Southeast Archives Education Collaborative S·A·E·C

# Project Outline

## *Abstract:*

Schools of Library and Information Science (LIS) today educate about two-thirds of the new archivists in the United States, but most LIS schools do not have the resources to provide the comprehensive program of professional education recommended by the Society of American Archivists (SAA). A realistic assessment of most programs will reveal that few, if any, of them can develop a curriculum with much more sophisticated offerings than it now has, so a critical need goes unanswered. However, one can imagine that if they combined their resources through the use of Distance Education (DE) technology, they could develop a strong collaborative program; the collaboration could provide collectively what none could provide individually. To address the need for stronger professional education for archivists, we propose to establish a regional collaboration of archives educators in the Southeast to develop and deliver a comprehensive curriculum of archives education. This collaboration could serve as a national model.

This proposal seeks funds to test a three-year pilot program of professional education in archives management to meet the following goals:

- to provide students in five institutions across the Southeast a more rigorous and comprehensive program in archives management than their home institutions now provide
- to provide the faculty in the collaborating institutions the opportunity to grow as teachers through training in and use of DE, as well as to develop expertise in a particular aspect of archives education
- to demonstrate the efficacy of collaboration through DE in such an endeavor

Grant funds would underwrite consultants' costs, travel and meeting costs incurred as participants work out institutional administrative and technological details, costs of training faculty in effective distance education, costs of course conversion to a DE format, costs of evaluating the project, and part of the administrative costs.

If the model proves successful, collaborative efforts in other disciplines could adopt it anywhere. Therefore, this proposal addresses the IMLS priority for Education and Training projects that "implement innovative approaches to education and training and enhance the availability of professional librarians with advanced skills and specializations."

# *Narrative:*

## National Impact:

The Learning Society:

In the fall of 2001, the IMLS sponsored a three-day conference on the topic of the 21st Century learner.[1] It advocated collaboration among various cultural heritage institutions, i.e., libraries, museums, archives, historical societies, and public broadcasting to supplement the country's formal education system. Without exception, the speakers conveyed a sense of urgency about the need to transform American society into a learning society that will "provide widespread, integrated, systematic, and equitable access to learning resources and skills."[2] The demonstration projects for the types of collaboration the agency wants to support depended very heavily on historical documents through which the collaborating institutions seek to promote a sense of community among local populations. Historical maps, photographs, and manuscript materials abounded as the focus of the projects or as the source of information the projects drew upon. That a learning society should start by learning from its historical record came through very clearly as the conference speakers preached collaboration across institutions, confirming Victoria Irons Walch's observation that "There is a growing passion for history across our society..."[3]

Need for Archival Education:

Walch compiled the results of the 1997 survey of non-governmental historical document repositories for the Council of State Historical Records Coordinators (COSHRC).[4] The study revealed that 47 percent of historical documents repositories in the United States have come into existence since 1970 [Walch, Table B.2.a]. It also revealed a cadre of non-existent or woefully under-trained archivists managing them.

For example, fourteen per cent of the institutions which responded to the COSHRC survey fall into the category labeled "Major" (holding 5,000 linear feet or more records, excluding printed books) or "Large" (having between 500 and 5,000 linear feet of records) [Walch, p. 12]. Nearly half the major repositories and nearly two-thirds of large repositories have no one with recognizable training in either history or library science in a leadership role. Walch does not indicate how many of those with graduate degrees include any specialization in archives management in their education.

When describing archival education among staff of the smaller repositories Walch reported that, "archival workshops show up most often as the type of training received by staff [but,]....Eighteen percent of the total repositories reported no specialized training" among paid staff [Walch, p. 13]. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents have no paid staff [Walch, Table B.2.b].

