from donor endowments or directly from library funds. Using state funds to pay for alcohol is often prohibited.

With a few exceptions among respondents, for fund-raising activities, the university, donors, or memorandums of understanding do not dictate events. While friend-raising events are not either, GSU's Spring Event bucks this trend. Only in a few instances do donors or memorandums of understanding dictate the content of educational events.

Approximately half of the respondents indicated that neither fund-raising nor friend-raising events are cosponsored. Conversely, educational events are more likely to be cosponsored with another department or institution. Forty-two percent of the respondents indicated that none of their fund-raising events are cosponsored, while 54 percent indicated that only a portion of their fund-raising events is cosponsored. Respondents also indicated that if an event is cosponsored, it is in conjunction with another university department, local historical society, or humanities council, and only in some instances with the development office/foundation. Other cosponsors include local and regional libraries, and policy centers. Sixty percent of respondents indicated that their friend-raising events are not cosponsored, while 40 percent indicated that some of the events are cosponsored by other departments within the university or local historical societies and libraries. Other sources of funding include grants and library friends groups. Thirty-two percent of respondents indicated that their educational events are not cosponsored, while 62 percent indicated that other departments within the university, alumni, university administration, or local historical societies and libraries cosponsor some of their events. Collaboration in other ways can also be successful. For the reception prior to the Johnny Mercer Centennial Concert, the university's School of Hospitality Administration allowed a group of students working on a class project to assist with planning and implementation, including the catering

budget, food and drink selection, and decorations. This was a mutually beneficial way to work with an outside department.

Less than half of the institutions have department-wide outreach plans. In the fund-raising category, 42 percent reported having a department-wide outreach plan. In the friend-raising category, 43 percent of the institutions have a department-wide outreach plan. In the educational category, only 33 percent of the institutions have a department-wide outreach plan.

Among the respondents, the director of development or the head of the special collections usually undertakes the planning of fund-raising events. For friend-raising and educational events, the planning is the responsibility of the archivist. In most cases, the director of development or the head of special collections and archives is responsible for planning and coordinating fund-raising events. To a lesser degree, respondents indicated that the duties fall to a sole curator or archivist. Some institutions have an outreach/marketing coordinator or a committee dedicated to these types of events. Unlike fund-raising events, the planning and coordinating responsibilities for friend-raising events overwhelmingly fall to the curator or archivist. Some institutions have an outreach/marketing coordinator or a committee dedicated to these types of events. The planning and coordination of educational events falls to the archivist or head of special collections. At GSU, the majority of the activities related to the Johnny Mercer Centennial events were implemented solely by the Popular Music and Culture archivist. In hindsight, the events would have benefited from a formal planning and outreach committee. Because events such as these benefit not only special collections and archives, but the university as a whole in terms of positive attention and general awareness, an outreach committee that includes archivists, members of the library administration, and personnel from other related departments on campus (public relations, facilities, etc.) helps to create a more cohesive event.

Overall, institutions provide assistance for fund-raising events, but little assistance is provided for friend-raising and educational events beyond the regular staff of the special collections and archives departments. Almost all institutions have staff to assist with the planning and implementation of fund-raising events. This additional staffing usually comes from the university development office or library administration. Only two of the respondents indicated that they are provided with staff to assist with the planning and implementing of friend-raising events. Twenty-one respondents reported that they do not receive institutional assistance for educational events and that only special collections and archives staff participate in their planning and implementation. Twenty-seven respondents reported that they do receive assistance. However, in many instances, that assistance actually comes from within the department (department secretary/archives assistant/student assistants). Some listed other library staff, and a few listed development staff and alumni.<sup>19</sup>

Reflecting past experiences at GSU, survey results show that the scale, nature, and complexity of events dictate the time required to plan. The results ranged from a few weeks for small educational events to a year for large events like a symposium. Depending on the size and scope of the fund-raising event, the planning period ranges from one to six months with the majority being the latter. On average, the planning period for friend-raising events is two to three months, considerably less than for fund-raising

events. On average, the planning period for educational events ranges from a few weeks up to six months, while some take up to a year to plan.

