

Archivist to Archivist: Employing an Ethics of Care Model with Interns and Student Workers

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Archivist to Archivist: Employing an Ethics of Care Model with Interns and Student Workers

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ABSTRACT

In their 2016 article, “From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives,” Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor posit four “affective responsibilities” for archives and archivists: “the relationship [s] between archivist and record creator, between archivist and record subject, between archivist and user, and between archivist and larger communities.” This paper posits an additional responsibility, between archivist and archivist. There is, as Caswell and Cifor put it, a “web of mutual responsibility” within the professional archives community that has become a central focal point in many discussions and, at the same time, continues to be ignored in maintenance of the status quo. Archivists place a great deal of focus on temporary and term positions, low pay in archival jobs, and unpaid internships, but little focus has been placed on the “ethics of care” that should be at the core of managerial relationships. In this paper, archival managers and current and former temporary workers and interns look at the state of how archival internships are managed. Here, the authors propose instilling the ideals of radical empathy into all aspects of these relationships.

Introduction

Ten years ago, Society of American Archivists (SAA) member Maureen Callahan tipped off a fierce conversation about the ethics of the state of hiring practices within the archives profession with her blog *You Ought to Be Ashamed*. “If we’re interested in being well-regarded in our larger institutions and in society,” she stated, “we have to do our best to nurture young professionals.”¹ Focused on the experience of interns

1. Maureen Callahan, “Why Should You Be Ashamed?,” *You Ought to Be Ashamed*, published September 24, 2010, accessed December 2020, <https://eatingouryoung.wordpress.com/2010/09/24/why-should-you-be-ashamed/>.

and newer professionals, the blog chronicled “TERRIBLE job ads (with commentary!), [and] job horror stories.” While the blog’s ultimate aim was to expose and find solutions for “structural injustices” in the archives labor market, it did so with a cry toward being treated with empathy by established members of the profession. “You were unemployed once too, man” was the blog’s famed, and pointed, subtitle.²

Three years after Callahan’s initial post, SAA President Jackie Dooley responded to the blog’s charges in her presidential address to the membership of SAA at the organization’s 2013 Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana. Since then, as the graduate students, interns, and early career professionals of the early 2010s have become seasoned professionals and leaders themselves, SAA and the archives profession as a whole, has made an effort toward rectifying some of the injustices pointed out by Callahan and the other contributors to her blog. The Students and New Archives Professionals (SNAP) Section of SAA was inaugurated to give newer members an established voice, best practices for internships as part of graduate education were formally adopted, many regional archives associations stopped posting job openings without salary information, and SAA and many regional organizations began declining postings of unpaid, not-for-credit internships.³

Many of these structural changes have been in line with a larger philosophical push toward integrating concepts of inclusivity and economic equality, as well as racial and social justice, into archival practice and theory. In 2016, Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor introduced their framework of a feminist-informed ethics of care as applied to the management of archival records documenting marginalized and victimized communities. In “From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives,” Caswell and Cifor describe a set of “affective responsibilities” for archives and archivists “marked by *radical empathy*, the ability to understand and appreciate another person’s feelings, experience, etc.”⁴ They challenge archivists to “scratch beneath the surface of the veneer of detached professionalism and start to think of record keepers and archivists less as sentinels of accountability...and more as caregivers, bound to records creators, subjects, users, and communities through a web of mutual responsibility.”⁵

Caswell and Cifor’s article focuses heavily on concepts of “inviting the ‘other’ into the archives” and their four affective relationships are external from the archive; this feminist framework is useful in the context of managing and working in internships and student archival positions. Caswell and Cifor posit four “affective responsibilities”

2. Maureen Callahan, “About,” *You Ought to Be Ashamed*, accessed December 2020, <https://eatingouryoung.wordpress.com/about/>.
3. “Petition to Form Students and New Archives Professionals (SNAP) Roundtable” (Society of American Archivists, January 2012), <http://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/012-III-H-2-RTPetition-SNAP.pdf>.
4. Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor, “From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives,” *Archivaria* 81 (Spring 2016): 24-25.
5. *Ibid*, 25.

for archives and archivists: “the relationship[s] between archivist and record creator, between archivist and record subject, between archivist and user, and between archivist and larger communities.”⁶ Building off of work by others such as Holly Smith and Rachel Mattson, this paper examines an additional responsibility, between archivist and archivist, with a focus on student employees and interns.⁷ There is, as Caswell and Cifor put it, a “web of mutual responsibility” within the professional archives community that has become a central focal point in many discussions and, at the same time, continues to be ignored in maintenance of the status quo. Archivists place a great deal of focus on temporary and term positions, low pay in archival jobs, and unpaid internships, but little focus has been placed on the “ethics of care” that should be at the core of supervisory relationships. In this paper, archival supervisors along with current and former temporary workers and interns look at how archival internships and student positions are managed, and propose instilling the ideals of radical empathy into all aspects of these relationships.

Authors’ Statement

This paper draws from the experiences of the five authors’ different backgrounds at different stages of their archival careers, though focused in academic institutions. Like most professionals, all of the authors entered the archives field after some combination of volunteer work, undergraduate student employment, internships during their graduate education, and working in temporary or term-limited positions. Alexandra Bisio (she/her) worked in several volunteer positions, a part-time paid position, and a part-time paid fellowship during her degree, before moving on to two unrelated temporary positions, finally securing a full-time permanent position outside of academia. After two years, she returned to academia in the managerial position she now holds. Steve Duckworth (he/him) worked in volunteer and part-time positions during his degree, leading to a one-year position after graduation, and eventually to his current managerial role. Helena Egbert (she/her) began as an intern, followed by becoming a student employee, and then a temporary staff member before moving into a full-time permanent tenure track position at a new institution. Gayle O’Hara (she/her) worked two part-time paid positions, one volunteer internship, one virtual internship for credit, and a temporary one-year position during and just after her MLIS program before obtaining a full-time permanent position. Emily Haskins (she/her) started as a volunteer and then moved into the internship position she presently occupies.

