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**LSTA Grant Project Evaluation
Grant: 11-13-5a
Grant Award: \$37,401**

**University of Oregon
Randall V. Mills Archives of Northwest Folklore
Preservation and Access Project for Media Collections**

Summary of Evaluation:

The Randall V. Mills Archives of Northwest Folklore Preservation and Access Project for Media Collections set out to improve public access to Oregon folklife collections in the Randall V. Mills Archives of Northwest Folklore and the Oregon Folklife Program. These resources document communities that are underrepresented in the archival record of the region. The project builds upon an already established partnership between the Folklore Program and the University of Oregon Libraries. It utilizes the Archivists' Toolkit, an open source archival data management system developed by archivists, to develop a database for 3,500 fieldwork collections.

For the simple fact that this collection's use has been limited to University of Oregon, any and all attempts to digitize and publicize the materials will inevitably make them more accessible. The project proposal objectives included both of these activities, and for the most part has shown success. The project's shortcomings are minor, will not adversely affect the project outcomes, and taken perspective, have served as lessons rather than failures.

I met with Nathan Georgitis, the managing archivist, on Thursday, February 2nd at the Randall V. Mills Archives in Eugene, Oregon. The visit included a tour of the archives and an in-depth discussion of the project's objectives, plans, results, and impact. The objectives are on track to being met by the end of this month, and Mr. Georgitis has shown that the project is in excellent positioning for the next year's objectives. If the finding aids and MARC records are published as promised, the collection will have achieved increased access. If the Archive can follow through on its plans to reach out to the cultural communities that it documents, as well as the scholarly communities that might utilize these resources, this project could serve as an example for similar projects in the future.

Project Objectives:

The University of Oregon's Randall V. Mills Archives of Northwest Folklore set out to accomplish Goal 5 of the *Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five-Year State Plan*--"Oregon libraries use cost-effective technologies to expand and enhance the access that all Oregonians have to information resources." In the first year, they proposed three major activities to accomplish this goal:

1. A preservation survey and inventory of all media materials, such as slides, recordings, and photographs. This survey and inventory includes a risk assessment, measures to protect the media materials, the creation of item-level metadata, and adding item records in the Archivists' Toolkit database.
2. Publication of finding aids to the approximately 3,500 student folklore field collections to the Northwest Digital Archive (<http://nwda.orbiscascade.org/index.shtml>), and the coordination and creation of additional MARC records to the UO Libraries Catalog.
3. Launch a digital image collection, and develop digital preservation procedures for the collections in partnership with the UO Libraries' Visual Resources Center. This includes the scanning of 6,00 slides in the Folk Art of the Oregon Country fieldwork project.

Per the grant proposal: "Upon completing these activities, we will publicize our collections by producing literature for distribution to cultural heritage institutions and cultural communities in Oregon."

Project Method:

Nathan Georgitis explained how a master plan was created, along with a file directory for all of the project activities. This allowed multiple Graduate Teaching Fellows to follow the project. It created a folder for each area of activity, and helped them stay on track. Through the use of graduate students and one archivist, Nathan Georgitis, the University of Oregon's Randall V. Mills Archives of Northwest Folklore set out to accomplish dual purposes:

1. To use cost-effective technologies to expand and enhance the access that all Oregonians have to information resources;
2. To provide an opportunity for students to actively engage with the archive and preservation process, and learn from this experience.

Project Results:

LSTA grant funding enabled the University of Oregon's Randall V. Mills Archives of Northwest Folklore to accomplish the major objectives of inventory and preservation. They inventoried all of the media, which involved some re-housing. They separated media materials, such as slides, photographs, DVDs, CDs, and micro-cassettes, and stored them in archival boxes and sleeves. They developed an item level inventory, and created Encoded Archival Description (EAD) finding Aids for the folklore fieldwork collections in the Archivist's toolkit.

They are now in a position to publish the finding aids. They are finalizing some edits and proofing of the data, and gradually publishing them to the Northwest Digital Archives database. Nathan Georgitis is also currently coordinating the addition of these records to the UO Libraries Catalog and the OCLC World Cat. By the end of the month, he anticipates completing the following:

1. The publication of finding aids for all collections for which they have a signed release form.
2. The publication of a repository level MARC record, and a plan for how extensively they will publish item level MARC records.

Because they were able to incorporate the digitization of objects into their workflow, the Archives has scanned and coordinated the scanning of thousands of slides, developed metadata for the images, and uploaded the 2,904 image Northwest Folklife Digital Collection to the UO Libraries website. This is currently making the collections more accessible.

As indicated in their grant proposal, they have developed a draft of a pamphlet that they will use to publicize their collections by distribution to cultural heritage institutions and cultural communities in Oregon, such as the Oregon Historical Society Library.

The one area that has not been accomplished is the hiring of a student Web Developer, and the development of the Archives of the Northwest Folklore's Web site. According to Nathan Georgitis, this part of the grant proposal fell by the wayside. However, it may work out for the best, because the University Libraries is hiring a Web Developer, and this project has been added to their to-do list. This option won't cost the Archives money; the Libraries is willing to foot the bill to have that developer do that support. However, it is a \$5,000 line in their budget, which will be a remaining balance that will need to be dealt with.

Project Impact:

They have been monitoring the Archives use through a visitor log, and are keeping a close eye on the Google analytics to measure the use of the Northwest Digital Archives database. It's too early to measure this impact, but previous to this project it was impossible for anyone outside of the University to find out much about the collections. By putting these digital images and finding aids on the web, there is the possibility of access through Google, WorldCat, and the NWDA website. Overall, public access to the Archive has grown. Perhaps the greatest measure of their success will be when they get their first outside visitor to the Archive itself.

Suggestions for Improvement:

Nathan Georgitis did not anticipate how much time it would take to stay ahead of three student assistants. Sometimes, the work would get done more quickly than anticipated, and other times the work was so detail oriented that he needed to be in the room and supervising. In retrospect, he admits that he could have used more time, and more time with the students. He had developed project overview sheets, and procedure sheets for some assignments, and found those most helpful.

He could have used this tool more often. He should also reallocate more human resources early in the project, to allow for more supervision and project orientation. These two changes could potentially streamline the process. In addition, I would strongly urge the creation of item level MARC records. I understand that this is a time consuming process, but it has the potential to increase the accessibility and impact of these valuable resources, especially among researchers from other interested fields.

While recognizing some of these concerns, it is important to note that they have already begun preparations for the next part of the grant cycle. They have scheduled an instructional session, organized data, and hope to realize any complications early and resolve them in a timely fashion.