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Students as Donors to University Archives: A Study of Student Perceptions with Recommendations

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Students as Donors to University Archives: A Study of Student Perceptions with Recommendations

Jessica L. Wagner and Debbi A. Smith

A b s t r a c t

Most of the literature that explores the relationship between students and university archives focuses on how to integrate archival materials into the undergraduate curriculum. Little exists that analyzes student perceptions of the types of materials that are found in archives; even less discusses how to induce students to donate materials that document life on campus. This case study examines student perceptions of various aspects of university archives, with the goal of developing better methods of reaching out to encourage donation of student life materials.

All college and university archivists face the challenge of documenting student life. At Adelphi University, we have tried to understand the depth of the challenge and develop strategies that meet the needs of our institution and its students.

Both authors of this article are faculty librarians at Adelphi University, a private academic institution in the Northeast with a total enrollment of about eight thousand students (approximately five thousand undergraduates and three thousand graduates). Adelphi has programs in the liberal arts and sciences, as well as professional schools in business, education, nursing, psychological studies, and social work. We also have three satellite campuses in the region. One author is the assistant archivist for the University Libraries, and the other is the collection development and management librarian. As at most colleges and universities, archives at Adelphi play an important role in maintaining the continuity of culture on the campus. University Archives and

Special Collections are housed together as a unit in a building adjoining the main campus library and has two full-time faculty, three adjuncts, an administrative assistant, and three student workers.

Our library web page describes the archives' mandate: "University Archives serves as the primary repository for records and information relating to the history, development, organization, and operations of Adelphi University and any of its offices, divisions, schools, or departments." In addition to official records of the university, the collection includes other materials published or created by the university, including *The Oracle* (the Adelphi student yearbook), *The Delphian* student newspaper, and other Adelphi newspapers, manuscripts, graphic materials, audiovisual materials, photographs, electronic records, and miscellaneous artifacts created by members of the campus community. The collection also includes items that originated outside the university, such as newspaper and journal articles about Adelphi.

Every spring, several sororities on campus assign their pledges a task: they must visit the archives to collect information on their sorority's history at our school. And each spring we do our best to help them, but must always explain that we have limited materials on Greek life, and, indeed, on student life in general. The issue that many academic institutions face confronts us: how can we adequately document student life? As Michele Christian pointed out in 2002, it is essential to document the student record or else a university's history will be limited to that of the administration and not the student body it was created to serve.[1] And it is not just current students who seek information about their predecessors in various sororities, residence halls, student governance organizations, clubs, and sports teams; requests for information about past student life flow constantly into University Archives from the administration, alumni, and outside news agencies.

Student life materials include records of extracurricular activities, clubs, performances, sports teams, and Greek life; materials reflecting residential life and commuting; samples of student work; photographs and ephemera; student publications; and records of students' social lives. But, as many archivists have found, capturing these materials is like hitting a moving target. Students are only enrolled for an average of four years, and they arrive and leave every semester. Classes, social engagements, and extracurricular activities keep them extremely busy. Furthermore, at Adelphi, many students commute to campus, and many students work full or part time, which makes them even less likely to get enmeshed in the social fabric of the campus.

We decided that the best way to move beyond hypotheses and develop a better understanding of students' awareness, perceptions, and usage of

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[1] Michele Christian, "Documenting Student Life: The Use of Oral Histories in University Archives," *Archival Issues: Journal of the Midwest Archives Conference* 27 (October 2002): 111–24.

University Archives, as well as how to induce students to make more use of them as researchers or, particularly, as donors, was to conduct a survey among them. The results of this survey would then assist us in developing a plan for more effectively reaching out to and informing our students.

Literature Review

Since the advent of the notion that documenting student life is an important part of the mission of a university archives, archivists have struggled to implement a satisfactory program to do so. For a very long time, archival theory was primarily concerned with documenting the business of institutions from the top down; for universities, this meant a focus on the administration, faculty, trustees, and academic research. Though relatively little has been written on the subject of systematizing student donation to archives, archivists have studied many other aspects of the relationship between students and archives. Several key themes come up again and again: encouraging students to use primary sources in their research; reaching out to students and teachers to publicize the archives, often using exhibits; structuring archival projects for students and teaching with primary sources; orienting student users; and "demystifying" the archives for them.

By far, the bulk of scholarship on students and archives focuses on student use of archives, special collections, and rare books in the classroom. In 1989, Mark A. Greene outlined specifically the issues associated with encouraging use of archival materials in the classroom, such as overcoming the prejudices of students and faculty with regard to the usefulness of archival materials in a liberal arts curriculum.[2] Similarly, Laurie McFadden outlines a course she taught for undergraduate students about how to use archival materials to study the history of their university.[3] A 2000 article by Marian J. Matyn directed at history teachers, advocates for the skills undergraduates gain by working with primary source material in an archives setting.[4] Susan Allen makes a similar argument with regard to the use of rare books.[5] Some research has also been conducted regarding ways to encourage faculty to prepare archival projects for their students.

[2] Mark A. Greene, "Using College and University Archives as Instructional Materials: A Case Study and an Exhortation," *The Midwestern Archivist* 14, no.1 (1989): 31–38.

[3] Laurie Lounsberry McFadden, "Making History Live: How to Get Students Interested in University Archives," *College and Research Libraries News* 59 (June 1998): 423–25.

[4] Marian J. Matyn, "Getting Undergraduates to Seek Primary Sources in Archives," *The History Teacher* 33 (1 May 2000): 349–55.

[5] Susan M. Allen, "Rare Books and the College Library: Current Practices in Marrying Undergraduates to Special Collections," *Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship* 13, no. 2 (1999): 110–19.