While each author of “Archivist to Archivist” has a unique socio-economic, educational, and professional background, they are, not unlike the majority of the

6. Ibid, 33.

7. Elvia Arroyo-Ramirez et al., “Radical Empathy in Archival Practice” (Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting, Portland, OR, July 28, 2017), <https://archives2017.sched.com/event/ABGy/301-radical-empathy-in-archival-practice>.

library and archives professionals, white and benefit from a professional culture and society that privileges and rewards “whiteness.”⁸ They work at predominantly white institutions that “can and often do support dominant systems to the exclusion of others.”⁹ Their experiences must be viewed through this palpable lens of white privilege.

Throughout this article different phrases are used to describe students and other early learners in the archives profession. Interns are temporary employees whose primary mission is to learn about the field through the work they do. Student employees refer to graduate students interested in pursuing a career in the archives field. Work described in this paper is focused on these types of pre-professional positions, or the initial years of early career professional experience. The authors focus on the experiences and management of interns and student employees, though the recommendations can apply to any early career position in the archives field. However, this paper is not focused on the entire breadth of “early career” experience, a phrase which often encompasses the first five or more years of an archivist’s professional career.

Literature Review

While this review of relevant literature focuses on articles that fit within the main scope of this paper, there is a need to highlight the myriad related issues that often arise when looking at student positions and those of early career professionals. Issues around temporary employment in the field have been examined by many authors before and will not be specifically commented on in this article, though many temporary positions could benefit from the ideals advocated for in the following text. It bears mentioning, however, that these practices hinder diversity in the profession and continue to push people away from or entirely out of the archives field.

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, shows that none of these professional problems stand in isolation.¹⁰ A long history of institutionalized racism has led directly to the overwhelmingly white profession we find ourselves in today. European and colonialist ideals work to sustain that white supremacist structure. The existence of temporary positions, low pay, a homogenous profession, elevated barriers

8. April Hathcock, “White Librarianship in Blackface: Diversity Initiatives in LIS,” In *the Library with the Lead Pipe*, published October 7, 2015, accessed December 2020, <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/lis-diversity/>.
9. Ellen Engseth, “Cultural Competency: A Framework for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Archival Profession in the United States,” *The American Archivist* 81, no. 2 (September 2018): 461, <https://meridian.allenpress.com/american-archivist/article-abstract/81/2/460/12340/Cultural-Competency-A-Framework-for-Equity>.
10. Kimberle Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1, <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8/>.

to entry, and lack of representation within the archival record all stem from and continue to support that structure while also working to keep other marginalized groups at bay. This article looks at one way in which student mentors and supervisors can start to break down some of those structures in their daily tasks and interactions to support advancement of students from all backgrounds. By employing an ethics of care, by showing empathy in a setting where it comes off as radical even when it should be an accepted norm, we can all work toward positive change.

Volunteer Work

Writing in 1990, David Carmichael looked at the use of volunteers in archives. While not focused on students aiming for a career in the field, he made some points that are valid to this paper. Carmichael focused on aspects such as determining the fit between the work and the volunteer, clearly defining expectations, orienting volunteers to the entire organization—not just their specific tasks—and training them well in the tasks they are asked to perform. However, overall, he was less concerned with the development of a future archives professional and more motivated by creating mutually beneficial relationships to fulfill specific needs.¹¹

Similarly, SAA's "Best Practices for Volunteers in Archives" calls for little more than providing volunteers with "adequate training and supervision" and "access to a designated staff member for questions," along with the vague recommendation that "organizations should strive to give volunteers a satisfying experience."¹² These guidelines make a clear distinction between the educational and mentorship structure of an internship and the civic or charitable service supplied by volunteers. Unfortunately, in real-world situations, this distinction is not always so clear, and the need for experience and the drive of vocational awe can lead inexperienced archival professionals into unsupportive and disadvantageous situations.¹³

Internships

No article about managing internships and student employees would be complete without looking at the guidelines supplied by the Society of American Archivists. Their "Best Practices for Internships as a Component of Graduate Archival Education," published in 2014, attempts to construct a framework for successful training opportunities for archives students. While admirable, this "set of suggested

11. David W. Carmichael, "Involving Volunteers in Archives," *Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference*, Technical Leaflet Series, no. 6 (1990), https://www.marac.info/assets/documents/marac_technical_leaflet_6.pdf.
12. Society of American Archivists, "Best Practices for Volunteers in Archives," published November 2018, accessed December 2020, <https://www2.archivists.org/standards/best-practices-for-volunteers-in-archives>.
13. Fobazi Ettarh, "Vocational Awe and Librarianship: The Lies We Tell Ourselves," *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*, published January 10, 2018, accessed December 2020, <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2018/vocational-awe/>.

guidelines for graduate students, archival educators, and archivists serving as intern supervisors” does not go far enough in advocating for truly supportive and beneficial experiences for both students and supervisors alike. The guidelines advocate for paid positions and stipulate that interns should “be oriented to institutional operations,” but go no further in any sort of empathic way to advocate for support structures and mechanisms. They instead focus on agreements and communications between participants, as well as the desired quantifiable outputs of the intern’s labor.¹⁴

Elizabeth Surlles and Adriana Cuervo examined a fellowship at the Institute of Jazz Studies in 2014. Their fellowship assists professional development, specifically honing in on diversity in the profession—both increasing it and cultivating it. Their fellowship is just two weeks long and likely cannot incorporate the full spectrum of empathic perspectives advocated for here, but they do work to “create meaningful, rich, and useful training opportunities while fostering social responsibility and diversifying the archives profession.”¹⁵ They also include career development and networking opportunities, and regularly assess their program to highlight areas for improvement.¹⁶