Description of Archival Education:

The SAA guidelines for archival education distinguishes training from professional education:

> Graduate archival education, in contrast to archival training, is both academic and professional; therefore, it includes both scholarly and experiential elements.... Ultimately, archival education creates an intellectual framework that enables students to understand the ideas on which their profession is founded, to engage in the development of archival principles, and to apply this knowledge in a wide variety of settings. In contrast, archival training focuses on building skills or acquiring practical knowledge according to a replicable pattern, or on developing a specialization in certain areas.[5]

According to the SAA Directory of Archival Education[6] 34 colleges and universities in North America offer formal archival training, typically through a department of history (35%), or a school of library and information science (65%). Among those, seven (20%) offer a joint degree with another school or department. Although requirements vary broadly, most commonly archival education appears as a specialization within a larger MLS or MA degree and requires two or three courses and an internship. In a 1999 study of changes in archival education, Cox et al, discovered a growing number of faculty in schools

of library science responsible for an archival component in the schools' curriculum, but a muddled array of configurations and content.[7] Only 24% of the programs had more than one faculty member as an archives education specialist, and in 33% of the programs, nobody specialized in archives. In the remaining 43% the responsibility falls on the shoulders of one person. Typically that person carries other departmental responsibilities as well as their archives specialization. [Cox et al, p. 233].

While the geography of archival education shows a wide disbursement, the content of the programs varies as widely.[8] The SAA has recently published revisions of their Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies.[9] Among other uses, they intend the guidelines "to assist universities and colleges in developing archival studies program, [and] to assist students and employers in the evaluation of available programs of archival education." Assuming that employers will use the guidelines for judging our new graduates, we use the guidelines as the model for educating them.

The guidelines call for a minimum of eighteen credits covering fundamental concepts in the nature of archival functions. In 2001, the IMLS funded a "two-year project by the American Association for State and Local History, in collaboration with the Michigan Historical Center, the Ohio Historical Society, and the New York State Archives, [designed] to improve management of and access to historical records by providing online continuing education for individuals working in museums, libraries, historical societies, and related organizations with responsibility for archival and manuscript materials."[10] - a continuing education effort which the COSHRC report has shown as critical. This proposal complements that effort by describing a program to strengthen the graduate education of students in the Southeast who want to enter the field of archives management at the professional level.

Students of archival management tend to stay close to home.[11] They tend to have a strong interest, and frequently substantial expertise in local history and institutions. They tend to be adults, looking at a second career. Many have family responsibilities. While they want solid archival education, they are reluctant or unable to leave home to acquire it. Therefore, ironically, despite the need for more sophisticated professional archival education, schools offering archival education have found the low demand in any one geographic area precludes a more extensive program - it will not draw enough students from beyond the local region. As a result, schools must restrict the number and focus of courses they can provide to those that one person can teach each generation of students. In a three-semester course of study, a school can guarantee three classes, an independent study, and an internship in a specialty - which is what most schools provide. At any given school, students may have time and interest for more specialized classes, but the school cannot consistently deliver it. See the Syllabi page for the curricula offered at the institutions involved with this project. However, one can imagine that if regional institutions combined their resources through the use of distance education technology, they could develop a stronger distributed curriculum than any of them could offer individually. The Syllabi page contains the course listing that could be offered through the collaborative effort of all the partners.

Such a collaboration would reflect a global trend in what James Quinn calls "disaggregation" based on advanced communication technology.[12] Quinn observes that knowledge economy structures (services based on specialized knowledge) have begun to restructure themselves from generalist institutions into centers of specialized knowledge interconnected by communications technology. "Each knowledge center develops its own skills in depth around its core competencies and broadcasts its needs and capabilities to others - combining with them to solve specific problems as required."[Quinn, p. 32]. This proposal seeks funding for a prototype of a distributed curriculum in archives education based on the larger changes in the knowledge-based industries Quinn discusses. The project arises from the belief that through collaboration, schools can offer better archival education by developing a distributed curriculum through distance education. Not only will the students of participating schools benefit, but, one can imagine that through DE, the collaborators could offer archives education to students in schools which do not now offer it at all. As such it falls within the IMLS Education and Training priority which encourages projects that "implement innovative approaches to education and training and enhance the availability of professional librarians with advanced skills and specializations."

