I. ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

The University Archives and West Florida History Center was established by the Library and University in 1966. Designed to support the research needs of the students and faculty, the department began acquiring, preserving, and making available information resources about the history of Florida’s first senior University as well as the Florida Panhandle.

Since then, the Archives has become the largest research collection in existence on the history and development of the Florida Panhandle and Gulf Coast region that were parts of the Spanish and British West Florida colonies. Its 1.5 million items date from 1420 to the present and are used by faculty and students in history, anthropology, biology, environmental studies, business, and related fields and by local and national researchers.

The University Archives collects and preserves publications, University records, photographs and other materials documenting the history of the University. The collections also include the papers of faculty and staff. Notable collections are the Eastern Airlines research files of Dr. Martha Saunders (former Dean of College of Arts and Sciences, presently President of the University of Southern Mississippi); the records of the Chamorro Family of Nicaragua and the Sandinista Movement and research files of Dr. Patricia Edmisten (Violeta Chamorro was elected the first president of Nicaragua in 1990 following the Nicaraguan revolution; her brother Edgar taught a semester class at UWF); the research files of Dr. Dallas Blanchard on the anti-abortion movement in Pensacola including the bombing of the clinics and later murder of a physician, as well as the ‘Cloud of Witnesses’ project of collecting reminiscences of Methodist ministers and churches of Alabama and Florida involved in supporting the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

During the past fiscal year, the University Archives web presence showed 23,800 hits by 6,213 visitors. Our online detailed catalog of holdings (Archon) showed 256,420 hits from over 9,000 visitors and users. From these figures and physical visits to the Archives, we can show that nearly 16,000 users utilized the department’s information resources. Interest is increasing as the University approaches its 50th anniversary in 2017.

II. WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

The collections total 4,354 linear feet and continue to grow. The University is expanding and this, in turn, increases the research materials necessary to preserve the core history of the campus.
UWF’s current vision statement (2008-2012) seeks to empower students with knowledge skills and opportunities to contribute responsibly and creatively to a complex world. Central to this complexity and creative empowerment is basic access privileges to information for research, project collaboration, and information literacy. Every college discipline requires the use of primary and secondary sources. It is critical that students have on-site access to these and that the University Archives be able to grow these resources through gifts of community leaders, businesses, organizations, and other sources.

**Thus a critical need is storage space for collections.** The collections total 4,354 linear feet and we have exhausted our storage capacity and any room for growth.

**A second basic need is access to collections.** It is not enough to judiciously select, preserve, and catalog the archives of the University. Our users demand access in other ways.

Since the 1980s, the University Archives and West Florida History Center has embraced technology to make our collections accessible and known to University students and researchers as well as researchers throughout the world.

At present we have several generations of computers to allow us to retrieve and evaluate data from various floppy disks (5 ¼, 3.5 SD, 3.5 DD) and compact disk media. As part of the PALMM initiative of the State University Library system, we have 21,000 photographic images available online, as well as around 100 books and publications from our collections.

Using the ARCHON catalog platform, we have the ability to catalog and store images as well as data about collections, and we are moving born digital media to that platform on an almost daily basis. Over the past few years, we have acquired equipment to enable us to convert photographs, documents, slides, audiotapes, and videotapes into digital files, and we steadily move these into the ARCHON catalog.

The escalating workload in this area led to the Department’s request of the Dean of Libraries to create a third full-time position (digital archivist) for the department. We understand this position has been approved and will be filled sometime in 2012.
III. WHY ARE THESE PROBLEMS?

Space

The archives collections total 4,354 linear feet with no room to grow. We’ve had to acquire additional space in a building three miles away that is both environmentally and physically insecure.

As the University Archives, it is our responsibility to document and keep pace with the expanding University and with the demands for information both now and in the future. We have an obligation to our students to offer onsite access to physical collections and insure their security and preservation. We have an obligation to grow our collections by acquiring new research resources and materials to support instruction and study.

*How do we meet these needs without growth space for the collections? How do we provide onsite access to students when collections are stored three miles away? How do we insure security and preservation of the collections when existing off-library facilities are deficient?*

Access Through Digitization

Some may argue that collection growth and storage is unnecessary in the age of digitization. In archives administration, preservation and digitization are two separate issues. Preservation involves all issues relative to maintaining the unique resources from shelving to environmental controls and from security to restoration. Digitization in the public mind has become synonymous with preservation. However, digitization is not a form of preservation, but a form of access. Archivists and librarians have shown that with proper storage equipment, environmental control, and security they can preserve archives over decades and centuries. This is not the case with digital files.