In 2019, Maggie Gallup Kopp focused more on designing internships around learning goals, rather than around projects. Using pedagogical practices, she shaped internship experiences to provide a variety of responsibilities for students in order to teach skills needed in the profession, which also happen to be skills that benefit students even if they do not aim to be professional archivists. Pedagogical practices are often more empathic than standard supervisory practices. Kopp states that “it can be tempting to design internships that revolve around project-based tasks or rote work rather than the types of learning that contribute to students’ overall educational experience,” but “a focus on ‘intentional learning shaped by experiential pedagogy’ is key to building a strong internship program.”¹⁷ Kopp also writes that, according to a report of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, internships were “shown to increase students’ academic performance and intellectual and personal development” through “high-impact practices” that “1) are effortful; 2) help students build substantive relationships; 3) help students engage across differences; 4) provide students with rich feedback; 5) help students apply and test what they are learning in

14. Society of American Archivists, “Best Practices for Internships as a Component of Graduate Archival Education,” published January 2014, accessed December 2020, <https://www2.archivists.org/standards/best-practices-for-internships-as-a-component-of-graduate-archival-education>.

15. Elizabeth Surlles and Adriana P. Cuervo, “The Jazz Archives Fellowship: Professional Development and Diversity at the Institute of Jazz Studies,” *Journal of Archival Organization* 12, no. 3-4 (2015): 230, <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/49183/>.

16. *Ibid*, 239.

17. Maggie Gallup Kopp, “Internships in Special Collections: Experiential Pedagogy, Intentional Design, and High-Impact Practice,” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 20, no. 1 (2019): 13, <https://rbm.acrl.org/index.php/rbm/article/view/17769>.

new situations; and 6) provide opportunities for students to reflect on the people they are becoming.”¹⁸ In this way, whether discussing internships specifically designed to cultivate future professional archivists or student employment positions focused on completing necessary tasks, there is no downside to employing this pedagogical and empathic mindset.

Holly Smith, speaking in 2018 at the Society of North Carolina Archivists Annual Meeting, took the idea of radical empathy and turned it inward to the relationships archivists have among ourselves. She states that “archivists must consider how we empathize and communicate with each other. Our multi-layered and intersectional identities can be just as complex as the records we steward and we must be cognizant of how we support, challenge, and advocate for each other professionally and personally.”¹⁹ The work of Smith and other colleagues, including Shannon O’Neil, Kelly Wooten, Dinah Handel, Giordana Mecagni, Rachel Mattson, Jasmine Jones, Elvia Arroyo-Ramirez, and Molly Brown, was discussed in a presentation at the 2017 SAA Annual Meeting²⁰ and further led to a special edition of the *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* focusing on radical empathy in all areas of archival practice.²¹

Similar to the thesis of “Archivist to Archivist”, Kayo Denda and Jennifer Hunter advocated for a team-based approach to student employment based on feminist pedagogy that allows student employees at any level, including undergraduates, to gain a more robust and well-rounded experience, whether or not they are aiming for a career in library science professions. They “call for librarians to approach their supervisor roles from the rich tradition of mentoring” rather than employing the traditional “hierarchical relationship where the supervisor shares [their] experience and wisdom while the novice intern absorbs the knowledge.”²² To them, these supervisory roles are “not about clock-watching and task assigning, but rather about facilitation of growth and expansion of personal learning and professional networks.”²³

18. Kopp, “Internships in Special Collections,” 16.

19. Holly A. Smith, “Radical Love: Documenting Underrepresented Communities Using Principles of Radical Empathy,” *Journal for the Society of North Carolina Archivists* 15 (2018): 5, http://www.ncarchivists.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/jsnca_vol15_smith.pdf.

20. Arroyo-Ramirez et al., “Radical Empathy in Archival Practice.”

21. Elvia Arroyo-Ramirez et al., eds., “Radical Empathy in Archival Practice (Special Issue),” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 3, no. 2020, <https://journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/issue/view/10>.

22. Kayo Denda and Jennifer Hunter, “Building 21st Century Skills and Creating Communities: A Team-Based Engagement Framework for Student Employment in Academic Libraries,” *Journal of Library Administration* 56, no. 3 (2016): 254, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01930826.2015.1121662>.

23. Ibid, 255.

New Archivists and the Job Market

Max Eckard, Ashley Rosener, and Lindy Scripps-Hoekstra examined various factors that improved the chances of finding an academic library job. Having experience in an academic library was, of course, high on the list, but it also included less frequently mentioned factors, such as having experience with committee work. The authors also discuss how the idea of “fit” plays a part in the process, where “the literature suggests that a candidate's personality and potential fit with a library is a large consideration” in the hiring process.²⁴ Fit can be a barrier on many levels though. For one, it is not a concept that most Library and Information Science (LIS) programs include in their curriculum, so it may not occur as a factor to most job seekers. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, this practice can effectively work to maintain the status quo within the profession and hinder efforts to diversify the field. Supervisors who focus on hiring candidates they assume will fit the organizational culture will quite likely overlook candidates with more diverse backgrounds and different professional approaches. The article briefly talks about how the findings can inform LIS programs and supervisors in preparing graduates for the job search, but states that “students are ultimately responsible for preparing themselves for a job search.”²⁵

In her writings, April Hathcock highlights how the profession's very efforts to recruit underrepresented students and early career professionals have failed in many instances. “Our diversity programs do not work because they are themselves coded to promote whiteness as the norm in the profession,” she writes, “and unduly burden those individuals they are most intended to help.”²⁶ Similarly, Eira Tansey has demonstrated how SAA leadership continues to inadequately address, or even undermine, the needs and successes of early career, precarious, and underrepresented archivists. For many years, Tansey has stressed the importance of acting with intention when dealing with issues related to equity and mentorship, and that fostering an equitable environment that nurtures students and new professionals cannot be passed off as a given in a profession that has often ignored the needs of the young and marginalized.²⁷

Donna Zufan Pontau and M. Cecilia Rothschild published a reflection on temporary library work experiences in 1986 where they identified four core areas where problems arise that negatively affect the employees: orientation, supervision,

24. Max Eckard, Ashley Rosener, and Lindy Scripps-Hoekstra, “Factors That Increase the Probability of a Successful Academic Library Job Search,” *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 40, no. 2 (March 2014): 111, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0099133314000123?via%3Dihub>.