Distance Education Between Universities:

While not many in number, courses and degrees provided through intercollegiate cooperation have sprung up across the United States. Some programs, like Five Colleges,[13] in Massachusetts, go back decades. Most, however, have been born of necessity since the early 1990s, using various forms of

technology to accomplish their ends. The following summary of the issues such programs must address comes from a review of that literature.

The most difficult element to manage in intercollegiate cooperation through distance education arise from administrative practices and procedures which vary widely among schools.[14] Questions such as tuition rates, credit granting, class timing, and class prerequisites present the first series of issues that need to be addressed. While not settled, the region has several overarching administrative structures and philosophical agreements from which to work - the most prominent being the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).[15] Letters of support demonstrate that all schools involved with this project have made a commitment to finding solutions to problems that will arise; they will work out the specific details once the project has begun. The letters from SREB partners indicate that we will have experienced and knowledgeable resources available as needed.

The next series of issues has to do with technology - how the course work will be delivered among the participating institutions. We have determined that our campus DE infrastructures can work together using compressed video to the main campus of all schools involved; whether the signal travels as a telephone protocol (H.320) or an Internet 2 signal (H.323) remains unclear, and will likely change over the course of the grant period. Regardless, as demonstrated by the support letters, one or more technology group on each campus supports the effort and will work out the specific details after the project has begun.

The next series of issues that arises has to do with the pedagogy - how the course work will be taught, what will it contain, what grading standards will apply, etc.[16] We have developed a roster of classes each institution could contribute right now to the curriculum. It calls for no new classes for this project. Instead we will focus our energies on converting current “land-based” offerings for DE presentation. With training and assistance from specialists in distance education course development, the faculty will develop a similar look and feel to all courses taught through the collaborative effort, a uniform content for single courses taught by several sites, a general consistency in the workload expectations we present in all courses, and an agreed-upon grading standard.

**Adaptability:**

Such a collaborative effort will serve as a model for other regions. This collaborative model will demonstrate how institutions can emphasize their strengths and draw from the strengths in other institutions for the benefit of all. It will provide models for working through the administrative and pedagological issues that will arise. In addition, it will develop a wide variety of evaluation materials. If successful, this format for archival training could be adapted virtually anywhere. If this experience proves that the real problems are political rather than technological or pedagogical, as we suspect it will, we will have shown that where there’s a will, there’s a way.

**Project Design:**

Goals and Objectives:

This proposal seeks funds to test a three-year pilot program of professional education in archives management to meet the following objectives:

- to provide students across the Southeast a more rigorous and comprehensive program in archives management than their home institution now provides;
- to provide the faculty in the collaborating institutions the opportunity to grow as teachers through training in and use of DE, as well as to develop expertise in a particular aspect of archives education;
- to demonstrate the efficacy of distance education in such an endeavor.

The Program:

Beginning Oct. 1, 2002, five universities, Auburn University (AU), Georgia College and State University (GCSU), Louisiana State University (LSU), the University of Kentucky (UK), and the University of South Carolina (USC), will join forces to develop an 18 hour program in archival education, taught largely

through distance education in a way that all campuses share students and classes. Between October, 2002, and January, 2003, LSU will develop the administrative structure, plan and hold three Advisory Board meetings - one "on-site" and two electronic - and arrange for the DE training for the faculty. Between January '03 and September '03, faculty will take training in DE and DE course conversion and re-work their classes for DE. At the same time, the institutional administrators and technologists will work out the details for the administration and delivery of these classes. Meanwhile, the project management team will advertise the project to the archival communities and student populations in the states involved, develop the program evaluation instruments, and coordinate the activities of all parties involved.

