

ELEMENTS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES, FACULTIES, ARCHIVE SERVICES AND ARCHIVES

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The author discusses and presents elements of relations between universities, faculties, their archive services and professional archives, focusing on the management of archival and documentary records.

The text gives a rough overview and presents the condition of university archives and archive services at faculties.

Special emphasis is given to the transfer of archival records from universities and faculties to professional archives, their destiny, forms of transfer, evaluation and sorting into categories.

Besides, the role and importance of such archives are discussed.

Descriptors (ATLANTI)

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Key words

Archives, university archives, archive services, transfers, inventory check, archival records, organisation, competence, importance, the development of spirit and knowledge

Introduction

The 19 conference of the International Institute for Archival Science at the University of Maribor (IIAS/UM) was held in 2004 at Maribor, where members of the IIAS/UM, respecting the ICA Section on University and Research Institution Archives and respecting results of the Marburg Archival School 2003 symposium¹, have decided on topic of this year international archival day at Trieste: Elements of Relations between Universities, Faculties, Archive Services and Archives.

We are interested to find out what are real elements of archival professional-technical relations between universities, as the highest scientific and study-research institu-

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¹ See Veröffentlichungen der Archivschule Marburg, Institut fuer Archivwissenschaft Nr. 37. Nils Bruebach und Karl Murk (Hrsg.), Zur Lage der Universitaetsarchive in Deutschland, Beitrage eines Symposiums.

tions, their members – faculties and other university institutions (institutes, research centers, university libraries etc.), their archive services and competent state, regional and local archives that is professional archives.

Avenues of approach

Representing forms of relations towards universities archival records first of all we have to point out that there are several avenues of approach to records creators:

First level is at the university president's office with all of its rapidly changing competences and organizational forms.

Second level is faculties, which are repeatedly changing due to its existential and organizational structure, although they are creating important archival records.

The third level is university institutions, which are repeatedly changing due to its existential and organizational structure, although they are creating important archival records.

Connections to archival records

It is known fact that competent archives are connected with universities (here I have in mind all the levels) and their archival records by general archival legislation (the Law on archives and archival records) and by articles of other laws that prescribe universities activities and often creation of archival records (at least indirectly).

That records is important source for writing not only classic historical overviews, but also for other fields, partially connected with history writing, such as for example history of various sciences, history of art, sociology, law, geography and the like. Universities archival records are important not only for the local region.

European state universities were not always located at the main state of regional cities. The fact that at the universities there are various students and professors coming from different milieus should be respected. That is why university archival records are important for wider territory. It is also important to respect this fact when writing history of new universities and faculties' foundation, and also invited professors coming from family of already existing and active universities and faculties have play a significant role when creating new programs.

When dealing with historical topics for which important sources are coming from universities archives or from its members archive services – faculties, it is important to point out these sources that are important for writing a history of development of genius, idea and science of certain people or wider social group.

Elements of some connections

Speaking about elements of relations between universities, faculties and professional archives we have to mention supports given to the interrelation development. When

certain competent state or “local” professional archive has been founded universities and faculties were not present. Vice versa, it can easily be said that state, regional or local archives, as competent, professional ones, have and still are repeatedly influencing foundation and development of a university archive services and even more archives and records management of a single university members, primarily regarding records evaluation and suggestions on material conditions of records preservation and protection.

Existing, mentioned interrelations between universities and professional archives and vice versa are defined by certain articles of professional or reference legislation. It was not possible to find out if it was written, when a university has been founded, that there will be “independent archive service of university (president’s office)”, but it is a fact that at certain universities independent archive service or historical archives have been founded sooner or later. As an excellent example I can give quality developed active archival-museum service at the University of Maribor, University archive services is active and growing².

Professional archival legislation gives, in principle, enough bases for arrangement of relation between professional – competent archives and universities and their members. In some states archival laws even give to universities or faculties a possibility to permanently keep their records by themselves which is arranged by particular legal provisions, professional bases and decisions on access, interrelation information, and professional stuff and similar.

Archive service, universities’ archives, archives of universities and faculties

Universities or faculties archive services are created more by chance than as a result of established and prescribed procedure. There are known examples that archive services were created when a university have been preparing celebration of various anniversaries of institutions or professors and similar and that is why universities wanted to organized exhibitions promoting quality archival records created by university through centuries or decades. Such activates often give birth to the archive services that were active, or are active, more or less successfully till today.

There is also common practice that universities or faculties give theirs record to competent state or local archives on permanent custody. Such records are preserved as independent fonds and are kept in the field of science, education and culture, according to the archival laws and provisions.

Importance of universities and faculties archival records is unquestionable and it can be classified as universal archival records. In recent times there is a trend that some state or private universities or state or private faculties are becoming autonomous which is connected with decentralization and independence. This phenomenon cause decreasing of important categories of archival records such as “registers of students” which are not more held by the president’s office but by the single faculties.