Respondents measure the success of events by attendance, income generated, and donation of or increased use of collections. Not surprisingly, respondents judged nearly all of the fund-raising events as successful or effective based on their attendance and income generated. Some institutions measure success by the amount of press coverage the event receives. Additionally, a fair portion of the respondents seek out external and internal feedback after the completion of events, either via surveys or debrief meetings. Friend-raising events are deemed successful or effective based on attendance; donation of materials, either by attendees or donor referrals; and increased use of collections. Educational events are deemed successful or effective based on attendance and information gathered from attendee feedback through surveys or evaluations. That being said, some forms of outreach are very difficult to evaluate. For instance, the success of the Johnny Mercer radio tribute programs that aired on the campus radio station WRAS was nearly impossible to evaluate. However, several inquisitive call-ins were made during the show, and the programs received positive feedback from the station manager. The standard programming on WRAS is predominantly indie rock music, so the demographic of the listening audience is not typical for the music of Johnny Mercer. The archivist was well aware of this fact beforehand, but one of the goals of the program was to bring awareness of Johnny Mercer and the archival collections to an audience that might otherwise not know about the songwriter, his music, and the collection housed at GSU. Although the program mentioned several times that the content was being presented by the Popular Music and Culture Collection, neither inquiries nor visitors to Special Collections and Archives noticeably increased shortly after these broadcasts.

Archivists at GSU recognize that assessment of events has not been done well or thoroughly for many years. The archivists measure success simply by number of attendees and/or postevent feedback. The creation of an outreach plan with specific instructions, tools for assessment, and the requirement of mandatory debrief meetings would go a long way to enable archivists to honestly measure success and find ways to modify the procedures and planning for future events. It is a goal of the department to create such a tool.

Among the respondents, all three types of events face similar challenges, including scheduling, lack of time and staff, and budget constraints. The reported challenges related to planning and implementing fund-raising events include scheduling and coordination with other departments and offices, lack of time and staff, as well as budget constraints and lack of effective publicity to generate an appropriate audience. Friend-raising events face similar challenges. Educational events are especially challenged by the lack of staff time and funding. At GSU, selecting a date and time for the Women and Gender Collections events has been a consistent challenge. To streamline the planning procedure, the archivist focuses on the most important participants for each event: the library or host(s), presenters, and anyone being honored. Religious holidays and other local women's events are also considered. Of course, at times the only date available is problematic. For example, in the Women's Collections' fifteenth anniversary year, 2010, two Sheroes were honored. The only date and time

that worked for the honorees coincided with the Atlanta Gay Pride Parade. Since the Shero event took place in Midtown and the parade route ran through Midtown, traffic was a significant consideration.

Despite the challenges involved in hosting fund-raising events, many respondents reported benefits too, including increased awareness of the department/collections, increased funding and support, donation of new collections, and the creation and strengthening of partnerships with other departments or organizations. The reported benefits of friend-raising events include increased awareness and advocacy for the department or collections, improved donor relations, and the development of new or the expansion of existing collections. The benefits of educational events reported include increased awareness and advocacy for the department, collection acquisitions, and the creation of new connections and collaborations. These benefits certainly reflect the experiences of archivists at GSU. An additional benefit, not widely reported in the survey and perhaps not of immediate use to institutions, is that communities are strengthened through a shared understanding of their history, a new awareness of its importance, and a greater appreciation of the efforts of those community members who belong to different generations. This is certainly apparent at GSU's Spring Events, where second, third, and fourth wave feminists come together to learn about the past and how that past influences their lives today.

A question about successful and creative programs rounded out the survey, and the responses were quite varied. The majority of responses were in relation to educational events, and respondents reported that anniversaries and events with a regional emphasis were better attended. Successful and creative fund-raising and friend-raising events fall into three categories: performances, including folk singing, a dinner theater production, and a performance at the local opera that coincided with the presentation of music databases; exhibitions, including cut-outs of entertainers, highlighting courtship and marriage with a dinner hosted by the university president and his wife, and a photographic exhibit projected in 3-D; and community events such as donor recognition and show-and-tell presentations by archivists. More successful and creative educational events were reported than fund-raising and friend-raising events combined. However, when broken down, many of the events listed could be more accurately described as a combination of educational *and* friend-raising. Among the successes listed were events directed toward students and faculty, which include campus author events, student/parent events, and a creative arts festival. Other events listed were designed for broader communities and include an archives film series, exhibits, anniversary events, genealogy events, how-to workshops, and events at which community members help archivists identify images within their collections. Among the more interesting responses was a "Zine Night" at which attendees learned about zines and created their own. It was so well received—especially among undergraduates—that the institution is planning a similar event about pop-up books. Other successes include a symposium on aviation's response to the 9/11 attacks that attracted almost five hundred people and was covered by C-Span, and a display about Argentina's public education system that received so much interest that a continuing education course now travels to Argentina to explore the history of education and international education. Finally, one institution

reported that it participates in many local festivals and is in fact a member of two local chambers of commerce.

