*Academic Archives: Managing the Next Generation of College and University Archives,**Records, and Special Collections*. Aaron D. Purcell. Chicago: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2012.

In *Academic Archives: Managing the Next Generation of College and University Archives, Records, and Special Collections*, Aaron Purcell, Virginia Tech’s Director of Special Collections, assesses academic archives, which include special collections departments, records management programs, and institutional repositories. He writes, “Academic archivists have adapted to technological shifts and developed new ways of conceptualizing archives and managing records. Their role…as digital curators of campus information will only grow in the coming decades” (p. 245). A multifarious archive has required the profession to reevaluate the roles and skills of academic archivists as opportunities for education, training, and technology increase.

Purcell surveys the contemporary landscape of academic archives including career development, the symbiotic relationship between libraries and archives, special collections, archives program fundamentals, records management, collection development, managing collections, public and research services, digital archives, and emerging trends. The book is divided into three parts: the first section serves as an aperçu of the field; the second, more thetic, section explains how to build an archive program; and the final section expounds on the vocation’s future.

The author notes, “The standard tenets of modern academic librarianship—know your users and their needs, provide access to information, and use technology to best achieve your objectives—are also imperative for successful academic archivists” (p. 50). In recent years, the information commons movement, in which the library becomes a collaborative space for students, has shaped special collections departments and archives programs within libraries. Emphasis on research and unique holdings, such as rare books, manuscripts, archival collections, and official institutional records, has made archives more visited than ever before. Additionally, the emergence of Archives 2.0, an open, transparent, and user-centered approach to leading archives programs, has resulted in active reading rooms, outreach programs to students and faculty, masterful research services, and abundant online resources.

The book’s first chapter is the most useful to its core audience, those interested in becoming academic archivists. Purcell recommends pursuing an MLIS degree, even for those with a subject master’s degree, PhD, or a specialized archives concentration certificate, because the degree provides a solid foundation for those seeking work in an academic environment. He is candid about the profession’s limited advancement. “Without mid-level archivists moving up or moving on from their positions (which would most likely be reclassified and refilled as an entry-level position), there is a logjam for incoming archivists and an absence of new senior administrative archivists to lead programs” (p. 12). The transition of professional direction from one generation to the next is one of the biggest challenges for archivists faced with the realities of the job market.

*Academic Archives: Managing the Next Generation of College and University Archives, Records, and Special Collections* evaluates the current state of the vocation, offering insights into the dedication and leadership needed by rising professionals. Technological advances, new campus and library resources, born-digital collections, and collaborative partnerships await emerging academic archivists who wish to contribute to an understanding of the past and to help inform the future.

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