The issue of collecting contemporary materials on college campuses has been prominently discussed in the literature for a long time. In 1946, Thomas Le Duc argued that if campus archivists want their collections to serve the "intellectual enterprise" of the university, and not just the "sentimental antiquarians" who comprised the alumni, archivists need to identify multiple user groups and cater to their needs.[6] Le Duc lists several, such as college historians, campus administrators, professional scholars, and biographers. To serve such groups, archivists must inquire about which materials would meet their needs; in particular, he believes that "[a] safe rule might be to gather precisely those sources in which the average alumnus shows the least interest."[7] To properly document a university, archivists must not rely on alumni donating copies of yearbooks and commencement programs (which the archives likely already has); instead, archivists must devote as much time to collecting contemporary materials while they are available as to collecting historical materials. To do this, the archivist must be a "shameless solicitor and a ruthless collector," as "[w]hat today seems trivial may tomorrow be indispensable."[8] However, aside from emphasizing that archivists must be proactive, Le Duc does not provide suggestions as to how to collect the "[t]ext-books, photographs, student publications, [and] records of undergraduate societies and of fraternity chapters" that he feels are so important.[9]

Several other scholars, particularly during the middle of the twentieth century, discuss the establishment of university and college archives at some of the more prominent American colleges and universities.[10] They discuss the roles of archivists as collectors of academic ephemera on the one hand, and as collectors of administrative records on the other. Generally, they indicate that archivists should spend more time collecting contemporary materials, but they do not indicate the best ways to go about this.

Due in part to cultural shifts from the 1960s to the 1980s, scholars began telling new stories: those of workers, students, people of color, immigrants, women, and other underdocumented groups, from the perspectives of the subjects themselves. Archivists suddenly faced the challenges of providing access to materials they already had on these subjects, as well as starting new collecting programs to acquire these materials. Of course, these materials proved much

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6   T. Le Duc, "Arcana Siwash: The Function and Needs of A College Archives," *The American Archivist* 9, no. 2 (1946): 132.

7   Le Duc, "Arcana Siwash," 133.

8   Le Duc, "Arcana Siwash," 135.

9   Le Duc, "Arcana Siwash," 135.

10 See John M. Jennings, "Archival Activity in American Universities and Colleges," *The American Archivist* 12, no. 2 (1949): 155–63, and Clifford K. Shipton, "College Archives and Academic Research," *The American Archivist* 27, no. 3 (1964): 395–400.

more difficult to collect, as structures and institutions to provide records about these groups from their own points of view were less likely to exist.

Helen Willa Samuels's landmark 1992 work, *Varsity Letters*, cemented this new focus, arguing that student life is one of the seven areas archivists should consider essential to their mission. However, little research has subsequently been done to determine best practices for collecting these materials, appraising them when collected, and, especially, encouraging students to donate. In *Varsity Letters*, Samuels focuses an entire chapter, "Foster Socialization," on student life materials. For the purposes of her book, Samuels considers the socialization process "within a larger context that includes all of those activities that foster the social, cultural and physical development of the student outside the formal academic program." Further, she identifies three groups that may sponsor the activities: the institution itself, students under the guidance of the institution, and students acting on their own. Clearly, the former two categories are much easier for archivists to collect, as some institutional structures are likely in place and recordkeeping may already be required. Student socializing that takes place outside of the university's programs may not produce as many records, and any that are produced will likely be far more difficult to locate and collect.[11]

While *Varsity Letters* provides plenty of insight into how to document student life at the university, it focuses on documentation strategy: performing a functional analysis on an institution, identifying the jobs the institution does every day in the course of its business, and documenting those to create a fuller, more complete documentary record.[12] Therefore, Samuels identifies "fostering socialization" as a goal, focuses on discovering a university's "coherent set of goals" for socializing its students, and recommends acquiring records to illustrate how these goals are enacted and met.[13] She indicates that this approach may leave out material covering "the effect that [social activities] have on the development of students," so archivists must seek ways to acquire materials documenting student perspectives:[14]

> A fuller record may only be achieved through conscious documentary efforts. Archivists may wish to ask student organizations, housing groups, and alumni clubs to undertake special documentary projects. Organizations can be urged to maintain records of their activities, photograph events, and interview their members. Individual students can be encouraged to keep diaries

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[11] Helen Willa Samuels, *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities.* (Chicago and Metuchen, N.J: Society of American Archivists; Scarecrow Press, 1992), 76.

[12] For more information on functional analysis, documentation strategy, macro-appraisal, etc., see Marcus C. Robyns and Jason Woolman, "Institutional Functional Analysis at Northern Michigan University: A New Process of Appraisal and Arrangement of Archival Records," *The American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (2011): 241–56.

[13] Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 76.

[14] Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 76.

or participate in oral history projects. Training and guidance will be required, but such records, though self-consciously created, could fill a significant documentary gap.[15]

Therefore, while Samuels's study is very useful in identifying collecting areas to document the university as a whole, it does not provide much detail as to the mechanics of how an archivist should acquire student-produced material. She suggests several possibilities, but it falls outside the scope of her study to identify ways to publicize this part of the archives' mission, ways to network with students, ways to motivate them to donate, and ways to appraise records that are acquired.

Varsity Letters, having been written in 1992, also omits discussion of electronic records as a major force in student life. Increasingly, students conduct their socializing electronically, using tools like Facebook, email, and text messaging; as we will discuss below, our survey findings show that almost all of our students engage in social networking in this way. Further, even social activities sponsored by the university are often conducted online. At Adelphi, for example, social clubs are provided with a university-sponsored website to keep track of membership and publish meeting minutes and event announcements. As has been discussed elsewhere,[16] many barriers exist to collecting these sorts of electronic records: access to password-protected materials, frequent updates and changes to social media sites, and ease of deletion of materials, to name just a few.

Some archivists have begun to explore documenting student life via the Internet. In a key 2004 article, Christopher J. Prom and Ellen D. Swain focus on the documentation of student organizations through the websites each organization may host. According to their research, students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign tend to use websites, blogs, and emails heavily for some tasks, such as sharing photographs and organizing and publicizing activities. However, students also keep many of their documents in hard copy and tend not to have systematic recordkeeping policies, especially from year to year, as membership changes. This leads Prom and Swain to conclude that "[a]rchivists who wish to implement a full collecting program for student life must continue to document organizations' activities in more traditional ways."[17] Fur-

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[15] Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 78.

[16] See Catherine O'Sullivan, "Diaries, On-line Diaries, and the Future Loss to Archives; or, Blogs and the Blogging Bloggers Who Blog Them," *The American Archivist* 68 (Spring/Summer 2005): 71, and also several articles in Christopher A. Lee, ed., *I, Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011).

