

# Archives and History Office Program Review Committee// 2004 Report

The SLAC Archives and History Office (AHO) is part of the Technical Information Services (TIS) organization. The TIS Department is part of the Research Division of SLAC. Its mission is to support SLAC's research, education, and communication efforts and to provide rapid, accurate, and user-friendly access to particle physics information. TIS includes the Archives and History Office, the Library, the SLAC Web Information Manager, the SPIRES-HEP Databases, Technical Publications, the Unix-SPIRES Collaboration, responsibility for coordinating the Web at SLAC, and for managing the Lab's scientific and technical information. Pat Kreitz serves as the Director of TIS.

A program review of the SLAC Archives and History Office was held on 18-19 June, 2004. The program review committee membership represented the Laboratory and the major external constituencies of the Archives and History Office. The members possessed a broad and diverse background with extensive experience in archiving and record management, as well as in scientific training in High Energy Physics. The members have experience in a variety of working environments, including universities, national laboratories and scientific societies. The 2004 Archive Review Committee members were:

- JoAnne Hewett, chair, SLAC, Theory Group
- R. Joseph Anderson, AIP, Center for the History of Physics
- Jerry Jobe, SLAC, Business Services Division
- Magaret Kimball, Stanford University, Archives Office
- Aaron Roodman, SLAC, Experimental Group C
- John Stoner, LBNL, Information Technologies and Services
- Peter Westwick, California Institute of Technology, Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences

## Charge to the Committee:

The SLAC Archives and History Office advisory committee is a standing committee charged with advising SLAC management on the goals, policies, and activities of the SLAC Archives and History program. This review process offers the opportunity to refine the program and to assist in establishing a clear sense of priorities for both SLAC management and the archive staff. While the Advisory Committee's emphasis may change over time, its current effort will include the following areas:

- Review the current archives and history program and assess how well it is fulfilling its mission and meeting DOE requirements.
- Evaluate SLAC's near-term (1-2 year) archival needs and recommend needed changes.
- Evaluate SLAC's longer-term (8-10 year) needs and strategy.
- Review and comment on the Office's mission, goals, policies, and activities.
- Prepare a report on these points and any other subject which may arise during the Committee's deliberations.

The SLAC Archives Review Committee met for 1 and 1/2 days on 18-19 June, 2004. On the first day, Jean Deken, the Head Archivist at SLAC, and Pat Kreitz spoke to the committee on the archival program, its operations and operating procedures, as well as progress on archiving electronic records. Presentations were also given on the National Archives and Records Administration (by Shirley Burton, the NARA regional administrator), the archival program at CERN (by Anita Hollier, CERN archivist), and DOE information management (by Karen Kruger and Laura O'Hara of the SLAC AHO). This was followed by an executive session of the program review committee, where the committee drew up a list of questions for the Head Archivist. The second day began with Jean Deken responding to these questions, followed by an executive session of the committee where issues for the committee report were formulated and discussed. Each member of the committee then drafted a section of the report.

### **Overall Appraisal:**

The committee unanimously praised both the effort of the AHO to preserve and make available the scientific history of SLAC and the dedication of the program and the laboratory towards this effort. SLAC continues to be a leader and an example of how scientific laboratories should archive their history. Overall, the committee believes that the SLAC archival program is outstanding. With limited resources and a broad charge, the archive staff has responded to the needs of the laboratory and established a position of leadership within the archival community and DOE. The AHO is well integrated into the TIS. In particular, Jean Deken is to be commended for her accomplishments and effectiveness as head of the archive effort. She continues to make tremendous progress and be innovative with limited resources. In addition to the overall excellent performance of the AHO, the committee would like to specifically applaud the archive office and Jean Deken for

- The progress on backlog reduction.
- The initiative on the electronic records project. This participation in a cutting-edge research project is both impressive and unique. The laboratory should be proud of this effort.
- Making the archived records web accessible.

- The archiving of the historically significant M-reports as well as an oral history of Pief Panofsky.
- The effort for the 40th anniversary of the laboratory, particularly in compiling photographs and assisting on the commemorative book.
- The establishment of a relationship with the National Archival Records Administration and the preservation of permanent records.

**Priorities:**

The mission of the SLAC AHO is defined as providing SLAC with a reliable, accessible, and dynamic institutional memory that captures its scientific history while meeting DOE and NARA contract requirements. The core work of an archivist falls into four areas: Finding and Appraising, Organizing, Assisting Users, and Providing Intellectual Capital. The archive staff should divide its time appropriately amongst these areas.

**Recommendations:**

The recommendations of the Committee are listed below. They lie within the four areas of core archival work listed above.

1. **Storage:** The 2002 report of the AHO Program Review Committee recommended that the archivist develop a long range storage strategy to meet the space needs of the SLAC archive for the next 10 years. The archivist was encouraged to explore all reasonable solutions and to insure that the strategy addressed the ability of the archive office to meet the needs of its users in a timely fashion.