² <http://www.uni-lj.si/ArhivMuzejSluzba/arhivINmuzej/ARHIVinMUZEJ.asp>. Many thanks to dr. Ciperle, head of service, who has kindly assist me with a lot of information, and to Ms Lidija Gregorec who gave me information on University of Maribor.

There are lots of professional papers on creation, development and activities of universities archives. There is very active International Council on Archives Section on University and Research Institution Archives which we, IIAS(UM) do not wish to compete.

State of archive services activities

State of universities archive services is very different. There are quality services with professional, archival stuff, working and repository spaces, corresponding to the standards on material preservation of archival records and possibilities of modern informational access.

Many archive services act as pure “emergency exists” which is when some sort of university of faculty archive services is mentioned but the very archive service has no stuff, records inventories, spaces for work or adequate preservation of records. Such broad spectrum when on one end we have rather developed archive services and on the other end rather undeveloped archive services is possible to notice on the European territory and I do not believe that in other parts of the world situation is very different.

Elements of records transfer and accession

Relation between universities and competent archives become more closer and of higher-quality when universities – faculties wants to give their archival, frequently their current records to competent state, local archives. Universities and their members create huge and important quantities of archival records and that is why, it is our consideration, procedures of transfer and accession of records are crucial. So called “conflict situation” can be noticed when record are transferred. One of them emerges between competent archives and state archives and records creators (universities and faculties) when records creators are evaluated by statement that “university and its members archival records is of such level that it should be transferred only to state (national) archives”. This problem is specially pressing in states where along with state archives exist local, regional, historical and similar archives.

On principle, transfers of records are performed quality, according to positive archival legislation, based on prescribed procedure, with quality summary, sometimes even analytic inventories and with correct, technical equipment, and there are even elements of international standards ISAD(G). But, there are also ad hoc transfers according to the system “take it or leave it”.

Conflict situation

Some conflict situations occur when notarized copies of records should be issued, because universities and faculties have different competences than state archives. That is also visible when current records is evaluated and when lists of records are

created (guidelines) because in some cases it is made for faculties by universities archival services, although it is competence of archives.

We are separately stating these elements of relations between universities, faculties and competent archives concerning material protection of archival records, but often issue is only about that competent archives gives advise on production of recommendations for material protection of records performance, first of all forms of protection, preservation and records maintenance, choice of correct working and repository spaces, proper equipment and so on.

We can clearly notice conflict situation concerning particular materials that is marginally part of records, which is that archival records that can be easily considered as museum (sashes, medallions, awards...) or library records (legacies of professors, researchers, scientists working at the faculties or universities institutes...).

Mentioned conflict situations do not have negative effect but on the contrary stimulate universities archives to cooperate with competent archives, libraries and museums.

Conclusions

State of archives and archive services at president's offices is various. On one side quality universities archives are active, on other we can notice archival services of president's offices and faculties created and working with problems.

Here we will refrain from commenting situation of total "ignoring" of archival records preservation problem present at some universities or faculties which solve problems by "we will give our records to competent state, regional or local archives where they will deal with it".

Education of people working at universities archives gives us real role and importance which archive services of president's offices of particular faculties have. We can easily conclude that although there is a graduate study of archival science, which we will only mention here, state of this field is not satisfactory.

Archive services are subordinated to universities or faculties general secretary assistant, commonly organizationally positioned within department for general and personnel affairs.

Leaders of president's offices or faculties rarely (speaking about last 10 years) address their archival services or universities archives, and when they do that it is usually when celebrating various anniversaries or when there is a need for whatsoever document from the "universities and faculties" archives, especially when a document can not be traced because records is unarranged. In such cases decisions on quick "ad hoc" performed list of records are made. Very rarely universities and faculties include in their work and other programs archives of universities or archive services.

Archive services deal also with archiving of archival and current records created on new media. So they are in same position as archive services of administration, judiciary, education system and so on. Some of them already approach usage of new

media as form of records archiving (photographic and video records) or access to information, issuing of certificates or whatsoever other copies of documents and similar.

Creation of different professional points of view of archive services is frequently done without cooperation of competent archives.

Many presidents' offices, universities and faculties archive services do not operated based on special regulations on archive services work or records schedules³. This influences disagreeable final state of protection of written cultural heritage, no matter it is deposited in a university archives, in archives of a university, in university or faculty archive services.

In this paper I have represent many various elements of relations between universities, faculties, theirs archive services and competent archives, although not all of them. Stated differences are not given for the sake of criticism but they express a state for which we can without a problem say that generally speaking is becoming better.

I am sure that recommendations that will be prepared by the members of IIAS, based on the "International Archival Day 2005 at Trieste/Italy" proceedings will be in some environments wisely used.

³ Deciding on schedules a Law on high education, Law on financial-accounting operations, Law on personnel registers, and first of all Ordinances on selection and evaluation of public archival records should be respect.