### *Conclusion*

Pederson's survey was sent to four hundred archival institutions nationwide.<sup>20</sup> This 2012 survey was sent to more than four hundred state-supported academic institutions that represent only part of a much-expanded archival presence in the United States. The number of institutions surveyed and the response rate in the GSU survey are similar to Pederson's survey. Also similar is the fact that respondents are "spotty" in documenting budgets and vary in the way they define their programs. However, things have changed. Archives is no longer a profession that provides outreach services only to scholars and other archivists. Today, public programming is designed for students and the community too. As public universities include community interaction in their missions, it is not surprising to see that their archival units are providing such interactions. Pederson described outreach in the mid-1970s as being comprised primarily of "informal, one-time campaigns." This too has changed over time. It is clear from the 2012 survey that not only has the frequency of events increased, but also that a growing number of institutions create outreach plans and provide some support for such endeavors.

Research on this article began with questions about the methods and reasons special collections and archives host events. The results show that the experiences of the authors are rather normal, if not necessarily ideal. They believe that, as archivists in an academic institution, educational programming should take priority. However, friend-raising and fund-raising are also necessary for the survival and growth of special collections and archives. They hope that this article will initiate important conversations; encourage department heads to create responsible and realistic outreach plans that take into account staff, space, and time constraints; and serve as proof to skeptical administrators that outreach in general, and public programming in particular, are indeed normal activities that should be supported. Ideally, archival education will include classes on outreach and donor relations. Conversations with colleagues reveal that many archivists come to the profession with little knowledge of or desire to attempt outreach. Educating budding professionals about this work can only benefit archivists and the archives they serve. The authors also hope that archivists outside of state academic institutions will conduct surveys similar to this one so that, over time, it will be possible to fully understand the evolution of outreach in American institutions.

## *Appendix*

This survey consisted of three identical sections, each pertaining to a different category of events: Fund-raising, Friend-raising, and Educational. For illustration purposes, only the Fund-raising section is included here.

### Special Collections and Archives Outreach Survey

The following survey is intended to gather data for a research study designed to document outreach activities in state academic institutions across the United States. After the results have been collated and interpreted, they will be published and shared with survey participants. The completion of the survey is voluntary. This survey includes three categories of events that a special collections and/or archives might participate in: Fund-raising, Friend-raising, and Educational. Answer questions in each section, and you may skip a category if it does not apply. Institutional information will not be shared, but the results of the survey will be made available.

#### **Question 1—Choice—One Answer**

Are you a Special Collections or Archives or Both?

- Special Collections
- Archives
- Both

#### **Question 2—Choice—One Answer [Mandatory]**

Does your department do Fund-raising Events?

- Yes [Skip to 3]
- No [Skip to 4]

#### **Question 3—Open Ended—Comments Box**

Approximately how many events do you have each year?

#### **Question 4—Choice—One Answer**

Are they annual or one-time events?

- Annual
- One-Time
- Both

#### **Question 5—Open Ended—Comments Box**

Is there a topic or theme for your events? Please explain.

#### **Question 6—Choice—Multiple Answers**

Who is your target audience? (select all that apply)

- Faculty
- Students

- Donors
- General Public
- Other, please specify

**Question 7—Open Ended—Comments Box**

What outlets are used for publicity?

**Question 8—Open Ended—Comments Box**

What is the average attendance per event?

**Question 9—Choice—Multiple Answers**

Where are the events held? (select all that apply)

- Library
- Special Collections
- Archives
- Other facility on campus
- Off campus

**Question 10—Open Ended—Comments Box**

What time of the year, day of the week, and time of day are they usually held?