[17] Christopher J. Prom and Ellen D. Swain, "From the College Democrats to the Falling Illini: Identifying, Appraising, and Capturing Student Organization Websites," *The American Archivist* 70 (Fall/Winter 2007): 352.

ther, archivists must step in to help students organize and systematize their recordkeeping, both with regard to electronic and traditional records:

> To capture the full range of documentation produced by a student organization, archivists need to collaborate with that organization on a personal level to acquire records not contained on its site. Indeed, documenting student life in the electronic age will not eliminate the need for personal contact.[18]

Prom and Swain go on to argue that given how resource intensive setting up a full-fledged collecting program for student records can be, a sound alternative might be to crawl student organization websites on an annual basis; this is less labor intensive, but will still provide a reasonable cross-section of student organization activity.[19] Again, as this article was written in 2004, it does not contend with the heavy use by students of social media sites like Facebook. As our research will show, students conduct much of their networking, both personal and within student organizations, using these social media sites. Facebook, in particular, has strict limitations on what information Web crawling software can capture; if students are using Facebook rather than other websites for their networking, archivists face an uphill battle in using this option to document student life.

Swain was one of the first to approach archival collection development from a student perspective. Rather than examining ways to improve student use of archives, she sought ways to encourage students to participate in developing collections related to their activities: "Archival scholarship extols the research potential of these documents and outlines strategies for capturing student experience more fully. At the same time, it ignores the role students can and should play in planning and implementing any documentary program related to student life and culture."[20] She argues that a student documentation program should investigate student perceptions of archives, examine how students document their activities, and analyze what benefits accrue to students who place their materials into university archives. In this article, Swain describes two studies conducted at the University of Illinois. In the first, she surveyed classes that came to the archives to discover what they already knew about archives and what they knew after the visit. In the second, she trained student historians or secretaries in clubs to collect materials on behalf of their organizations. She outlines three key problems archivists must face: 1) overcoming student perceptions of the archives; 2) figuring out how students document their own

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[18] Prom and Swain, "From the College Democrats to the Falling Illini," 352–53.

[19] Prom and Swain, "From the College Democrats to the Falling Illini," 354–55.

[20] Ellen D. Swain, "College Student as Archives' Consultant? A New Approach to Outreach Programming on Campus," *Archival Issues: Journal of the Midwest Archives Conference* 29 (2 January 2005): 113.

lives, especially with regard to online documentation; and 3) convincing students their records are important and motivating them to donate.

But Swain's article, seminal as it is, was also written prior to the prevalence of social media in the lives of students. Swain mentions Facebook, MySpace, and other social media sites in passing but did not ask about them in her survey, nor did she ask about text messaging. In the seven years since publication, then, the technology students use in their daily lives has changed dramatically, and archivists must continue to adjust their collecting techniques to accommodate these changes.

Methodology

We programmed the survey we conducted among Adelphi students Survey Monkey and included both quantitative and qualitative questions addressing the above issues, as well as questions related to demographics, extracurricular involvement, and overall library use (see Appendix A). We analyzed the qualitative responses with the assistance of the tagging capabilities in Survey Monkey. We sent out a broadcast email under the auspices of the University Libraries to invite students to participate in the survey and provide an incentive for participating—entry in a lottery for a $50 Barnes and Noble gift card (see Appendix B). The survey was available from 20 September through 10 October 2011, during which time 470 students completed the questionnaire (or, about 6% of the total student population).

The profile of those who responded indicates a balanced representative sample that generally lines up with the gender, age, and matriculation status of the student body. This, combined with the robust sample size, led us to conclude that the survey responses were a reliable, if not totally projectable, snapshot of student perceptions and activities.

Findings and Discussion

Awareness of the Existence of University Archives and Its Source

Survey responses reveal that most students (63%) were not aware of the existence of University Archives before taking the survey. Of those who were, about 1 in 4 claims to have used the archives for some a class assignment, either independently or as the result of a professor's request. The other sources of awareness mainly stemmed from visual cues: seeing the sign for the archives outside its building or the link for it on the library's home page on the Web. As
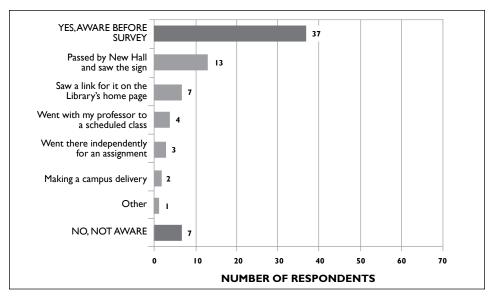
FIGURE 1. **Awareness of University Archives Before Survey**

a percentage of the total students surveyed, however, awareness levels and actual use are low (see Figure 1). As few students have been in our facility, and the majority of those aware of our facility know about it from visual cues, we can conclude that very few students have a sense of what sorts of materials our collections contain.

Perceptions of Archives' Users

Students were asked to select from a list the populations they think use the materials in the University Archives. From this list, both Adelphi faculty and graduate students are highly, and nearly equally, likely to be perceived as archives users (89%; 85%). However, large percentages also consider undergraduate students to be users (68%), followed by slightly lower, but still substantial, mentions for researchers from other institutions (61%), university administration/staff (60%), and archivists in general (58%). These responses indicate that in spite of low current usage by the students surveyed, they perceive that materials in the archives are being used by other students.

Use of Archival Collections, Both Digital/Online and in Person

Given the overall lack of awareness of University Archives, it is not surprising that most students (86%) state that they have not used any of the digital
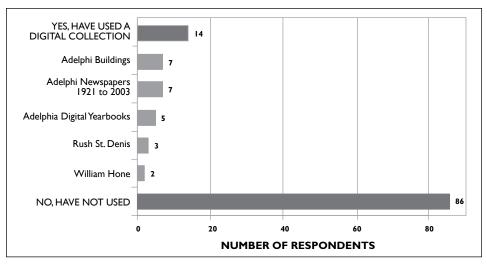
F I G U R E   2 . Digital Collections Used on Library's Web Site

collections found on the library's website and that they have never used the archives in person (93%). The few (7%) who did visit the archives were likely to have done so for a class assignment (see Figures 2 and 3).

