

Annual Assessment Report

Executive Summary

As the final step of the AES assessment process, each AES unit is required to submit an Executive Summary. The Executive Summary is a short document which provides an overview of the Unit, and the overall assessment process, highlights key findings and provides recommendation and next steps.

Unit name: LaGuardia and Wagner Archives

Assessment year: 2023 - 2024

Unit Mission

The LaGuardia and Wagner Archives was established in 1982 to collect, preserve, and make available primary materials documenting the social and political history of New York City, with an emphasis on the mayoralty and the borough of Queens. The Archives serves researchers, journalists, students, scholars, exhibit planners, and policy makers examining the history of Greater New York. The Archives also produces public programs exploring that history. Its website provides a web database to the collections, which include more than 100,000 digitized photos, and nearly 2.5 million digitized documents.

Assessment Results by Goal and Objectives

Goal 1:

Enrich student experiences at LaGuardia by helping them engage with and relate to the history of New York City. Build a broad and inclusive audience for the archives, its projects, and its collections within the college community.

Supporting Strategic Plan Goals:

Objectives	Method and Measure
1.1 - Introduce students to research methodologies and expose them to archival resources. Generate interest in historical materials and improve accessibility through collaboration with faculty and staff across different disciplines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The number of classes taught
1.2 - Promote and share student scholarship and foster community using archival materials. Encourage students to feel confident in their expertise as they relate to historical narratives of New York City and contribute their work and voices to our collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The number of students completing the Gardiner-Shenker program.

Overview of findings, analysis, recommendations and future initiatives

Results & analysis

Objective 1.1: 38 classes attended sessions at the archives, surpassing our targets. We brought in part time educators to help with the teaching load this year and were able to accommodate our target number of classes. We led a workshop during Opening Sessions to introduce more faculty to our offerings and resources. We sent out a survey at the end of Fall II semester asking for feedback from faculty who brought their classes. While only a few people responded to the survey, the feedback was positive.

Objective 1.2: 6 students (100% of those enrolled) completed research projects and all program assignments by designated due date, surpassing our targets. Even with fluctuating staffing and limited funding we achieved outstanding student results with deeply thoughtful research projects and presentations as well as work that will be added to the archives' collections. The final presentations were all done live on May 26th with dignitaries such as Council Members and former Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger. We also created an exhibit about Women in Government that we installed at City Hall next to where all the Council Members all meet. The exhibit was well-received and brought to the Council's attention by CM Amanda Farias from the podium. President Adams and students also came to talk to CMs about the exhibit and our project.

Recommendations and future initiatives

Objective 1.1: We will do outreach to all departments and participate in department meetings to discuss all the resources the archives has available. We will host a workshop during Opening Sessions to help bring more awareness to professors who might want to utilize the archives in their curricula.

Objective 1.2: We are continuing the program with a similar structure but with new faculty and with new disciplines involved. We are once again using a new funding source this year but will also be able to produce a high-quality publication from the last three years of the program which will showcase student work and help us illustrate our stellar work to the previous funders (the Gardiner Foundation).

Goal 2:

To develop a public history project that engages both the LaGuardia community and a broader audience of researchers and New Yorkers in general off of campus.

Supporting Strategic Plan Goal:

Objectives	Method and Measure
2.1 - To work with students to develop an online exhibit with educational curriculum based on archival collections. Teach students archival research and oral history interview methods. Build the archive collection with student photography and oral history interview transcripts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To launch the exhibit on the Archives website.
2.2 - To hold panel discussion open to the public about New York City history based on archival collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of panels and Number of people in attendance

Overview of findings, analysis, recommendations and future initiatives

Results & analysis

Objective 2.1: The exhibit featured oral history interviews, archival records, photographs, and educational curriculum. Students worked on all facets of the exhibit. The exhibit attracted extraordinary media attention, on the Brian Lehrer Show, CUNY TV, Gay City News, The Gay & Lesbian Review, and the Gotham Center Blog.

Objective 2.2: Four Panels were held: on Campus, at the Queer History Conference at Cal State Fullerton, the Roosevelt House at Hunter College, and the Haworth Showroom.

Recommendations and future initiatives

Objective 2.1: To continue to work with students to research and discuss archival sources and to conduct oral history interviews.

Objective 2.2: To continue to organize panels and talks to engage audiences off campus about our exhibits and to work with college marketing resources to promote them.

Goal 3:

Support and Service to Researchers from Outside the College Community.