25. Ibid.

26. Hathcock, “White Librarianship in Blackface.”

27. Eira Tansey, “Crumbs for Our Young,” published February 13, 2020, accessed December 2020, <http://eiratansey.com/2020/02/13/crumbs-for-our-young/>.

acceptance and integration, and utilization. They highlight that temporary workers are often rushed through orientation, offered insufficient supervision, struggle with acceptance and integration, and have skills that are underutilized, all due to the limited nature of their employment.²⁸ These problem areas arise in student positions as well and should be made a focal point for all supervisors and mentors. It also bears mentioning that their article is currently 34 years old and addresses the problem of temporary employment—a problem still central to the library and archives professions and one that continues to inhibit advancing diversity and inclusion in the field.

Findings in the 2018 *Collective Responsibility* white paper, while focused overall on precarious and temporary employment practices, speak to the need for radical empathy in education and management. Two major themes in their findings are a “lack of attention to the professional or personal futures of workers” and “workers’ dependence on direct supervisors for support.”²⁹ To this second point, the report states that “the quality of a worker’s experience often depends entirely on the efforts of a supportive supervisor who holds power and a stable position at the organization. Workers suffer without a mentor or advocate... However, such supervisors and projects appear uncommon.”³⁰ It is this issue of chance that is so worrying in the area of archival internships and training opportunities. Caring and supportive supervisors exist, but are not something that can be counted upon. A more thorough incorporation of an ethics of care mindset could address these concerns. Other findings of the report support the need for socialization and orientation within such positions.³¹ In summation, participants in the forum called for a series of elements for a better future, including “a single, supportive boss who will share usable information and advice and be an advocate for workers;” “orientation to institutional politics, strategies, and unwritten rules;” “honest two-way communication about expectations;” and “agency and creativity: the ability to explore problems and look for solutions, even if they don’t work out, and shape one’s own work.”³²

Radical Empathy in Experiential Learning

Library and Information Science (LIS) programs specializing in archival studies or management often make internships a requirement for their graduates. Indeed, the

28. Donna Zufan Pontau and M. Cecilia Rothschild, “T Is for Temporary,” *College & Research Libraries* 47, no. 2 (1986): 150-55, <https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/view/14193>.

29. Sandy Rodriguez et al., “Collective Responsibility: Seeking Equity for Contingent Labor in Libraries, Archives, and Museums” (IMLS LG-73-18-0236-18, 2019), 4, accessed December 2020, <https://osf.io/afghz/>.

30. *Ibid.*, 17.

31. *Ibid.*, 18.

32. *Ibid.*, 25.

Society of American Archivists' "Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Education" states in the introduction to its section on curriculum that all archives-focused graduate programs should require "practical experience such as a practicum or internship."³³ While most in the profession agree that the principles and theories taught in LIS programs are an important basis on which to build a shared understanding of practice and values, actual archival work tends to be best learned through practical application. The writings reviewed above highlight the need for a more compassionate approach to gaining this practical knowledge and in this article, the authors will demonstrate an approach employing "radical empathy" that incorporates thorough training along with a concerted focus on building community and trust, and supporting students as they begin to enter the profession.

Care in Education and Training

Interns and other LIS students begin positions with a variety of experiences and diverse educational backgrounds. Despite this, it is not uncommon for supervisors of internships and other student positions, often overburdened with unrelated job duties, to casually neglect basic training that students may lack or assume that a student was previously instructed in a way that is similar to their own. Training varies widely for pre-professional archivists, experientially and theoretically, and not all pre-professional archivists come to the archive through an LIS program. During training, it is important for supervisors to ask questions, employ active listening, and demonstrate patience in order to begin building rapport.

It is an open secret in the world of understaffed archives and special collections libraries that the educational experiences offered to both LIS and undergraduate students sometimes fall short of advertised learning outcomes. It is incredibly tempting for overworked supervisors in archival repositories to simply "design internships that revolve around project-based tasks or rote work rather than the types of learning that contribute to students' overall educational experience."³⁴ This tendency often makes internships look "more like unpaid work study programs than learning experiences [...] the internship program could perhaps be construed as using unpaid interns to displace employees – a questionable practice from both an ethical and professional standpoint."³⁵ The situation is not only a violation of SAA's best practices for graduate internships, but a fundamental betrayal of an internship supervisor's duty of care as a mentor to new members of the profession.

Similarly, literature surrounding temporary employees in archives and other cultural heritage professions clearly shows that the most important components to short term employee success are orientation, training, and supportive supervision

33. Society of American Archivists, "Best Practices for Internships."

34. Kopp, "Internships in Special Collections," 13.

35. *Ibid*, 14.

beyond the initial hiring period. To reiterate the findings of the *Collective Responsibility* whitepaper, all temporary workers in cultural heritage should be able to expect supervisors who are supportive and will “share usable information and advice,” as well as foster “honest two-way communication about expectations.”³⁶ In addition, much like professional temporary workers, interns and students (pre-professional, temporary workers) should be treated as integral parts of the archives staff who have the ability to make substantive intellectual and creative contributions to the work of the institution. These interns and students benefit from a commitment to not only mentorship, but comradeship, from their supervisors.³⁷

It is imperative for supervisors not to assume a new intern’s knowledge based on the school they attend or the program in which they are enrolled, but instead work to assess each student or intern’s familiarity with archival theory and practice before moving on to more independent practical applications, such as processing collections. Indeed, it is often necessary for supervisors to establish a baseline of knowledge through readings not covered in formal classes, and “crash course” pre-professional employees through local practice. Though assigning interns to read for a significant amount of time at the start of their term may not be ideal for the work that needs to be accomplished, this early time spent on building a strong foundation will pay off later in time, saved from misunderstandings and mistakes that result in sub-par work that may need to be corrected.