Because digital files require equipment (scanner, computer, storage media) and software (operating systems, digital platform software, system and scanner drivers), the files are dependent upon every element of these systems working with each other. A change in any part of these systems can render the digital files unreadable and irretrievable. The changes in computer systems over the past twenty years are replete with cases of lost digital files and collections due to changes in software, hardware, and storage. This has resulted in two issues: first, more attention is paid to the costs of migration of data across platforms (requires staff, constant upgrades, and funding); and second, that while digitization provides access to researchers, it is not an effective preservation initiative.
Digitization creates a number of problems in itself. Since demand fluctuates from user to user, it is difficult to determine what should be digitized. Records may be in different languages requiring translation and detailed description. Data storage requirements can easily exceed available capacity. Cataloging for access may require a software platform or digital asset management system.

While digitization is clearly a form of access, it will not solve our problem of the need for additional storage capacity for original records.

IV. HOW DO WE SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS

Space

We propose the purchase and installation of compact shelving to provide for storage and growth space for the University Archives. The total cost of the project is $615,000, including shelving, installation of a floor, adjustments of lighting and ductwork, moving the collections, and dismantling the present shelving.

As mentioned before the collections total 4,354 linear feet. The addition of compact shelving would provide 8,638 linear feet of storage or 100% increase in our capacity. This efficiency would allow us to centralize the collection, provide proper environmental and security controls, and permit growth for 20+ years.

The acquisition of the compact shelving will allow for more efficient storage and security of important primary materials and bring the collections together into one location. The additional expansion space will permit the Archives to continue its University and community missions of acquiring, preserving, and making available research information about the University of West Florida and region.

Access

With the collections consolidated, we intend to ambitiously expand our digitization efforts to provide access to researchers.

As previously mentioned, we will continue to use the ARCHON software and new staffing to expand our digitization efforts. ARCHON states that it is not a digital archives management system, and in truth, it is not, but for the present it does provide us an access and user platform for the digitized images created in the Department. ARCHON will be replaced sometime in the next two years by a massive upgrade (ArchivesSpace) that will combine ARCHON with the Archivist's Toolkit. At the same time, the State University Library system is looking to replace its digital platforms (presently Digitool) as well, so at present
we do not know what awaits, but we are confident that the digital files we are creating (.tiff and .jpg) will be viable in future short-term migration.

**Because of the ensuing evolution of the ARCHON platform and the state-level implementation of a new digitization portal, we do not have solutions to the platform issue at the present time. Because of this, it is even more imperative that we take steps to efficiently preserve the original records from which digitization is derived.**

In terms of our digitization program to provide access, the greatest demand from our users appears to be photographic images. The department holds over 100,000 University photographs with more arriving regularly. Only about 2% of the department’s photographs have been digitized and we must also contend with incoming born digital materials. For example, we are working with a University office planning to transfer 252GB of images. A test sample (1.08 GB) turned up 2,784 images. At the low end of estimation (10 image tiffs per GB time the 251GB), the total number of images could top 5,294. Each of these must be resized, identified, and cataloged into ARCHON. For the non-digital University photographs, these are negatives, which will require scanning and then research to identify the resulting positive images, and then cataloged into ARCHON.

Digital images are in demand for class projects (websites, PowerPoint presentations, etc.) historic preservation (images of buildings, streets, sites of archaeological studies), and history (celebrations, events, University 50th in 2017, etc.). Our priority projects in this area are:

1. **University of West Florida Photograph Collection (retrospective)**
   
   As we anticipate a demand for University photographs along the lines of celebration of the 50th anniversary in 2017, our top priority is the scanning, cataloging, and accessibility of these. (100,000 images). (8,000 hours)

2. **UWF Publications**
   
   We have microfilm of the Fountain; some of the catalogs; graduation pictures, and other film. We will explore using the new scanners to see if we can create images to place online for use.

3. **Malinowski Collection**

   West Florida photographs of Ray Malinowski cover all aspects of the region from 1960-2002; we have preliminary cataloging data, and these photographs are negatives, so they have to be scanned and converted. (50,000 images), (3,000 hours)