Spartan Archive:
An Electronic Records Archive at Michigan State University
NHPRC Project #RE-10025-10

CIC Quarterly Report, April 1, 2010–June 30, 2010

In late 2009, the Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections (UAHC) received a three-year, $251,079 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to develop policies and procedures to appraise, ingest, process, describe, and preserve institutional electronic records. The original grant proposal and supporting documents for the project, "Spartan Archive: An Electronic Records Archive at Michigan State University," may be found at http://www.archives.msu.edu/about/sap_project_documentation.php.

At the 2008 Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) records forum, members agreed to share models and lessons learned for better management of university electronic records and digital assets. In that spirit and as required in NHPRC's performance objectives for the Spartan Archive project, UAHC will share quarterly progress reports with the CIC and solicit feedback from our colleagues at other universities. This is the first of our quarterly progress reports.

The Project
During the three-year Spartan Archive project period, UAHC will use a proof-of-concept approach to build an archival solution for the long-term access and preservation of three large electronic records series produced by MSU's Registrar's Office: the full catalog of Academic Programs, the Description of Courses offered each semester, and the annual Student Directory. A public interface will also be developed later in the project and will provide access to electronic records transferred to the University Archives for permanent retention.

The Spartan Archive will be based on traditional archival principles in combination with the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model, a reference model that provides a framework for long-term digital preservation and access. For data management, the Integrated Rules-Oriented Data System (iRODS) distributed data grid system will be utilized. UAHC will collaborate with multiple units within MSU on the project. The grant includes funding for iRODS training from the Data Intensive Cyber Environments (DICE) Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the developer of iRODS.

One of the first steps in developing Spartan Archive is the implementation of a new collection management system. After some deliberation, UAHC has chosen Archivists' Toolkit as the replacement for the DOS-based MicroMARC software.

The Spartan Archive project is designed to run in 6 phases. UAHC started work on Phase 1 on April 1, 2010.

The Project Team
A core project team includes Cynthia Ghering, director of UAHC and project director; Lisa Schmidt, electronic records archivist and project manager; Ed Busch and Whitney Miller, archivists; Michael Babcock, information technologist from the Office of the Registrar; and Ajay Patel, information technologist from Administrative Information Services (AIS) and project

technical advisor. In addition, the grant funds the position of a project information technologist (PIT) within UAHC who will be responsible for technical development of the archive. A job posting will be released later this month.

Project Activities Undertaken
Of the project activities scheduled, the MSU Archives undertook the following during the reporting period:

- **Develop project task list**
  Patel drafted a project task list for each of the project phases based on a project workplan submitted to NHPRC. The project task list was reviewed by Ghering, Schmidt, Babcock, Busch, and Miller. Both the project task list and the workplan may be found at http://www.archives.msu.edu/about/sap_project_documentation.php.

- **Review Archivists' Toolkit and prepare usage/feature notes**
  Patel reviewed the Archivists' Toolkit archival management software and created a document describing its features, for use within UAHC. This document may be found at http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/ATv2u5-Introduction.pdf.

- **Finalize and post Project Information Technologist (PIT) position**
  Ghering finalized a job description for the Project Information Technologist (PIT) position. The position will be posted in mid-July, with an expected hiring date in early fall 2010.

- **Create project web pages**
  Schmidt created web pages for the project on the UAHC website, http://www.archives.msu.edu/about/spartan_archive.php. Project documentation, announcements, presentations, publications, and other information will be posted to the site on a regular basis.

Additional Project Activity
In addition to activities scheduled on the project task list, the following project-related developments occurred during the reporting period:

- Busch, Miller, and Ghering proposed revisions of all university general retention schedules. Ghering has circulated the proposed revisions across the university and met individually with administrative and academic units for feedback. The revisions are currently in the third draft and continue to be circulated to key university committees and senior administration.
- Ghering, Schmidt, Busch, and Miller participated in the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) annual meeting in Chicago, April 22-24. At a gathering of CIC-UAG members during the conference, Ghering presented the Spartan Archive project.
- Schmidt and Ghering drafted a press release announcing receipt of the grant for *MSU Weekly News*, an online news publication distributed to the MSU community. Expected publication: week of July 12. University Relations may make the release available on the newswire.
- Ghering submitted a proposal for a presentation on the Spartan Archive project to the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Research Forum in August.
- Ghering and Schmidt participated in the Digital Curation Curriculum (DigCCurr) Professional Institute at the University of North Carolina, May 16-21. Schmidt plans to examine tools and other resources introduced at the Institute as to their use in better executing project tasks. The

Institute also presented networking opportunities with colleagues working on similar projects. Participants designed 6-month plans that they will report on in January 2011.

- Schmidt was asked to write an article on Michigan State's electronic records program, with a focus on the Spartan Archive project, for the "Electronic Currents" column of the MAC newsletter, December 2010 issue. Ghering will co-author.
- Schmidt was invited to submit a proposal to present at the 2010 Best Practices Exchange in September. If accepted, the presentation entitled "A Tale of Two Michigan State University Digital Preservation Projects" will compare and contrast the Spartan Archive project with Schmidt's earlier NHPRC-funded H-Net e-mail list preservation project, particularly in the area of policy development.
- Ghering and Miller are conducting a records survey of MSU Technologies' new paper-sparse business workflow, in preparation for specific unit-level records retention schedules.
- Busch is accessioning electronic records from the MSU College of Human Medicine and College of Osteopathic Medicine, in preparation for transfer to the University Archives.

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