Alongside onsite practical training materials, supervisors should include articles that focus on the basics rather than those that delve deeply into theory, but make sure to choose works that represent diverse voices and views.³⁸ While archives workers should all know about Sir Hilary Jenkinson, reading his manual cover-to-cover provides little for today’s budding archivists. Similarly, avoiding the ideas of bias and social justice within archival work would be a disservice to anyone coming into the profession. For example, when teaching a student about appraisal, something like Terry Cook’s “What is Past is Prologue” can provide a great introduction to various theories and practices, but the work of Michelle Caswell on feminist standpoint appraisal should also be included.³⁹

36. Rodriguez et al., “Collective Responsibility,” 25.

37. Ibid, 26.

38. As an example, explore and utilize the many resources provided by Archives For Black Lives in Philadelphia (<https://archivesforblacklives.wordpress.com>) or articles from the Critical Archival Studies special edition of the *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* (<https://journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/issue/view/3>).

39. Terry Cook, “What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 43 (1997): 17–63, <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/12175>; Michelle Caswell, “Dusting for Fingerprints: Introducing Feminist Standpoint Appraisal,” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 3 (2020): 36, <https://journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/article/view/113>.

Interns should be instructed to critically examine each collection on its own contents and merits and devise the most appropriate plan rather than sticking to a rote doctrine employed for all collections. While teaching core archival theory, such as provenance and original order, appraisal methods, and the ideas underpinning arrangement and description, supervisors should also make the effort to teach the practical application of those theories. Original order is a fairly simple idea, but in reality, is almost never as clear as theory describes. Supervisors should take time to note the patriarchal and colonial nature of the idea of provenance.⁴⁰ Again, it is compelling in theory, especially when looking through a social justice lens, however it may not apply in all situations. This idea regarding fostering critical analysis rather than prioritizing routine performance of tasks can also easily apply to physical processing. Collections in archives do not usually benefit from a one-size-fits-all approach. Flexibility in description and technique should be used in all processing projects.

Teaching students critical examination skills can help them not only devise a processing plan that is most appropriate to the collection in front of them, but also practice developing adaptable approaches to processing that will better prepare them for the job market. Factoring in the student's viewpoint into planning can also widen the perspective on archival processing projects. Archivists repeatedly discuss the ways finding aids and other archival practices mainly serve those in the profession rather than archives users, and then iteratively train new archivists to repeat the same mistakes. Student archivists often come in with fresh eyes to see problems in archival practice, but also have the benefit of knowing some theory. Without the burden of tradition, they can envision new ways to approach problems. Embracing new professionals' perspectives can inspire better professional practices.

Educating interns is paramount, and so is making easily accessible documentation of that teaching. Saving robust documentation on archival standards and the application of best practices for that institution will support the management of students' education, and save supervisors from having to repeat themselves. Training materials can also be shared with other institutions for their own adaptation. A thorough processing manual is recommended, such as the one developed by Duckworth at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU).⁴¹ This resource, itself based on a guide developed by the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries' Hidden Collections project, explains the procedures of

40. Jarrett M. Drake, "RadTech Meets RadArch: Towards A New Principle for Archives and Archival Description," *Medium*, published April 6, 2016, accessed December 2020, <https://medium.com/on-archivy/radtech-meets-radarch-towards-a-new-principle-for-archives-and-archival-description-568f133e4325>.

41. Steve Duckworth, "Archival Processing: Introduction," Oregon Health & Science University, accessed December 2020, <http://libguides.ohsu.edu/archivalprocessing>.

archival processing in a step-by-step manner and has proven useful for archives workers at other institutions as well.⁴²

Fostering Community and Trust

Caswell and Cifor's notion regarding ethics of care in archives rests on the mandate that archival theory and practice shift its ethical center from the service and protection of individuals and individual rights to one focused on responsibility for communities. The authors demonstrate the ethics of care turned outward toward records creators, subjects, and users; that archivists, particularly archivists in positions of power like supervisors, look inward and strive to create spaces in their own library communities that are informed by radical empathy.

The SAA "Best Practices for Internships as a Component for Graduate Archival Education" articulates the explicit goal of an internship experience in a particularly transactional way, specifically as "designed so that a student can later refer to [their] discreet role and accomplishment when applying for employment."⁴³ For an internship to be of value to the student and not just the hosting institution (that is, for it not to be purely exploitative), graduate students should leave with something tangible to show potential employers beyond a line on a resume. This, however, is the very least a supervisor can offer to an intern. An internship should also be the time in a student's career in which they are able to get a feel for the type of environment in which they are likely to work and make connections with other interns and the library professionals that will soon become colleagues.

Supervisors have a unique responsibility in how they shape the work environment of their archival interns. The desire to give interns and student workers a sense of community may seem well-meaning, if superfluous, to some, but, as was shown earlier, studies into temporary work in libraries suggest that this emotional work on the part of supervisors is necessary for even short-term workers to feel that they, and their contributions, are of value. Like the temporary library employees Pontau and Rothschild described as needing "acceptance and integration" to thrive, interns and student workers may only be with the archive for a short period of time, but still require attention and belonging to be successful.⁴⁴ Supervisors who promote the growth of community as part of the internship experience not only give graduate interns and student workers a valuable, realistic experience of the expectations inherent to library work, but also bolster the professional confidence of new archivists.

42. Holly Mengel and Courtney Smerz, "Surveying and Minimal Processing Manual: Hidden Collections Processing Project," 2012, 57, http://clir.pacscl.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/Survey_and_Processing-Manual.pdf.