**Question 11—Choice—Multiple Answers**

How long are the events? (select all that apply)

- Couple of hours
- One-day
- Multi-day

**Question 12—Choice—One Answer**

Are they catered?

- Yes, all are catered.
- Yes, some are catered.
- No

**Question 13—Choice—One Answer**

Do you serve alcohol?

- Yes, at all events
- Yes, at some events
- No

**Question 14—Open Ended—Comments Box**

What are the costs associated with the events?

**Question 15—Open Ended—Comments Box**

How are the events paid for?

**Question 16—Open Ended—Comments Box**

Are the events dictated by the university, donors or memorandums of understanding?

**Question 17—Choice—One Answer**

Are the events co-sponsored?

- Yes, all are co-sponsored.
- Yes, some are co-sponsored.
- No

**Question 18—Open Ended—Comments Box**

For the co-sponsored events, who are your co-sponsors?

**Question 19—Choice—One Answer**

Does your institution have a department-wide outreach plan?

- Yes
- No

**Question 20—Open Ended—Comments Box**

Who is in charge of the planning and coordination?

**Question 21—Open Ended—Comments Box**

Does your institution provide staff support to plan and carry-out the events? Please explain.

**Question 22—Open Ended—Comments Box**

How long is your typical planning period?

**Question 23—Open Ended—Comments Box**

How do you measure the effectiveness of the events?

**Question 24—Open Ended—Comments Box**

Describe some of your challenges with planning and carrying-out events.

**Question 25—Open Ended—Comments Box**

Please describe the benefits of hosting your events?

**Question 26—Open Ended—Comments Box**

Please describe any events that were successful or unusually creative.

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## NOTES

1. Ann E. Pederson, “Archival Outreach: SAA’s 1976 Survey,” *American Archivist* 41, no. 2 (1978): 161.
2. Ibid.
3. The Women and Gender Collections archivist regularly provides instruction to students from Agnes Scott College and from further afield. In 2012, a group of feminists from Duke University visited the Women and Gender Collections as part of their “Archives Dive.”
4. Publications examined include *American Archivist*, the journal of the Society of American Archivists; *Provenance*, the journal of the Society of Georgia Archivists; *Archival Issues*, the journal of the Midwest Archives Conference; *Archivaria*, the journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists; *Journal of the Society of Archivists* (UK); and *Archives and Manuscripts*, the journal of the Australian Society of Archivists.
5. Pederson, “Archival Outreach,” 155–62.
6. Howard L. Applegate, Richard H. Brown, and Elsie F. Freivogel, “Wider Use of Historical Records,” *American Archivist* 40, no. 3 (1977): 331–35 and Elsie F. Freivogel, “Education Programs: Outreach as an Administrative Function,” *American Archivist* 41, no. 2 (1978): 147–53.
7. Timothy L. Ericson, “Preoccupied with Our Own Gardens: Outreach and Archivists,” *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–1991): 114–22. Also included in this publication were Gabrielle Blais and David Enns, “From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives,” *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–1991): 101–13; Terry Cook, “Viewing the World Upside Down: Reflections on the Theoretical Underpinnings of Archival Public Programming,” *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–1991): 123–34; Barbara L. Craig, “What Are the Clients? Who Are the Products? The Future of Archival Public Services in Perspective,” *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–1991): 135–41. Other articles include Richard J. Cox, “The Concept of Public Memory and Its Impact on Archival Public Programming,” *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993): 122–35; Christopher Weir, “The Marketing Context. Outreach: Luxury or Necessity?,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 25, no. 1 (2004): 71–77.
8. Michael F. Kohl, “It Only Happens Once Every Hundred Years: Making the Most of the Centennial Opportunity,” *American Archivist* 54, no. 3 (1991): 390–97; P. J. Rettig, “Water Tables: A Case Study of a Successful Archival Fund-Raising Event,” *American Archivist* 73, no. 1 (2010): 204–18; and Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, Yasmin B. Kafai, and William E. Landis, “Integrating Primary Sources into the Elementary School Classroom: A Case Study of Teachers’ Perspectives,” *Archivaria* 48 (1999–2000): 89–115. Others include Ellen Garrison, “L’il Abner Revisited: The Archives of Appalachia and Regional Multicultural Education,” *American Archivist* 50, no. 2 (1987): 236–38; Ann ten Cate, “Outreach in a Small Archives: A Case History,” *Archivaria* 28 (Summer 1989): 28–35;