Perceptions of the Types of Materials in Archives

We asked all students what sorts of materials they thought would be, or knew would be, present in the archives, and respondents generally seemed unsure. Nineteen percent of the answers referred to old newspaper or journal articles; many suggested that "back issues" of academic journals and campus newspapers were stored in the archives when it was no longer necessary to keep them in the main library collections. Other popular responses included references to items from the past, yearbooks, and information about the university's history in general. Aside from campus newspapers and yearbooks, very few students listed specific examples of items that might be in archival collections: only 5.5% mentioned manuscripts or documents, 3.7% listed "records" (it was usually not clear whether they used this as an umbrella term or if they referred to audio media), 3% mentioned photographs, 1% mentioned memorabilia, and 4.6% mentioned items that needed special care or treatment, were rare, or were damaged. These results clearly indicate that students and archives staff have different understandings as to the contents of an archival collection. Given that so few of the respondents have used the archives in person, it is understandable that they may not know from experience; it does, however, indicate a failure of publicity and messaging on our part to inform our
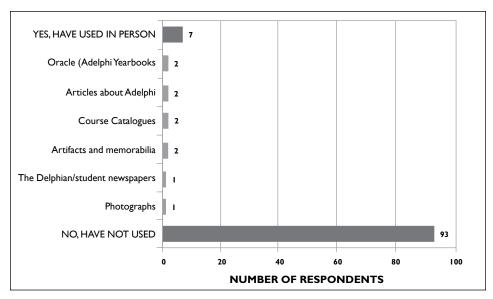
F I G U R E 3 .   **Collections Used in Person**

students about what they can expect to find in our collections. Interestingly, due to respondents' emphasis on historical or outdated items, they seem not to conceive of archival collections as growing, with new materials donated or accessioned regularly.

P e r c e p t i o n s   o f   t h e   L i b r a r i a n s   W h o   W o r k   i n   A r c h i v e s

When we asked students what tasks they believe are part of an archivist's job, very few mentioned collection development. By far the most common response was helping researchers to find resources, at 40%. Other common responses included arranging or organizing materials (20%), conservation or preservation tasks (6%), and maintaining or updating files (7.8%). Only 2% listed any kind of acquisition activity among the archivist's tasks. These results paint the picture that students believe archivists work with static collections, with "old" things, and primarily help the public access things already in the collections. They emphasize the public face of what archivists do, and are largely unable to identify the basic tasks most archivists consider part of their job: acquisition of materials, reference, preservation, arrangement and description, access. It will be essential, then, to encourage students to envision the University Archives as a growing collection; we must drive home the point that to build a relevant collection to use in the future, students and archivists must both proactively collect materials now.
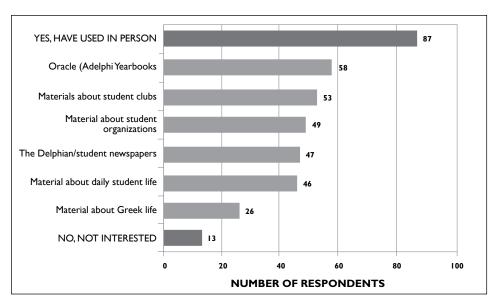
F I G U R E   4 .   Student Life Collections of Interest

Student Life Activities and Related Materials

We asked students a series of questions pertaining to interest in current student life archival materials, their own extracurricular activities, and their likelihood of donating materials to the archives. The purpose of these questions was to correlate student activities with potential ways of increasing student involvement with archives.

Most students surveyed (87%) are not aware that University Archives collects materials that document student life. However, when then presented with a list of student life materials collected in the archives, most (87%) indicated that certain collections would be of interest to them (see Figure 4). This indicates that lack of awareness, rather than lack of interest, is inhibiting usage. Most respondents were surprised at the notion that materials belonging to them might be "worthy" of inclusion in an archival collection. Of our respondents, 5% indicated that they would be willing to donate if asked, and if they had anything worthy of donating.

When the students were asked about their own extracurricular activities, almost half (47%) stated that they belong to a club or student organization; fewer said they are on a sports team (6%) or in a Greek society (8%). All of these groups, though, are likely to have some sort of online presence, primarily on Facebook or with OrgSync, the Adelphi online organizational network that allows students to join clubs and student groups and maintain their involvement with them (see Figure 5).
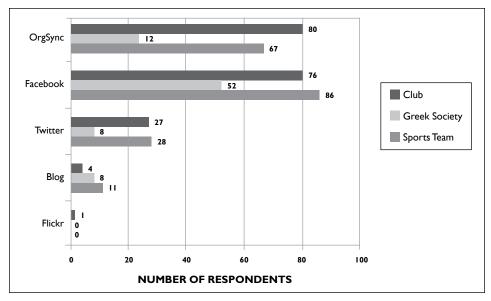
FIGURE 5. Online Presence of Clubs/Sports Teams/Greek Societies

In addition to these online records, students indicated they keep print materials as well. Approximately 25% of students who responded to this question indicated that their organization keeps promotional materials for events they sponsor, and 22% mentioned keeping meeting minutes. Approximately 19% keep attendance records as well. Greek organizations, in particular, have a strong bent toward documenting their histories: respondents involved in these organizations indicated that they keep photographs, scrapbooks, and histories of their chapters and of alums who were members. Members of Greek societies, in addition to members of other organizations on campus, indicated that either the president or a club secretary or scribe keeps the records. No respondents mentioned any mechanism in place for maintaining continuity in the records from year to year. Greek students did mention that their affiliation with a national organization helped them keep records; in addition, several referred to the "Greek suites," storage areas on the Adelphi campus designated for storage of fraternity and sorority materials.

It is interesting to compare the records that students actually keep to what they state is important for University Archives to collect to document student life. Forty percent of respondents to this question suggested that dormitory life should be documented; this was by far the top response. Twelve percent mentioned that campus activities and events should be documented, and 8% mentioned organizations, extracurriculars, or clubs. Interestingly, only 5% included photographs of students on their lists. Clearly, the items high on their priority list for saving may not coincide with what they are saving, or, indeed,
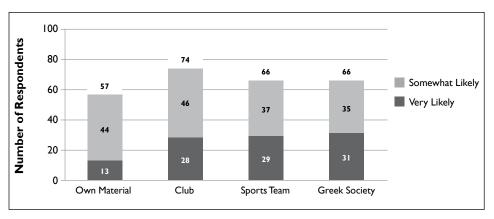
F I G U R E 6 . **Likelihood of Donating Material**

what we as archivists are saving; it will be important to further research how to make archivists' priorities match those of students and to determine how best to codify those priorities into a collecting plan. We also asked students about their own individual online activities to determine potential methods of online outreach. Most students (82%) indicated that they have a Facebook account. An even larger percentage (93%) use email on a regular basis and also text messaging (85%); many fewer use chat (24%) or Twitter (22%).