43. Society of American Archivists, "Best Practices for Internships."

44. Pontau and Rothschild, "T Is for Temporary."

In the Processing Unit of the University of Oregon (UO) Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA), it has been common practice to maintain a staff of multiple, long-term (an academic year or longer) graduate interns working alongside early career processing archivists, all under Alexandro Bisio's close supervision. Over the past three years, this team of students has become an interdependent cohort. While Bisio does the formal training of support staff and interns, and is available to answer any questions that arise during the work day, students and early career staff are highly encouraged to first try to solve any problems together. Students and staff are primarily encouraged to come to their supervisor only for confirmation of their solutions. Encouraging collaborative problem solving allows students to share their projects with each other, build trust in their knowledge and ability, and come up with novel approaches to archival issues that may have eluded even their supervisor. Getting students used to this type of approach early has been particularly helpful when processing archivists and interns have been tasked with working on team processing projects, where a large collection is broken into discrete sections and processed by several people in tandem. At UO, the Ken Kesey and Ursula K. Le Guin papers were both processed using this method.

A comprehensive orientation of the different major areas of work in archives can be very beneficial. Emily Haskins's initial introduction was limited due to being a volunteer while Gayle O'Hara received multiple orientations to both the work and departments by her various employers, some more thorough than others. Each of the authors of this paper found their most valuable orientation experiences were with supervisors who conveyed a desire to provide a useful experience in libraries and archives; following orientation, these supervisors remained available for questions. In addition, supervisors that provided constructive feedback and reinforcement that the interns were valued as part of the team were instrumental in socialization to the profession and integration into the department.

Showing interns and student workers how their work fits into the bigger picture of the department they work in can give deeper value to the work they do. While they may not work with every member of the department, all permanent employees should view interns and student workers as critical members of the team. Some situations may call for more inventive solutions to issues of socialization and integration. In one of Steve Duckworth's earliest positions, a team of student archives processors was spread across multiple physical sites so the project supervisor regularly scheduled social gatherings to bring the processing team together and build stronger connections between the members—and on paid time, too.

Supervisors can also improve the internship experience by allowing participants to explore various avenues of archival and library work in which they may be interested beyond what was originally assigned. Doing so not only gives interns additional skill sets to display on a resume, but also allows them to build relationships that will continue to be of value to them as they move forward in their careers. In addition to working in the processing unit, graduate processing assistants in UO SCUA are integrated into various functions of the department beyond

completing processing projects. From assisting with the physical packing of new acquisitions, serving on the reference desk for a limited number of hours, or collaborating with curators on exhibits, they are given opportunities to observe the full life-cycle of an archival resource. Bisio has also attempted to connect interns with librarians in other departments, including Digital Scholarship Services (DSS) and general cataloging, allowing them to explore library work outside of the archives. Haskins is a direct beneficiary of this practice. In addition to her work as a processing assistant in UO SCUA, she assisted DSS with metadata work and subsequently joined the team of the Oregon Digital Newspaper Project. These opportunities have allowed Haskins to build relationships with professionals outside of UO SCUA and gain work experience beyond the field of archives. The ability to branch out and work with other departments and librarians has provided insights into the variety of opportunities available to Haskins as a young professional entering the field.

Similarly, Helena Egbert also found that she was uncertain of where she wanted to land in the profession and was grateful that, early on, her work at Oregon State University provided her with a wide range of experiences without having to specifically seek them out. She was then able to hone in on areas of particular interest, such as processing and reference work, and was given progressively more responsibility, enabling her to not only gain confidence as a professional but also as a part of a professional community. At OHSU, one student archives assistant in a processing role under Duckworth's supervision took on expanded duties with the library's Collections Department to develop standards and documentation for cataloging rare books and unique archival publications, and then worked his way through a backlog of more than 200 books. O'Hara was brought into department discussions regarding equity in description during her temporary digitization project position, although this was not a part of her job description, nor was it necessary to complete her project. Where decision-making could have simply trickled down to her and the project, she was incorporated as a colleague. Having this opportunity assisted her in developing a better understanding of nuanced issues in the field, which aided her in job interviews, and continues to be useful at her current institution.

By addressing students' interests outside of discrete processing projects, internship supervisors can give students the opportunity to connect with other types of information professionals, and provide them a better understanding of the potential interconnections so important to innovative library work. Indeed, some of these cross-departmental, professional relationships, forged during even a short-term internship, could become long-term professional collaborations as students move forward in their careers

Though archival processing can often be a solitary endeavor, library work frequently involves collaboration with other professionals as part of a larger department, library, or in performing service for local or national organizations. Indeed, Eckard, Rosener, and Scripps-Hoekstra's study noted that, among the many qualities preferred by potential employers, academic libraries are particularly interested in candidates that "have a 'service orientation, a predilection for

collaboration and cooperation [and] a penchant for participating in teams.”⁴⁵ Supervisors who promote community, collaboration, and partnerships as part of the internship experience accomplish several important objectives that are integral to the success of a student’s educational experience. It is beneficial to encourage student and intern participation in committees and departmental meetings and events. Beyond the, hopefully, lasting connections they will make with their peers and other professionals in the library, and the sense that the contributions they made to the institution were of value, they will develop firsthand experience of institutional committee structure, partake in service that can enhance their resumes, and gain an understanding of the types of behaviors that will be expected of them as they go forward in their careers.

The authors who are students and early career professionals have a number of experiences with supervisors where they felt effort was made not only to make them feel a part of their workplace community, but also a part of the professional community of librarians and archivists. Student professionals often do not have the background or context to know what questions to ask or how to approach becoming a part of the professional community. O’Hara, in switching from a career in social work, felt at a distinct disadvantage compared to others in her LIS program, many of whom were younger and were already working in the library and archives field. Learning the culture of a new profession is just as challenging and vital as learning best practices. Haskins, as a first-generation graduate student, notes it can be particularly difficult for first-generation students, and students who are completely new to the profession, to have a clear idea of career goals and their vision for an internship when starting a program. They may be more focused on balancing work and classes, on making a good impression, and on simply doing good work in their position.