The collaborative will offer two classes each semester for four semesters-a total of eight classes. Each institution will provide its own "Archives 101" class, but will coordinate its syllabi with the other schools. Each school, with the exception of GCSU, which will offer only the historical methodology class, has committed to making two classes available to the project over the course of the four teaching semesters. That commitment creates a pool of eleven classes to present in a roster that needs only eight classes, including any we choose to repeat. The complexity of coordinating both DE time slots and course schedules among five institutions will require that the deans and the DE people from all institutions sit down together to work out the curriculum. We've scheduled that conversation as the centerpiece of the of the first Advisory Board meeting. At that time the actual roster of eight classes will emerge. It will include at least five classes above the introductory level which, when combined with the institutions' introductory classes, will provide the minimum of 18 hours as proposed by the SAA.

We considered offering one class starting in January of '03 as a test with which to work out unanticipated problems, but we have rejected that option. Instead, we will use the electronic meetings for that purpose, preferring to frustrate participating faculty and technology representatives with start-up problems rather than students.

Distance Education Technology:

The plan assumes that participating schools will initially use compressed video as the DE technology. The University of South Carolina prefers DE distribution through satellite broadcast of a TV signal, and may choose to use that medium. We recognize that over the course of the grant DE technology will change, and we plan to embrace it. Currently most compressed video uses a protocol known as H.320 which allows video images to travel along telephone lines. But the emerging Internet 2 protocol, H.323, has begun to materialize as a more flexible alternative. I-2 will play a role, though it's unclear how extensive that role might be and who will employ it. Auburn has decided to will use H.323. They will send their signal to LSU which can re-send to in the protocol of choice for the other partner schools. LSU and USC have also expressed an interest in using it extensively. If I-2 emerges as the technology of choice, this project will become one of the first uses of I-2 for distance education.

The trend in DE is to deliver the course content as near to the where the student lives as possible and as time-flexible as possible. Some variety of course delivery modes include: interactive media supplemented by video, CD, or supervised hands on instruction, Web-online, or video streaming, supplemented by online communication, etc. Although we've based the budget on compressed video, if moving to other modes proves desirable and possible, the collaborative may substitute a technology arguably superior to compressed video.

Indirect Benefits:

While we don't hold the following as goals, we recognize that this program holds the potential to model news ways for archivists in the Southeast to see and participate in their profession. The Southeast lacks the sense of regional cohesion found among archivists in other regions of the country. One can imagine that this project could stimulate the growth of a "sense of community" among both archives educators and professionals. Further, it may raise the consciousness of participating students and faculty about the potential for collaborative effort in new communications technology. One of the "archival values" O'Toole articulates in Understanding Archives and Manuscripts[17] is cooperation in documentation strategy, coordinated collecting policies, referrals of researchers, etc. Frequently the difficulty of group meetings to work on such issues impedes actually achieving those goals. The faculty involvement, and student projects done across university and state lines in this project will "model" cooperation through electronic

media for participants. In the end, that experience may be as important, if unspoken, a lesson as the lessons specified on syllabi.

**Management Plan:**

Governance:

One faculty member and one technology advisor from each partner school will sit on an Advisory Board to direct the collaboration. The Board will meet every month. The Board will coordinate curriculum and pedagological issues, oversee and negotiate technological needs, oversee and assess results of evaluation, and assure the project steers a steady course. The first meeting will convene in Baton Rouge in the late fall of '02; the meetings that follow will occur through compressed video. At the first on-site meetings, the board will launch the new effort, plan the curriculum, plan a general course of action, meet the trainers, and get a sense of each other as partners. Another on-site meetings near the end of the grant period will focus on the results of the evaluation-to-date, and the group's sense of this project's potential as a way to routinely provide archival education. The electronic meetings will provide a forum for addressing on-going issues or unexpected matters arising.

