

Professional Development Statement

Spring 2019

After three years working in public libraries, I entered the MLIS program at UCLA with a diverse set of wide-ranging interests and professional goals. For the past two years my course work has focused on media archives and preservation, community archives, museum studies, moving image technologies, sound technologies, archival description and access systems and special collections librarianship. As museums, archives and libraries have begun to converge and overlap in many of their core activities, I have attempted to place my professional future at the center of this overlap. I envision myself working within the special collections of a large research institution or university, a small community-based or local archive, or a museum's archives and library. The primary focus of my academic study has been the preservation, description and accessibility of obsolete media formats, from magnetic tape audio recordings and small gauge film to complex digital objects and software-dependent materials. As many collecting institutions have now expanded their scope far beyond traditional paper archives, I believe these skills will become increasingly relevant to archival work at all levels. Thus, my short-term professional goal is to gain extensive hands-on experience processing and describing archival collections, in order to more fully realize the technical proficiencies necessary to work with diverse media formats.

While much of my professional experience and coursework has focused on obsolete analog media such as film, videotape and grooved audio, a newfound interest in digital preservation has inspired me to seek out avenues for additional professional development within this specialization. While I was unable to take courses in digital asset management, human computer interaction or user experience design during my time in the program, I now recognize how vital these skills are for working with born-digital archival records. Through ongoing conversations with UCLA Digital Archivist Shira Peltzman, I have identified some of the most valuable workshops and conferences to help develop these skills as I enter the workforce. The annual Bitcurator User Forum, at which I volunteered last year, will be an especially useful resource for gaining knowledge of new tools and

best practices within digital preservation, and I hope to be able to attend the forum again in the near future.

As I enter the workforce, I am especially interested in gaining experience working with born-digital materials, because I believe this to be an under-emphasized yet growing area of need, especially within research institutions and personal papers collections. While I feel that I have a firm grasp on the ethical and theoretical grounding for this type of work, I recognize that I lack much of the technical knowledge and practical skills and proficiencies required to be a leader in this field. So, over the next five years, as I gain more hands-on experience processing archival materials, I also plan to complete the SAA's Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) Curriculum and Certificate Program, which, through a structured curriculum of tiered courses, covers the core competencies and tools of digital archives work. I recognize that regardless of the exact field I enter, I will need to commit to lifelong professional development and training, especially when working within the rapidly evolving and shifting world of digital records.

In my role as the University Archives Project Scholar in UCLA Library Special Collections' Center for Primary Research and Training, I was able to gain experience analyzing and working with legacy collections data. I not only gained a greater understanding of the behind-the-scenes, often unrecognized work that goes into the management of archival collections, I also developed new skills and proficiencies that I will carry with me throughout my career. Working with the University Archives legacy data, I also developed a newfound appreciation for database maintenance and records management. I now recognize that these skills are essential to archival work and plan to take advantage of the many free and accessible online tutorials for data management tools and programs. Moreover, through my conversations and collaborations with my supervisors and other archivists within library special collections, I learned of the wide-ranging skillsets necessary for work within

special collections and I began to focus my professional interest on the vast, under-processed and inaccessible digital and analog media material housed and sometimes hidden within large institutional archival collections.

Whatever my future career entails, I hope that outreach, instruction and education will be a major part of my duties, and thus I am extremely grateful for the experience I've gained over the last year as a teaching assistant in the Germanic Languages department. As a teaching assistant, I have grown immensely both academically and professionally. In the past year, I have honed my pedagogical skills by instructing and supporting over 180 students, designing lesson plans, leading weekly discussion sections and grading hundreds of critical essays. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time teaching and I look forward to further developing these skills through trainings such as the SAA's "Teaching with Primary Sources" professional development course or through training opportunities offered through employment at large research or educational institutions. I understand that engaging with researchers and users is a major, sometimes overlooked aspect of archives work, but I look forward to developing this professional strength even more as I continue my career.

As I have become more familiar with the many challenges and common obstacles to archival and media preservation work, I have grown to appreciate and value the role of professional organizations even more. Recognizing that many of the profession's most pressing issues will need to be addressed collaboratively and at scale, I look forward to becoming an active member in as many relevant professional organizations as my time will allow. While I have yet been unable to attend any major professional conferences, I am a member of the Society of American Archivists, and I have been actively involved in the student chapters of the Special Libraries Association (SLA), the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA), and the Association of Recorded Sounds Collections (ARSC). I have found these groups to be invaluable resources for connecting with

professionals and maintaining an up-to-date understanding of the most relevant and pressing issues in the field. With ARSC, I have attended multiple workshops, site visits and lectures, which have greatly enhanced my knowledge of the field and introduced me to other professionals. The specific organizations I end up joining will likely be a result of the specialization or focus of the archive or library where I find employment. My major short-term professional development goals include attending at least two national conferences in the next year. In addition to the conferences of the groups mentioned above, I have closely followed the itineraries and programs of the Code4lib conference and the DLF Forum, both of which I plan to attend within a year.

I have also gained valuable leadership and organizing skills through my work with README, a newly formed student group in the Information Studies department dedicated to privacy and digital rights in relation to information work. As a lead organizer with README, I created educational literature, presented at multiple conferences, co-organized and lead a summer book club, hosted weekly lab hours, planned and organized major events and workshops and helped cultivate a growing cooperative student group. My work with README has led to some of the most rewarding and fulfilling experiences of my time in the program and I look forward to further developing these organizing and collaborative movement-building skills as I enter the workforce. I look to organizations like the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Software Preservation Network as powerful examples of the impact collective organizing and advocacy can have, and I plan to become actively involved in these organizations as I gain more firm professional footing. Finally, I recognize that continued collaboration and conversation with my peers will be an essential part for my professional development; I am inspired by my peers in this cohort and I look forward to our future impact on the profession and shared growth.