- Raimund E. Goerler, “‘Play It Again, Sam’: Historical Slide Presentations in Public Programming—A Case Study,” *American Archivist* 54, no. 3 (1991): 378–88; Elsie F. Finch, “Making Sure They Want It: Managing Successful Public Programs,” *American Archivist* 56, no. 1 (1993): 70–75; Sharon Anne Cook, “Connecting Archives and the Classroom,” *Archivaria* 44 (1997); and L. McWhite, “‘So, Your Institution Is Hosting a Presidential Debate . . .’: A Case Study of 2008 Programming by the University of Mississippi Archives and Special Collections,” *American Archivist* 73, no. 1 (2010): 219–34.
9. Larry J. Hackman, ed., *Many Happy Returns: Advocacy and the Development of Archives* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011).
  10. Georgia Women’s Movement Project Records (W016).
  11. In 2010, for the 15th anniversary of the Georgia Women’s Movement Project, the event focused on bringing together long-term donors. The library hosted a Sunday afternoon high tea and celebrated the efforts of the Women’s Collections’ founding mothers. One donor paid for three commemorative hanging panels, and the library paid for a large plexiglass plaque that listed everyone who had made a donation since 1995. The event was very successful: not only did more people want to attend than could be accommodated, but it was the first time since the 1980s (and possibly the last time) that such a large group of Georgia’s second wave feminist stalwarts and friends gathered in a room together. The year 2011 was the 40th anniversary of Georgia State University’s Southern Labor Archives. To highlight this, archivists for the Women’s Collections and the Southern Labor Archives collaborated to curate the exhibit *We Can Do It: Empowering Women at Work*, which included materials from both collections. They also hosted an event that drew attendees from both the feminist and labor communities. Leading up to 2012, a number of collections documenting domestic violence in Georgia were processed, and an exhibit and event, both named *Taking Back Our Lives*, highlighted those collections. Speakers discussed their experiences establishing Georgia’s earliest battered women’s shelters, and the audience included a large number of domestic violence activists and representatives of organizations. The year 2013 marked the 40th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*. An exhibit, *Governing Choices: The Legal History of Reproductive Rights*, was curated, and the Spring Event brought together two individuals involved in *Roe’s* sister case, *Doe v. Bolton*. This event, the most heavily attended to date, attracted a large number of GSU students.
  12. Georgia LGBTQ Facebook page, accessed August 29, 2014 <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gorgia-LGBTQ-Archives-Project/257162497710554?ref=hl>.
  13. From 2009 to 2011, the event was held in the centrally located home of State Legislator Kathy Ashe. The 2012 event honored Ashe, so the location of the event was moved to a centrally located local golf club with abundant parking. The 2013 event will be held in a newly renovated building that houses the GSU president’s office.
  14. *Wikipedia*, s.v. “List of State Universities in the United States,” accessed August 29, 2014, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_state\\_universities\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_state_universities_in_the_United_States).
  15. There appears to be some overlap of educational and friend-raising events.
  16. Listservs included the Music Library Association, the Association of Recorded Sound Collections, the American Musicological Society, the Society for Ethnomusicology, the Society for American Music, H-South, H-Southern Music, Popular/American Culture, the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, and Ex Libris.
  17. While archivists at GSU do consider hosting bibliographic instruction and research methods classes an important part of their ongoing outreach activities, they do not normally categorize them as public programming. Clearly, this illustrates that perceptions of what constitutes educational programming vary. If the survey were to be sent again, Gerrard and Fleming would provide a fuller definition of the categories being surveyed.
  18. The results in this section may be flawed, as many respondents did not appear to understand the question. Some reported what they spent money on rather than giving a dollar amount.
  19. It is clear from the responses to this question and to the question about successful and creative events that there was some confusion: some respondents appear to consider educational events to be what the authors would call friend-raising or even fund-raising events. Furthermore, responses indicate that there was confusion about what form the “institutional” assistance could take. If this survey were to be resubmitted, the authors would define what kinds of activities each kind of outreach event would entail, as well as defining institutional assistance.
  20. Pederson, “Archival Outreach,” 155.