As one IMLS publication makes very clear, collaboration does not come easily.[18] None of the members of the Board has much experience in collaborative ventures, and all will have the interests of issues from their own situation to bring to the Board meeting - which interests may conflict with collaborative needs. The chair of the Board, therefore, should have both substantial experience in managing such a collaborative project and the freedom to keep the good of the collaborative as the highest priority. We will hire a consultant to work with the P.I. as Co-coordinator.

Management:

The overall day-to-day management of the project will come through the School of Library and Information Science at LSU. The Advisory Board members from each of the collaborating schools serve as liaison with the their own campuses.

Calendar Overview: (See Appendix E for a more detailed timeline)

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| Oct.-Dec. 2002 | Project Set-up: | Hire support staff, finalize plans for space, personnel, etc., plan training, make arrangements for training session. |
| Jan.-Aug. 2003 | Program Set-up: | Train instructors in distance education techniques, refine the technology, advertise the program, establish the evaluation criteria. Complete course conversion enhancement, create evaluation instruments and process. |
| Sept.-Dec. 2003 | Alpha | Run classes (1st semester), evaluate. |
| Jan.-May 2004 | Beta | Run classes, evaluate (2nd) |
| June-Aug. 2004 | Evaluation: | Analyze evaluations; write report on "first year" |
| Sept.-May 2005 | Normalcy: | Run classes, evaluate (3rd, 4th) |
| June-Aug. 2005 | Evaluate full program. | |

**Contributions:**

The participating schools will contribute all normal costs of providing a class, including faculty and staff salary and fringe, graduate assistants, the costs of distance education technology and other forms of distance education support, including normal student support services. In addition, the active faculty member from each school will serve as a live faculty member to work with students as they adjust to the online environment.

**Personnel:**

Elizabeth Dow will manage the project. She has managed large groups and small in her professional and personal life. She will also teach LSU's contribution to the curriculum. Resumes reveal that the partners have experience as archives educators, teaching the curriculum the project proposes, and/or in managing

complicated distance education endeavors. Deborah Vess from GCSU stands out as the single exception to that. As a teacher for the collaborative she can offer a class (Historical Methods) not readily available through the other schools. In addition, she has strength in evaluation which other members lack.

David Chesnutt, as Co-coordinator, will provide advice and support in management of this collaborative effort. Chesnutt, recently retired from the Dept. of History at the University of South Carolina, will chair the Advisory Board meetings. His CV reveals extensive experience managing national and international collaborative efforts. He will work with the P.I. to develop meeting agendas and time lines, so will have a detailed awareness of the status of the project and will undoubtedly flag rocky shoals and murky waters. As Advisory Board chair, his focus on the project as a whole will assure participants have equal status in the meetings, and will allow him to moderate both the meetings' procedures and the inevitable tensions and disagreements that will arise. Further, Chesnutt has extensive experience with grant-funded projects and can keep the Board running smoothly and aware of its obligations to the IMLS.

The team from the LSU Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching will provide the DE training. They have run training programs on these topics in the past, and they make a point of focusing as much on the essentials of good teaching as on the technological interface and technique.

Bobby L. Matthews, Director of CELT's Center for Assessment and Evaluation, will serve as part of the training team, and then will provide additional support as we develop our evaluation process, forms, and focus groups. Matthews is particularly well versed in outcomes evaluation and will work with us to produce accurate and useful data, as well as valid interpretations.

**Project Evaluation:**

With this project we will test whether a multi-institutional collaborative can deliver educationally comprehensive and rigorous archival education through distance education. We have set an objective of providing at least 40 student experiences[19] of high quality specialized education in archives management over the course of four semesters. We will evaluate the project in the form of traditional grading of students' performance, but, with guidance from a specialist in educational assessment, we will also measure outcomes beyond student grades - including the indirect impacts mentioned above. If we move out of compressed video to another delivery mode, we will also evaluate the relative effectiveness of various delivery methods. By the end of the grant period, we will answer the question, "Is this program educationally worth sustaining? If not, why not?"