However, many students seem skeptical of donating their personal materials to the collections (see Figure 6). Only 13% of respondents consider themselves "very likely" to donate their own personal materials to the collections, while 44% consider themselves "somewhat likely." The numbers were much more positive for donating materials from a student organization: approximately 30% at "very likely" and 40% at "somewhat likely." We discovered one possible reason for this reticence when we asked a follow-up question: "What sort of procedures would make it more likely for you to donate this kind of material? If there is nothing that would make it more likely for you to donate material, please explain why." Several respondents—a total of 5%—referred to concerns about anonymity, confidentiality, or security of their information. According to one student, "If I knew that they would be kept anonymously and safely and used for good reasons, I would donate my information." Another student added that he or she would prefer "[a]n easy drop off that is anonymous so you don't feel embarrassed about something." Responses like these suggest to us two other barriers to donation that we might need to overcome: first, students may be reluctant to save, for posterity, any records of their college exploits. Many students, of course, use their college years to explore and experience living on their own for the first time; it is logical to expect them to be unwilling to submit materials from their personal lives that may later prove to be embarrassing. Donating materials from

a group may mitigate this; the focus is less on an individual's activities, and thus the act of donating seems more anonymous.

Second, we wonder if students believe that personal materials they donate may turn out to be a security or identity risk. Given the emphasis on identity theft in the last several years, Americans in general are repeatedly warned about providing strangers with personal information, especially pertaining to health, finances, and personal communications. Any university maintains records of this sort, and students are well aware of this because of the documents they must submit to enroll. Archivists, of course, are trained to be conscious of confidentiality issues, and we would rather not take custody of records with sensitive health and financial information, especially if they tend to be outside of our purview.[21] Students, however, likely do not know this. To archivists, records of enduring value may mean correspondence, photographs, diaries, and ephemera; students may have no idea what sorts of records we consider archival and may not realize how cognizant we are of the issues of confidentiality and security. This, then, is another example of a failure of messaging: students may not be aware of what our collecting priorities are and how security risks can be minimized.

Outreach

Publicity and messaging are the main ways students suggest that we increase our collecting of their materials: fully 50% of responses to our question about procedures to encourage donation refer to publicity or advertising. One student wrote that donation would be encouraged by "outreach and education. [I] would need to understand the role of the archives, and be invested in it." Another student wrote, "I probably would donate material, I just didn't know it was needed. Letting people know that material was needed or wanted would make them more likely to donate." And another student wrote, quite simply, that "[t]he archives should be advertised more because not many students know about it." Though only 49% of students answered in the previous question that they were "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to donate personal materials, the tone of the responses to this question about procedures seemed more positive. We had several responses like this one: "[I] feel that if the information is important and should be archived, than [I] have no problem donating it." The overall tenor of these responses suggests that if students were aware of the archives and of its importance to the university and they knew what materials were suitable for donation and how to donate easily, they would be happy to help.

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[21] Tim Pyatt, "Balancing Issues of Privacy and Confidentiality in College and University Archives," in *College and University Archives: Readings in Theory and Practice,* ed. Christopher J. Prom and Ellen D. Swain (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008), 211–26.

N e x t   S t e p s

The purpose of our research was to examine the attitudes of students toward University Archives to better develop ways to involve them with donating and using materials related to student life. Our first finding was that most students are not aware of the existence of University Archives at all. Of the small percentage who are aware and have actually used the collections, very few are specifically aware of or have made use of the student life materials that currently reside there. Juxtaposed to these results are the findings that when students are told about the student life materials in the archives, they express high levels of interest in looking at many of the collections. Many are positive about the idea of donating materials and would be willing to contribute if they were asked and had an easy mechanism for doing so. The question then becomes how to reach students as soon as they become part of the Adelphi community and how to continue to interact with them throughout their tenure on campus.

A second area of analysis involves the records that students keep and how to obtain and collect these materials in various formats. The students in this survey who belong to a club, Greek society, or sports team have a heavy online presence, primarily on Facebook and the Adelphi network OrgSync, and have a unique Adelphi email address. They also document their meeting minutes and retain physical scrapbooks, photographs, and promotional materials. Greek societies also have storage areas on campus and their affiliations with their national oversight chapters help them archive records.

Apart from organized groups, survey respondents felt strongly that dormitory life be documented. This would require proactivity on the part of University Archives to educate students about saving materials and depositing them in the archives. To assuage any fears about confidentiality, students would need to be educated as to the types of materials that the archives is interested in, why it is important to document student life, and how their privacy would be protected. This might encourage donation by some students who seem reluctant.

Students provided us with a number of useful, practical suggestions as to how to collect more student materials. Several students suggested we set up collecting drives or leave drop boxes on campus for students to leave material. Some students also encouraged us to allow for online donation. Finally, several suggested we incentivize donation via giveaways or prizes. But, by far, the most common response students gave was that the best way to make them aware of University Archives is through outreach, publicity, and messaging. We are both on the library's Marketing Committee and used these findings to develop a strategic outreach plan that could use current marketing initiatives as well as develop new ones. This plan will take several years to implement, however, and will require a large investment of time, personnel, and resources. If we are successful in collecting more materials, we will of course need to appraise and

process them as well. Before embarking on any of these tasks, we plan to assess the staff time and resources it would take to process new materials and research ways to fund the project. After describing the goals below, we will consider first steps to take to implement them.

G o a l   O n e :   C o l l e c t i n g   P o l i c y

It will be essential to develop a collecting policy for student life materials as a permanent part of the overall University Libraries' Collection Development Policy. This will help to clarify in our own minds what is to be collected, how it is to be collected, and how it is to be stored and maintained. Since the Collection Development Policy is reviewed on an annual basis, it could also be modified by student feedback about what materials would be of future use to them. Once this policy is in effect, it would encourage other library faculty to become invested in the outcome of collecting for the archives; faculty in the libraries may therefore be more inclined to encourage donations from students with whom they interact. Also, as all library faculty serve as liaisons with academic departments, we may be able to encourage academic faculty involvement in the project. Key first steps for this goal include researching collecting policies for student materials established by other universities, surveying student materials we already have, and analyzing the areas we would like to focus on. This will allow us to prepare a preliminary collecting policy to present to the rest of the library faculty for inclusion in the overall collection policy.