Transitioning to view oneself as a professional and feeling part of a broader professional community does not come from learning the tasks or theories that form the backbone of the library and archives profession alone. Learning tasks and theories and having experiences in the field contribute to a feeling of professionalism and collegiality, but do not necessarily create a feeling of belonging or community. Much like how Caswell and Cifor noted that a shift from “individual rights” to a feminist ethics of care can deepen empathy and contribute to social justice, a shift in the fundamental view of the supervisor/supervisee relationship may build stronger community ties and contribute towards the profession-wide goal of becoming more inclusive.⁴⁶ Training a student archivist becomes not simply about teaching skills and providing a project for them to put on their resume, but about applying radical empathy in this context, and “orienting” the student or new employee to the broader community of professionals. It requires not only the desire to teach, but also the desire to foster inclusivity and address barriers on both micro and macro levels. Large

45. Eckard, Rosener, and Scripps-Hoekstra, “Factors That Increase the Probability,” 108.

46. Caswell and Cifor, “From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics,” 24.

issues within the profession that many archivists state they want to change—the lack of diversity, equity and inclusion, low wages, and the reliance on contingent labor—will no doubt remain static without applying radical empathy and a more in-depth exploration of what it means to have an affective responsibility towards students, early career employees, and each other.

Engrained within all of the above, but something that should be directly addressed is the idea of trust. Trust is an integral part of creating any successful relationship, so it should also be a main consideration in internships. Ideally supervisors will trust their interns and interns will trust their supervisors but interns also need to trust themselves. Self-trust is built over time as they learn and demonstrate growth, capacity, and accountability. That trust is built alongside the intern's trust in their supervisor. Some ways to focus this trust-building include proper education (as previously mentioned); taking a genuine interest in the goals and interests of student archivists and showing care in regards to those wants and needs; and supervisors owning their own shortcomings.

Egbert benefited from her supervisor being willing to discuss questions about projects, while providing the context of relevant theory. Her supervisor invested significant time educating her on many of the nuances in the practice and theory of working in the archives, particularly in processing. Both Egbert and her supervisor benefited from what grew to be a mentor-mentee relationship. Descriptive binders of best practice cannot be used to replace healthy and enriching professional relationships. They still maintain consistent contact as mentor and mentee even though Egbert now works at a different institution.

Duckworth has weekly meetings with each student employee he supervises where, in addition to current work projects, they discuss how classes are going, talk about personal interests, and generally get to know each other and build that relationship. This practice has continued virtually since the coming of COVID-19 along with adding weekly, informal department meetings where it seems the main topic of conversation is often recent Netflix offerings. This helps to replicate the relationships that used to grow through unplanned hallway run-ins and other spontaneous interactions.

Allowing time for students to learn and understand various perspectives on archival practice, and encouraging them to see the intricacies inherent in each archival decision, adds to building trust in that team. In this setup, the student can see that their supervisor is not solely focused on a certain task, but is committed to a total archival education and experience. Once the student is more confident in a particular area of focus in archives, supporting and nurturing that area is important.

Other aspects of building trust include getting to know someone and developing an understanding of who they are, where they come from, and where they are going; a rapport will develop and with this comes trust. To that end, supervisors are encouraged to take a genuine interest in the life and well-being of interns. Get to know them outside of their work functions, but also take an interest in their

professional goals and see if there is any way to support those goals. If someone is going through a rough time, give them flexibility in their duties or ask about other support they need. At the base of this is respect. Respect employees as one would respect a peer or colleague and it is likely they will return that respect.

No one has all of the answers, and sometimes an answer turns out to be wrong. Everyone makes mistakes, including interns, but often an intern's mistake is truly the fault of the supervisor for a shortcoming in training or guidance. When this happens, it is important for that growing respect and trust that supervisors own up to those shortcomings. Perhaps incorrect information was given, perhaps instructions were not clearly documented, perhaps the work environment did not encourage open communication. There are any number of possibilities here. The important part is that the supervisor takes ownership of the breakdown and avoids placing blame on the student who is, after all, there to learn.

Easing the Transition to the Job Market

Enacting a professional ethics based on care and empathy rather than transactional individualism, archivists should help their less experienced colleagues prepare for what is often one of the most emotionally difficult times in their careers: the job search.

As has become painfully obvious over the last decade, the job market for recent LIS graduates, especially those seeking permanent academic positions, has become incredibly competitive. As Eckard, Rosener, and Scripps-Hoekstra noted in their study, "the academic library job market for recent LIS graduates is competitive, and for those lacking significant practical experience, it is a 'potentially insurmountable challenge.'"⁴⁷ Anyone facing the challenge of a job search, particularly when said search has been described in professional literature as "potentially insurmountable," should be given as much emotional and professional support as possible from those who have experience with the process and have secured coveted permanent positions.

Students and new professionals are often bombarded with a tidal wave of well-meaning anecdotal advice about the job market.⁴⁸ Yet, one of the most important things students facing the job market can do is make themselves aware of the rigors of academic searches. Supervisors can help with this endeavor in a number of ways. At the beginning of their employment, Bisio's graduate student interns at UO SCUA meet with her for an informal interview where questions mirror those used for many entry-level professional jobs in Special Collections departments. Her students are also encouraged to go to the professional presentations given by candidates for faculty positions in the library. Occasionally, interns are allowed to sit in on group meetings with candidates and the Special Collections staff.

47. Eckard, Rosener, and Scripps-Hoekstra, "Factors That Increase the Probability," 108.

48. *Ibid.*, 107.

Some of the more obvious tasks supervisors can do include forwarding job postings, reviewing resumes and cover letters, and assisting with interview presentations. Formatting a resume and describing skills in a way that quickly and efficiently highlights a person's qualifications is an art that needs to be taught. Having to give a presentation during a job interview is a task many new to the profession have never considered. Supervisors can help here by offering suggestions on how to compile an impactful and effective presentation. Having an interview that lasts an entire day—sometimes two—is also a novel idea. Giving interns an understanding of how these marathon interviews play out and offering some coping mechanisms can give them an edge over the competition.

