Introduction

The University Archives’ first strategic plan served as a way to establish the identity of the Archives unit as collaborative, user-oriented, and purposeful about the work we do. The plan also helped to launch new services that met unfulfilled needs from the University community, including our records management program and our program to collect and manage born-digital content.

As our unit grows in staff and responsibility, the Ferdinand Hamburger University Archives’ strategic plan for FY 2015-2017 features four major goals that position us to continue to advance our mission and professional values to serve as responsible stewards of the content we manage and to seek out new and better ways to provide this content to our users. Each goal lists a series of specific, measureable projects we will undertake over the next three years in support of the strategic goal. Reference is made to each goal’s alignment with the University’s 10X20 plan and the Library’s strategic plan. See Appendix 1 for a visual rendering of project timelines.

The Archives unit will review the strategic plan annually so that we can make adjustments to the plan in light of unanticipated opportunities and changes in the strategic direction of the University and the Library.

Goal 1. Improve online description about our collections so that our users know more about our holdings.

Aligns with 10X20 goal #1 and Library Strategic Plan initiative 1.1.

Projects will include:

- Create a publicly-available collection-level record of every collection we manage, including reference to restricted content. (Year 1-2)

  Rationale: This project will serve to improve our collection control, will help keep us appropriately transparent about the collections we maintain, and will keep us and the University accountable for the restrictions we place on collections.

- Migrate metadata from Archivists’ Toolkit to ArchivesSpace. (Year 2)

  Rationale: As charter members of ArchivesSpace, we need to implement this tool in order to participate in the software’s adoption by the Archives community. ArchivesSpace also affords
functionality enhancements over our current collections management system that will improve our users’ engagement with our collections.¹

- Determine and implement a better way to provide finding aid content to our users. (Year 3)

  Rationale: Our users currently must navigate multiple systems in order to access our content. We will evaluate options and implement a solution that will provide our users with a streamlined, convenient mechanism for learning about our collections. Possible solutions may include using the public interface of ArchivesSpace or integrating our finding aid content into Catalyst, the Library’s online catalog.

Goal 2. Improve access to our digital content so that our users have a convenient way to fulfill their research needs using our digitized and born-digital holdings.

Aligns with 10X20 goal #1 and Library Strategic Plan initiative 1.1.

Projects will include:

- Enact a scan-on-demand workflow that provides quality scans of our holdings to our users in a timely manner and captures this content for re-use. (Year 1)

  Rationale: With the Library’s Digitization unit established, we want to be able to leverage their expertise by having them perform scans for our users. Creating a place to save past scans will mitigate redundant scanning activity and might enable our users to gain access to the content they want more quickly.²

¹ In order to achieve our goal on this project, in FY 2015 we will propose to the Digital Infrastructure Oversight Board that they approve the installation of an instance of ArchivesSpace by the end of June 2015 so that our Project Archivist may begin the migration of data from Archivists’ Toolkit to ArchivesSpace in FY 2016. Based on our experience working with the Systems department to install Archivists’ Toolkit, we do not anticipate the work required to do this, the data this system will maintain, or the ongoing support to be a substantial investment of resources. Furthermore, the installation of ArchivesSpace has the support of the Associate Director of Scholarly Resources and Special Collections and the Dean of the Sheridan Libraries, who has already committed a substantial financial investment to make us charter members of ArchivesSpace. For all of these reasons, we see this project as attainable. However, as noted above, our strategic plan is reviewed annually, in part to make adjustments in light of unanticipated circumstances beyond our control. In the event that we encounter unanticipated obstacles that delay this project, we will revise or postpone this goal to reflect those changes.

² We have already begun to partner with the Digitization unit on this project, having established early iterations of workflows, file-naming conventions, resolution and format standards, and fee structures that we expect to refine during FY 2015. The Digitization unit has proven to be a willing and enthusiastic partner in this evolution of service. At a minimum, these scans will reside offline on an intranet drive managed by Digitization, accessible by Archives staff. However, in FY 2015 we also intend to explore the possibility of serving up these scans through J-scholarship or whatever future interface is developed to manage online access to the Library’s digital assets. As
• Post all our publicly-available digital content to the Web so that our users can access this content without our intervention. (Year 2-3)

_Rationale:_ Our unit currently maintains over 400 gigabytes of digitized and born-digital content, most of which users are not aware of because we are not providing this content online. Posting our unrestricted digital content to the Web will provide better access for our users and may enable new users to access our materials.

**Goal 3. Better educate the university community and the public about Hopkins history in order to support the mission of Hopkins Retrospective, to respond to increasing user interest in this topic, and to connect University history to the story of Baltimore.**

Aligns with 10X20 goal #3 and Library Strategic Plan initiative 3.1.

Projects will include:

• Expand our role during the annual History Department seminar. (Year 1)

_Rationale:_ Our most established outreach project is our partnership with other Special Collections staff to lead the annual History Department class on primary source material that all sophomore history majors are required to attend. The Archives has played largely a support role at these classes. Given the increased interest in engaging undergraduates with their school’s history, the Archives will collaborate more actively with other Special Collections staff to ensure that archival collections that relate to Hopkins history play an important role in this class.

• Teach an intersession course about Hopkins history. (Year 3)

_Rationale:_ Intersession courses are a popular way to raise awareness about a variety of topics, and they have been taught by members of the Library in the past. Developing a course about Hopkins history will allow us to expand our outreach services to more deeply engage students with institutional history.

**Goal 4. Strengthen documentation and knowledge of our internal processes to reduce confusion and to ensure a seamless user experience.**

Aligns with 10X20 goal #2 and Library Strategic Plan initiative 4.1.

Projects will include:

_noted above, our strategic plan is reviewed annually, in part to make adjustments in light of unanticipated circumstances beyond our control. In the event that we encounter unanticipated obstacles that delay this project, we will revise or postpone this goal to reflect those changes._
• Cross-train staff in select areas of key functions. (Year 1-3)

  *Rationale:* Our first strategic plan succeeded in establishing distinct but complementary identities in the unit for each staff member so that tasks were accomplished more efficiently. We now seek to cross-train in important areas so that knowledge and expertise of critical unit functions are not lost in the event of an unexpected absence or departure. This effort will also help us better understand and respect the work of our coworkers.

• Improve documentation of processes and procedures that support core activities. (Year 1-3)

  *Rationale:* Documenting what we do will ensure that institutional memory about our activities is transparent and easily shared with other staff.

• Create knowledge base of reference transactions. (Year 2)

  While many of us will never have the degree of knowledge about our collections that our leads on reference have, creating a searchable repository of past reference transactions will position staff across the unit to respond to user requests more easily and accurately.

  *Approved by Associate Director Scholarly Resources and Special Collections, July 2014*
### Appendix 1. Visual Rendering of Johns Hopkins University Archives Strategic Plan, FY 2015-FY 2017

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