Clarifying beforehand the sort of student documentation we would like to capture would keep the collection from becoming too large, unwieldy, unfocused, and, subsequently, difficult to process. This information would be made available to the students to give them clear guidelines about acceptable donations. We would not want to discourage students from donating materials, but we also do not want them to give materials we won't keep and risk alienating them if their donation is not accepted. The policy should then have a mechanism in place for returning material, with our thanks, if it is not accepted into the collection, and we should be able to point to the policy to explain why something may have been returned.

G o a l   T w o :   H a r n e s s   t h e   L i b r a r y   W e b s i t e

We also plan to optimize ways to use our library website for outreach. Our website is currently the primary way that students (and faculty) become aware of library resources and services. We plan to create a rotating graphic for the website to highlight the student life collections at University Archives and our requests for donations. In addition, the website for University Archives and

Special Collections (which is a subsite of the main library website) will deliver prominent information about these materials and our collecting parameters. The library is also putting up a CoolSign digital signage display in the main library lobby. The rotating graphics developed for the website could easily be repurposed for this display, which is positioned to capture students' attention as they enter the library or as they check out material at the access services desk. Further, these signs are present in nearly every campus building and around the grounds; we can request that our graphics become part of the rotating display on these CoolSigns outside of the library. Key first steps include working with our in-house graphic designer to create an effective advertisement for the archives and its new student materials initiative.

Goal Three: Orientation Sessions

To win over new students at the beginning of their Adelphi experience, we would need to make ourselves immediately known to them. One easy way to accomplish this would be to make use of the Freshman Orientation Experience. The library is already involved in the Freshman Orientation Experience, a course freshman are required to take to introduce them to various programs and resources the university has to offer. We could easily include information about student life material in University Archives and our collecting program during the library session of this orientation course. Key steps include preparing a brief presentation about the collecting project for library staff to include in their orientation sessions and presenting this idea to the library faculty to ask for their participation.

Goal Four: Coordinate with Student Organizations

We would like to strengthen our connections with the existing Adelphi infrastructure to make our activities known to individual students and student groups. Outreach could be extended directly into student dormitories, where we could prepare the dorm resident advisors to speak with students and set up collecting boxes for material. As the majority of students commute to campus, we could work with the Commuter Student Organization and set up collecting boxes in the Commuters' Lounge.

The Center for Student Involvement (CSI), which oversees and maintains OrgSync online, would allow us access to all student groups on campus. We already ask them to collect student life materials on our behalf, but through CSI we may be able to coordinate a visit to various student organization meetings to establish connections with student leaders.

Every student entity on campus also has a unique Adelphi email address that goes to the organization's governing body (usually the secretary or president). We could use these addresses to send information about our student life collections including the types of materials we are looking for and how we can work with the group to collect its materials. Greek societies could be approached with a request that when they email meeting minutes and other pertinent materials to their national chapters they also forward a copy to University Archives. The Greeks could also be asked to donate duplicates of materials that they currently store elsewhere on campus.

We can also take advantage of the social media already in place to reach student clubs and organizations. Most groups on campus have their own Facebook page, as does the library. We can take advantage of this to "friend" organizations, and ask for contributions of photos and videos that are posted to their sites. CSI can also be approached to develop ways we can capture their content on a regular, ongoing basis.

Clearly, as we touched on above, social media websites contain highly relevant information but are very difficult to crawl. First, sites like Facebook are proprietary, and resist giving archives permission to take a snapshot of material posted to its pages. Second, these sites are notably dynamic; while other websites are "static," in that they may be updated or redesigned occasionally, social media sites and even blogs change every second. So in order to effectively document these sites, we will have to select a product or program that can crawl social media sites, and then decide how often to crawl them, with the knowledge that new material is constantly added.

Several products have been developed to capture content from both static and dynamic websites (such as Facebook). One such product, Archive-It, is a subscription service created by the Internet Archive; it is able to "[c]apture publicly available social networking sites: blogs, tweets, photos and comments."[22] Products such as these cannot capture password-protected material, but most of our student group Facebook pages are publicly accessible without joining the group. Since Archive-It or a similar product may not work with password-protected student group pages on OrgSync, we will have to work with CSI and other appropriate Adelphi departments to gain access to these pages. It seems feasible to crawl at the end of each semester or year to get as much of the information posted as we can.

First steps to accomplishing these goals include setting up meetings with CSI and dormitory resident advisors to explain our project and clarify its goals,

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[22] Archive-It, "About Archive-It," accessed 17 July 2012, http://www.archive-it.org/learn-more. The North Carolina State Archives successfully used this product to document the Facebook posts of the governor; please see Kelly Eubank et. al., "A Flickr of Hope: Harvesting Social Networking Sites" (presentation, ARCHIVES*RECORDS/DC 2010, the Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., 10-15, August 2010).

and also acquiring the email list of student organizations to begin reaching out to them about our project. We will also have to begin working with the university's social media staff to select a product that can accomplish the goals we describe above.

Goal Five: Make It Easy

Our research indicates that, in addition to making more information available to students, we have to make donation as easy as possible for them. We are discussing setting up drop boxes at several key points on campus for students to donate material, as well as setting up a Collection Day in the student union for students to drop material off. These tactics would have to coordinate with a messaging effort, informing students about the materials we are looking for, the location of drop boxes, and the date of Collecting Day. We may also consider sponsoring a contest whereby students can donate materials and win a prize. This will allow us to require students to include their names and information about the materials (such as a date and a description) to enter the contest. First steps for this goal would build on the networking with CSI and student organizations, and rely on the email list to publicize the events.