Egbert, for example, benefited from practicing her job presentation in front of colleagues and receiving feedback. This improved both her presentation and her confidence. Egbert also benefited from having her supervisor read over the job posting and pose questions that they thought would be likely. O'Hara's supervisor reserved the Special Collections reading room and invited the entire department for a practice run of her presentation for an upcoming on-campus interview. Many of the Special Collections staff attended and provided constructive feedback to improve the presentation. This was not done on a lunch hour; staff took time away from their own responsibilities, and O'Hara was compensated for her time as she would have been for any job duty.

Supervisors with hiring experience should offer to review resumes and cover letters and offer feedback for students to improve the materials they are submitting for job applications. It is readily known that the vast majority of library science programs do not teach anything about finding a job; students are left to figure this out for themselves. Supervisors can help fill this gap and also direct students to other services, such as the SAA mentorship program or the Annual Meeting's career center, where they can receive more feedback, and even do a mock interview, which Egbert utilized. She also benefited from feedback on her cover letters from her colleagues while applying to jobs. Duckworth developed a workshop that reviews resumes, cover letters, and advice for interviews, which he gives for all of the student assistants in the OHSU library on a roughly annual basis.

In addition to these more obvious charges, supervisors of interns and graduate student workers have the ability to create space for meaningful professional development. Supervisors can encourage and allow their employees to work on the types of professional development activities that will increase their chances of success in the job market. Eckard, Rosener, and Scripps-Hoekstra's study points to five key factors that most affect the outcome of an academic job search: time of application, academic library experience, committee work, conference attendance, and authoring or co-authoring a publication.⁴⁹ Supervisors can do something as simple as setting

49. Ibid., 110-11.

time as part of an internship or student's week for them to work on potential articles or presentations. It may even be desirable to require a presentation or publication as an expectation of the internship. Supervisors, who may themselves be working on scholarly publications and presentations, can invite their interns to assist and serve as co-authors. They can encourage student workers to present on grant-funded projects at regional and national meetings (and monetarily support their attendance at such events however possible). Duckworth's institution has not been able to specifically fund student archival assistants' attendance at professional meetings, but they have been able to maintain their regular hourly salary during the time they are attending the meeting. As more and more events moved to virtual platforms in 2020, this became even more feasible.

Graduate students in SCUA have had the opportunity to attend, with financial support from the department, both national and regional conferences, including ALA's Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, Society of American Archivists, and Northwest Archivists. In recent years, one student has presented at Northwest Archivists regarding their internship experience. The requirements of the Thomas Internship, an endowed internship awarded to different departments by the University of Oregon Libraries, requires that a student, upon completion of the internship, submit a reflection to a professional blog or other publication of their choice. With support from her supervisor, Egbert was awarded a "Student at Large" scholarship which financially supported her attendance to present at the Northwest Archivist Annual Conference with colleagues from University of Oregon and Rice University.

Supervisors can also serve as a support system during the job search. The trust supervisors build during internship experiences will support this dialog and allow interns to feel comfortable approaching supervisors with questions and concerns regarding the search. This can provide a supportive space for interns to test-run their interview and presentation skills. Both O'Hara and Egbert point to the role their supervisors played in their individual job searches and to each of them eventually being hired in their first positions out of graduate school. O'Hara noted the distinct differences she found in the job search and hiring process for the archive profession compared to her earlier career in social work where the process was not nearly as intense, or expected to take as long. In addition, with entry-level social work positions, one is not expected to have a wide-range of experience, that is something that is earned on-the-job. In contrast, particularly in academic libraries, many entry-level positions seem to expect myriad skills that very few internships actually provide. Haskins also noted surprise when introduced to the hiring process in archives when the department she interned for was filling an open position. The concepts of a job presentation and all-day interviews were completely new. This experience provided insight into what is involved in applying for positions in archives when one of her supervisors discussed the process with her and relayed what it entailed. Both Egbert and O'Hara expressed the impact supervisors had on their individual success and credit their supervisors with preparing them for what to expect and how to approach various aspects of the job search.

Conclusion

During the past two decades, the theory and practice of the archives profession has begun to actively address issues of inequality and injustice long ingrained in the work of documenting, preserving, and providing access to remnants of the past. More recently, seasoned archivists have been charged with turning their attention inward to reckon with the structural privileges, whether they be age, gender, race, or class, that often bar hopeful members of the profession from achieving success. Caswell and Cifor's feminist ethics of care framework and their notion of affective relationships is a useful tool for achieving both aims. This paper has been a reflection on the successes and difficulties of early career development guided by an inherent sense of empathy and an acknowledgement of the affective responsibility that exists between student and teacher, mentee and mentor, or intern and supervisor.

As this article is written, everyone is experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, which has necessitated a move to online settings in virtually all situations, cutting off many of the important aspects of the relationships outlined above. Supervisors, mentors, and teachers must ask themselves how the pandemic will impact current and future LIS students and their experiential professional preparation activities. Social distancing and virtual meetings bring the need to reconfigure orientation, integration, and professional support of incoming archivists to the foreground, bringing new creative challenges to these relationships and how work is accomplished, while ensuring rewarding experiences for interns. More importantly, the disparities in the impact of COVID-19 on already marginalized and underrepresented communities needs to be considered in education and recruitment.

The emotional labor performed by both mentor and mentee in a relationship informed by an ethics of care model has no direct benefit to the supervisor or the host institution. Instead, as authors Denda and Hunter perfectly state, with this type of work, supervisors facilitate learning "how to be" as a librarian [or archivist] "as opposed to simply what to do."⁵⁰ This ethic of care is employed to the direct benefit of the intern but in service to the larger profession and, in extension, to society as a whole. This contributes to the resiliency and sustainability of the profession and strengthens the community. In order for this to become the standard, rather than a student's fortunate encounter, the profession must commit to employing radical empathy with each other and embrace the affective responsibility of archivist to archivist.

50. Denda and Hunter, "Building 21st Century Skills and Creating Communities," 256.