Supporting Strategic Plan Goal:

Objectives	Method and Measure
3.1 - Continue to build Researcher traffic to the Archives' Website (Quantitative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Total Number of Pages that Unique Visitors are viewing
3.2 - Collaborate with the IT Staff to refine our new Website to optimize its search interface user-friendliness (Qualitative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">User Feedback Survey - Satisfaction data

Overview of findings, analysis, recommendations and future initiatives

Results & analysis

Objective 3.1: "Total Number of Pages that Unique Visitors Viewed" (either the same Visitors visiting more pages on the Website OR New visitors visiting pages on the website) increased. Following the imposition of Year 1 Activities and utilizing the Google Analytics metric as a measure of Archives' Website traffic, the Archives saw an increased flow of use when we compare the first six months of 2023 with the same period in 2024 (36,921 versus 48,973, respectively). This is an approximate 33% increase, surpassing our target of 20%. The inclusion of additional and augmented Google Tags on the Archives' Website had the desired effect of increasing User Traffic. Enhancement of the Website and additional resources launched during the period added to this improvement in traffic.

Objective 3.2: 73% of Users were Satisfied (47% very satisfied) with their research experience as they navigated through the Webdatabase Search Engine; roughly equivalent to our previous assessment, and inline with our target rating. The User Feedback survey (mounted in December 2022) yielded an additional of 41 Respondents since the previous 9 completed during the 2022-2023 Assessment year. Our effort to increase the Survey Sample Size has been achieved, in large part due to the addition of a pop-up link to the Survey on our Website. This augmented sample size should provide more reliable results. Respondents provided actionable information. Webdatabase speed and ease of use continue to be predominant expressions of user satisfaction, and we, essentially, achieved the specified Satisfaction Rating Target (i.e., 75%). Albeit ~ 20% of respondents said "nothing", or "not sure" when asked "If you were able to change ONE thing on the Archives' Webdatabase Search Engine, to make it work better/make it more useful or easier to use, what would that ONE thing be?", several key ideas were expressed, which paralleled comments made about any dissatisfaction with the use of the interface, including: the need for an ability "to sort the results by year or keyword"; "No finding aids. Entirely keyword search dependent"; "What is needed is ability to see what is in collections, not just do searches" and "Give information on how it is organized" "The inability to perform different searches and add them all to a marked list. "Allow for multiple searches"; "being able to open results in new tabs would be huge"; "Less pop up of survey. It distract and intervene every time I try to search something". These comments have lent us encouragement on concepts we had considered for improving the Webdatabase and provided new ideas. Actionable themes for this year would be to program an option to sort research results, provide a way for researchers to save their searches, work to mount FA narratives, and reduce the incidence of the Feedback Survey pop-up. Given an IT Staff shortage, we

would phase ½ of these ideas into the next AES cycle. Only 24% of respondents did not locate what they were searching for on the Archives' Webdatabase Search Engine, which is a positive finding (compared to 62.5% from the previous assessment).

Recommendations and future initiatives

Objective 3.1: Collaborate on a CUNY Archives' Initiative to mount Campus Collection records on the Archivespace Webdatabase and JSTOR Forum for Digital Assets. The eventual inclusion of the Archives' Collections on these two platforms will augment the user base, and work to increase researcher traffic to the Archives' Website.

Objective 3.2: We are continuing to , which should improve user satisfaction. We should continue to look for ways to streamline the ability of researchers to provide comments to Archives' Staff. Inclusion of a Browse option on the Webdatabase for the Formats for which database revisions - including addition of Subjects - have been completed (i.e., starting with Artifacts, and then Oral Histories) which will expose researchers to the breath of topics that can be researched. Reposition the "HelpTips" link on the Webdatabase Search interface, to make it more prominent. We should continue to work with the IT Staff on these improvement initiatives. Again, given an IT Staff shortage, we would phase ½ of these ideas into the next AES cycle.

Overall summary

- If you have assessment results from the previous year, please review and briefly describe and explain the ways the unit closed the loop on those results.
 - Goal 1: The number of classes who attended archives orientation sessions increased from 25 to 38 this year. The increase is due to several factors including:
 - We hired additional staff to teach the orientation sessions.
 - We hosted a workshop during opening session and attended department meetings to invite faculty to bring their classes to an archive orientation. During both sessions faculty learned how archival research can boost the quality of student research assignments.
 - We had another successful year due to our ability to invest time in working closely with students and faculty on archival research projects.
 - Goal 2: We closed the loop on our Public History goals by partnering with other institutions. As a result, we were able to cast a wider net and had successful panel discussions on timeless LGBTQ topics during Pride Month. Other ways in which we brought awareness to our Public History programs was by presenting at a history conference, discussing the LGBTQ exhibit with WNYC talk show host, and through newsletter articles about our online exhibit.
 - Goal 3: Traffic through our website increased due to our efforts to make our resources accessible online. We invested on improving our user-friendly website by hiring a part-time front-end developer for additional IT support, and by creating a user-satisfactory survey so we can receive feedback on the usability of our website.
- Overall future directions
 - We will continue to serve the LaGuardia Community and the public in person or online through our exhibits, curricula, public programs, and research services. Next year we hope to expand our reach by collaborating with new institutions, expanding our collections with new acquisitions, and by joining the other CUNY archives in Archive Space and JSTOR platforms.