Conclusion

The essential lesson we learned from our survey is to make it as easy as possible for students to donate their material to University Archives. We need to insert ourselves into their environment to make them aware of our existence, our mission, and our symbiotic relationship with them. Further issues would need to be addressed in University Archives before this program can commence on a large scale. Collecting more materials would require the budgeting of more time, personnel, resources, and supplies for gathering, organizing, and making these materials known and available. We would also have to predetermine how to best collect and store digital records, especially those captured online, and to continually review our processes so we can adjust to the ever-evolving digital technologies. Creating a strategic plan and investing the entire library in its implementation would address some of these issues and allow for modifications as circumstances continue to change. However, the results of our survey give us an invaluable starting point for taking on the enormous challenge of collecting and documenting student university life.

Appendix A: Archives and Special Collections Survey

The Adelphi University Libraries thanks you for participating in this important survey. It should take no longer than 10 minutes of your time, and will provide valuable information on your use of your library. Your responses will remain confidential and the information you provide will be presented
only as summary statistics.

*1. To begin, as you may or may not know, University Archives and Special Collections (UASC), a department of the Adelphi University Libraries, is located in the lower level of New Hall and is composed of two distinct collections: University Archives and Special Collections. Before this survey, were you aware of the existence of the University Archives?
☐ Yes
☐ No

2. How long do you plan to stay?
☐ I went with my professor to a scheduled class
☐ My professor told me to go there a class assignment
☐ I went there independently for a class assignment
☐ I was making a campus delivery
☐ I passed by New Hall with the sign outside for University Archives and Special Collections
☐ I saw a link for it on the Library's home page
☐ Other *(please specify)* _____

3. What specific types of materials do you think or know are in University Archives?
    (Free text)

4. Who do you think uses the materials in University Archives? *(Please select all that apply.)*
☐ Undergraduate students
☐ Graduate students
☐ Professors/faculty from Adelphi
☐ Researchers from other institutions
☐ University administration and/or staff
☐ Archivists
☐ Other *(please specify)* _____

5.   Which, if any, of the following digital collections of the Adelphi
     University Archives and Special Collections have you used on the library's
     web site? *(Please select all that apply.)*
     ☐ Adelphi Buildings Collection
     ☐ William Hone Digital Collection
     ☐ Ruth St. Denis Digital Collection
     ☐ The Adelphi Digital Yearbook Collection: The Oracles
     ☐ Adelphi Newspapers from 1921 to 2003 (including The Delphian)
     ☐ None of these

*6. Have you ever been to or used the University Archives in person?
     ☐ Yes
     ☐ No

7.   For which of the following reasons have you ever been to or used
     University Archives? *(Please select all that apply.)*
     ☐ A scheduled class that I went to with my professor
     ☐ A class assignment and my professor told me to go there
     ☐ A class assignment and I went there independently
     ☐ I was making a campus delivery
     ☐ Other *(please specify)* _____

8.   Which, if any, of the following collections in University Archives have you
     ever used in person? *(Please select all that apply.)*
     ☐ The Oracle (the Adelphi yearbook)
     ☐ The Delphian, or any other Adelphi newspapers
     ☐ Newspaper and journal articles about Adelphi
     ☐ Uncatalogued publications like flyers and brochures
     ☐ Photographs
     ☐ Course catalogues
     ☐ Department or administrative records
     ☐ Audio/visual materials
     ☐ Artifacts and memorabilia
     ☐ None of the above
     ☐ Something else *(please specify)* _____

9.   What do you think that University Archives and the librarians who service
     the collection are like? If you have ever used the University Archives in
     person, please base your response on your experience there.
         (Free text)

10. What do you think are the job duties of the librarians who work in Uni-
     versity Archives? If you have ever used the University Archives in person,
     please base your response on your experience there.
         (Free text)

11. University Archives serves as the primary repository for records and information relating to the history, development, organization, and operations of Adelphi University. University Archives is also responsible for collecting material that documents student life, such as the activities of clubs, student organizations, sports teams, student activities and Greek life. Were you aware that this material is collected by University Archives?

☐ Yes
☐ No

12. For which of the following reasons have you ever been to or used University Archives? *(Please select all that apply.)*

☐ The Oracle (the Adelphi yearbook)
☐ The Delphian, or any other Adelphi newspapers
☐ Material documenting daily student life
☐ Material documenting Adelphi student clubs
☐ Material documenting Adelphi student organizations
☐ Material documenting Adelphi Greek life
☐ None of the above
☐ Other *(please specify)* _____

*13. Are you a member of any University club or student organization?

☐ Yes, I am a member of a club or a student organization
☐ No, I am not a member of a club or a student organization

14. Which of the following clubs or student organizations do you belong to? *(Please select all that apply.)*

☐ Accounting Society
☐ The Delphian, or any other Adelphi newspapers
☐ Adelphi Ballroom Dance Club
☐ Adelphi Christian Fellowship
☐ Adelphi Life Club
☐ Amnesty International
☐ Anthropology Club
☐ AU Panther Pride
☐ Biology Club
☐ Black Students United
☐ Breaking Boundaries
☐ C.A.L.I.B.E.R.
☐ Circle K International
☐ Commuter Student Organization
☐ Criminal Justice Club

☐ Cultural Italian American Club
☐ Debate Society
☐ Delphinian
☐ Entrepreneurship Society
☐ Environmental Action Coalition
☐ Finance Society
☐ F.O.C.U.S.
☐ Future Teachers Association
☐ Green Council
☐ History Society
☐ ICAN
☐ I.S.S.
☐ L.A.S.O.
☐ Magnum Opus
☐ MOCA
☐ Mosaic

☐ Muslim Student Association ☐ Republican Club
☐ N.A.A.C.P. ☐ Student Activities Board
☐ N.S.S.L.H.A. ☐ Student Government
☐ Oracle   Association
☐ P.E. Majors Club ☐ S.N.A.P.
☐ Physics Club ☐ V.I.P.
☐ PreLaw ☐ Young Actors, Designers
☐ Society   and Dancers of Adelphi
☐ Pride Alliance ☐ Other *(please specify)* _____
☐ Psychology Club _____

15. To the best of your knowledge, please describe what sort of records and related materials your club (or clubs) keeps and how and by whom they are stored.

    (Free text)

16. What online presence, if any, does your club have? *(Please select all that apply.)*

    ☐ Facebook
    ☐ Twitter
    ☐ Flickr
    ☐ Blog
    ☐ None
    ☐ Other *(please specify)* _____

*17. Are you a member of any University sports team?