**Dissemination:**

Results of experimental programs need sharing with the communities which share the interests of the experimenters. Therefore, the participants will describe and discuss the development of this program and its results through various channels of professional communication. Panels/papers at the annual meetings of the Society of American Archivists and the Association for Library and Information Science Education, and EDUCAUSE, and the Internet 2 Members meetings. Presentations through all three years will reach the national audience, while similar efforts at meetings of regional associations such as the Society of Southwest Archivists, the Southern Archives Conference, the EDUCAUSE, Internet 2 Members regional groups, and the various state-wide societies. From those presentations will come articles for submission to journals on distance education, such as T.H. E. Journal and elearning, as well as American Archivist and the Journal of Education in Library and Information Science in the fields of archives education.

**Sustainability:**

In a very real way this project is a research project. If it proves successful in terms of educational goals, the schools may choose to sustain it, working to include it as a permanent part of the curriculum each offers, including continuing education potential. If it shows areas of strength and of weakness, they may choose to retain some parts and let others go. If it disappoints us utterly - sometimes research produces negative results - they will undoubtedly choose to abandon it and disseminate the reasons why.

1. http://www.imls.gov/whatsnew/21cl/21clrsc.htm
2. http://www.imls.gov/pubs/pdf/pub21cl.pdf p. 5.
3. Victoria Irons Walch. Where History Begins; a Report on Historical Records Repositories in the United States, (Washington: Council of State Historical Records Coordinators, 1998), p. 1.
4. The data represents surveys of 27 states, totaling 3508 usable surveys from historical documents repositories including historical societies (36%), academic institutions (14%), public libraries (21%), museums (20%) and creators (9%). See http://www.coshrc.org/
5. http://www.archivists.org/prof-education/ed_guidelines.asp. Paragraph I.B.
6. http://www.archivists.org
7. Richard J. Cox, et al, "Educating archivists in library and information science schools." Journal of Education in Library and Information Science, 42:3 (Summer 2001), p. 228-240.
8. Fourteen school which had posted their curricula on the SAA's online directory in mid-December, 2001, offer courses in roughly 60 different courses.
9. Archival Outlook, July/August 2001, p. 7-14.
10. http://www.imls.gov/whatsnew/01archive/092501-6.htm. Click on "15 projects."
11. An informal poll of the southeastern schools contacted in connection with this proposal confirms the LSU experience that most students enrolled in the archival specialization have roots in the school's state.
12. James Brian Quinn, "Services and technology: revolutionizing higher education." Educause 36:4 (July/August, 2001), 28-36.
13. http://www.fivecolleges.edu/
14. Howard Besser and Maria Bonn, "Interactive distance-independent education: challenges to traditional academic roles." Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 38 (Winter, 1997) 35-42; Steven Cohen, et al, "Information Resource Management Program: a case study in distance education." Journal of Public Education, 4:3 (1998) 179-192; Marshall Goodman, Maria A. Wunsch, and Ruth E. Williams, "Creating institutional alliances: bringing people and problems together." NCA Quarterly 72:4 (Spring 1998) 444-446.
15. Southern Regional Education Board (http://www.sreb.org) and the Academic Common Market (http://www.sreb.org/programs/acm/acm/acmbrochure.asp) to which all participating states belong.
16. Besser and Bonn; Cohen, et al; Maurita Peterson Holland, "Collaborative technologies in Inter-University Instruction" JASIS, 47:11 (1996) 857-862; Karen Hardy Cardenas, "Saving small foreign language programs: is cooperation the answer?" ADFL Bulletin 29:3 (Spring 1998) 11-19; Lawrence C. Ragan, "Good teaching is good teaching: an emerging set of guiding principles and practices for the design and development of distance education," Cause/Effect 22:1 (1999) 20-24.
17. James M. O'Toole, Understanding Archives and Manuscripts (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1990), 60.
18. Partners in Public Service, University Park, Pa.: Penn State Public Broadcasting, 2001.
19. Minimum of two students per school per semester.