    ☐ Yes, I am a member of a sports team
    ☐ No

16. Which of the following sports teams do you belong to? *(Please select all that apply.)*

☐ Baseball ☐ Soccer – Women's
☐ Basketball – Men's ☐ Softball – Women's
☐ Basketball – Women's ☐ Swimming
☐ Bowling – Women's ☐ Tennis – Men's
☐ Cross Country ☐ Tennis – Women's
☐ Field Hockey – Women's ☐ Track & Field – Men's
☐ Golf – Men's ☐ Volleyball – Women
☐ Lacrosse – Women's ☐ Other (please specify)_____
☐ Lacrosse – Men's _____
☐ Soccer – Men's

19. To the best of your knowledge, please describe what sort of records and related materials does your sports team (or teams) keeps and how and by whom are they are stored.

    (Free text)

20. What online presence, if any, does your team have? *(Please select all that apply.)*
    ☐ Facebook
    ☐ Twitter
    ☐ Flickr
    ☐ Blog
    ☐ None
    ☐ Other *(please specify)* _____

*21. Are you a member of any University sports team?
    ☐ Yes, I am a member of a Greek society
    ☐ No

22. Which of the following Greek societies do you belong to? *(Please select all that apply.)*

    ☐ Alpha Epsilon Phi   ☐ Phi Sigma Sigma
    ☐ Alpha Kappa Alpha   ☐ Pi Lamda Phi
    ☐ Delta Delta Delta   ☐ Rho Lamda
    ☐ Delta Gamma   ☐ Sigma Delta Tau
    ☐ Delta Sigma Pi   ☐ Sigma Lambda Upsilon
    ☐ Delta Sigma Theta   ☐ Swing Phi Swing
    ☐ Adelphi Hellenic Society   ☐ Thelta Delta Sigma
    ☐ InterGreek Council   ☐ United Greek & Fellowship
    ☐ Interfraternity Council   Council
    ☐ Kappa Sigma   ☐ Zeta Beta tau
    ☐ Order of Omega   ☐ Other (please specify)_____
    ☐ Phi Sigma Kappa   _____

23. To the best of your knowledge, please describe what sort of records and related materials your Greek society keeps and how and by whom they are stored.
        (Free text)

24. What online presence, if any, does your Greek society have? *(Please select all that apply.)*
    ☐ Facebook
    ☐ Twitter
    ☐ Flickr
    ☐ Blog
    ☐ None
    ☐ Other *(please specify)* _____

23. What sort of things do you think are important to have in University Archives to document the daily student life of the university?
        (Free text)

26. University Archives would like to collect more material that documents student life. How likely are you to donate material, either of your own or from any club or student organization, sports team, or Greek society you belong to? *(Please select one response for each.)*

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely	Does not apply to me
My own material					
From a club or student organization					
From a sports team					
From a Greek society					

27. What sort of procedures would make it more likely for you to donate this kind of material? If there is nothing that would make it more likely for you to donate material, please explain why.
    (Free text)
28. Which of the following do you, yourself, use on a regular basis? *(Please select all that apply.)*
    ☐ Facebook
    ☐ Twitter
    ☐ Flickr
    ☐ Email
    ☐ Cell/text
    ☐ Blog
    ☐ Chat
    ☐ None
    ☐ Other *(please specify)* _____
29. Which Adelphi campus or center do you primarily attend?
    ☐ Garden City
    ☐ Hauppauge
    ☐ Manhattan
    ☐ Hudson Valley
*30. What is your current matriculation status?
    ☐ Freshman
    ☐ Sophomore
    ☐ Junior
    ☐ Senior
    ☐ Graduate student

31. What is your major, or anticipated major?

☐ African American and Ethnic Studies
☐ Anthropology
☐ Art/Art History
☐ Biology
☐ Business
☐ Chemistry
☐ Communications
☐ Education
☐ English
☐ Environmental Studies
☐ History
☐ Languages and International Studies
☐ Mathematics and Computer Science
☐ Music
☐ Performing Arts
☐ Nursing
☐ Philosophy
☐ Physics
☐ Political Science
☐ Psychology
☐ Sociology
☐ Social Work
☐ Don't Know/Not Sure
☐ Other (please specify)_____
_____

32. What school are you attending for your graduate studies?

☐ School of Nursing
☐ School of Business
☐ School of Education
☐ School of Social Work
☐ Derner Institute

*30. What is your age?

☐ Under 18
☐ 18–22
☐ 23–25
☐ 26–29
☐ 30–39
☐ 40–49
☐ 50–59
☐ 60 and over

*30. What is your gender?

☐ Female
☐ Male

35. Thinking about your last semester, how frequently, if at all, did you come to the library to do research for any class assignments? If you are a freshman, please answer based on how frequently you think you will come to the library.

☐ Every day
☐ 2 or 3 times a week
☐ Once a week

☐ Every other week
☐ Once a month
☐ Less often than once a month
☐ Never

36. Still thinking about your last semester, how frequently, if at all, did you access the library's web site to do research for any class assignments when you were not in the library? If you are a freshman, please answer based on how frequently you think you will access the web site.
☐ Every day
☐ 2 or 3 times a week
☐ Once a week
☐ Every other week
☐ Once a month
☐ Less often than once a month
☐ Never

37. Still thinking about your last semester, how many instructional classes on library resources for a specific assignment have you attended that were conducted by a librarian? If you are a freshman, please answer based on how many instructional classes you anticipate you will attend.
☐ 0
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4 or more

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Your answers will help make the Adelphi University Archives and Special Collections more responsive to the needs of students like you. To thank you for taking this survey you can choose to participate in a drawing for a $50 Barnes & Noble card. You will have to give your email address so that we can notify you if you have won, but the responses you have just given will not be able to be linked to you in any way and will remain anonymous. Please click here if you wish to be in the lottery.

A p p e n d i x   B

Dear Student,

Your Adelphi University Library is conducting a survey about our University Archives and Special Collections and is asking for your participation. The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete and can be accessed by clicking on the link below or, if it does not connect, by cutting and pasting the link to your browser. The survey is anonymous, and all results will be analyzed and reported in the aggregate. We will have the survey available until October 10, 2011. Thanks in advance to all those able to participate.