It is estimated that by 2009 the archives will be out of onsite storage space. In addition, new minimum storage requirements for federal records will go into effect in 2009 and the archives current off-site storage may not be able (or willing) to comply with the new resolutions. To deal with this, the archivist has explored the following solutions:

- Offsite commercial storage
- Onsite storage
- Federal Records Center (FRC)

The archivist has developed and presented to the committee a plan that would utilize all three of these options:

- Offsite commercial storage: Due to the upcoming new Federal regulations being enforce in 2009, the archivist recommends concentrating on processing the offsite backlog, thus reducing the volume stored offsite and allowing for the transfer of the records to the FRC. This will result in increased intellectual control of the records, increased intellectual capital, and decreased storage costs. If the backlog

has not been fully processed by 2009 (which is unlikely) and the offsite storage facility does not meet the new minimum requirements, than a new contract with a new facility will have to be implemented.

- Onsite storage: The new minimum storage requirements do not apply to the archives onsite facility due to its size. However, the archive office has presently run out of onsite processing space. This has a serious negative impact on the ability of the AHO to fulfill its mission, to access new records, and to reduce the backlog. The committee strongly endorses the archivist's proposal that the AHO expand into Room B011 of Building 84. This area has approximately 500 square feet of floor space and its current use for SCS storage is minimal. Costs would include SCS storage relocation and additional shelving, which could accrue incrementally.
- Transfer of records to the FRC: The committee commends the archivist for the initial transfer of 23 cubic feet of Group A records to the FRC. The committee strongly supports the archivist's plan to expand the use of the FRC as part of the solution to the storage problem. The committee recognizes that transfer of records to the FRC requires processing of the backlog to a level that meets FRC requirements.

The archivist's plan for handling the records storage needs of SLAC identified minimum requirements that storage facilities need to meet by 2009, incorporates a combination of onsite, commercial offsite, and FRC space, and identifies necessary onsite space expansion options. This plan is well integrated with the needs for processing backlog and new incoming records.

In summary, the committee strongly recommends the expansion of the AHO into Room B011, Building 84. We believe this action is essential to the success of AHO operations. The committee commends the archivist for her planning efforts regarding storage space and recommends continued and expanded use of the FRC.

2. **Reduction of Backlog:** The backlog of unprocessed material is about 5,000 cubic feet and growing. Because much of this material was directly transferred to off-site storage, the provenance and contents are a mystery. The costs of off-site storage, lack of knowledge of the contents, and the impending federal regulations in 2009 concerning storage facilities all suggest the need for a long-term plan for the backlog.

The AHO should present three options to SLAC management:

- Continue with the status quo, adding new accessions to off-site storage.
- Pull the backlog back a segment at a time for box-level processing, to determine what is in each box, get rid of extraneous material, and return what is left to off-site storage.
- Gradually retrieve the backlog for thorough, folder-level processing and then transfer to FRC or NARA.

Option 1 is the cheapest (current off-site costs appear to be less than \$10,000/year), but has several drawbacks. Costs will mount in the long term as the backlog grows, and in 2009 the material will need to go to a new, federally compliant facility, which may cost more. The records will continue to suffer from the lack of environmental controls and fire protection in the current site. Although the AHO will check the contents of new accessions before they go off-site, the contents of much of the existing backlog will remain unknown.

Option 2 will incur additional costs to transfer material back and forth from the off-site location, plus the staff time to briefly check the contents of each box. (Labor costs are about \$1,000 to process 10 cubic feet, or about \$300,000 for all current off-site material; perhaps a summer student or intern could help here.) This option does not address the long-term off-site storage costs or the issue of the 2009 regulations. Advantages include reducing the size of the backlog, perhaps by 1/3 to 1/2, with the accompanying reduction in storage costs, and the important but intangible benefit of determining the contents of the backlog and increasing its utility.

Option 3 has the greatest immediate costs and long-term benefits. Costs include the price of transfers from off-site and, especially, processing to folder level. But all of the processed material could then go to the FRC, thus reducing future storage costs by 20%, complying with the 2009 regulations, and ensuring better protection of the records. Material over 30 years old could transfer completely to NARA, removing all storage costs but also SLAC's control. This option would greatly increase the value of the collections to users and hence fulfill a primary purpose of the AHO.

The AHO should present these options and tradeoffs to SLAC management along with the estimated costs and savings in both the near- and long-term, in order to develop a long-range solution to the backlog.

The committee also notes that processing of the backlog will require onsite facility space.

- 3. Electronics Archive Project:** The 2002 report recommended that the AHO commit to a pilot project of archiving electronic records. Since that time, the AHO has made impressive progress toward the goal of archiving the extensive electronic records at SLAC. The AHO is to be congratulated for its participation in the PAT Project (see: <http://www.sdsc.edu/PAT/index.html>), and for receiving outside funding to aid in this effort.

The AHO choice of the electronic records of the SLD experiment for this pilot project, instead of Babar, was sensible. SLD was a Level 1 experiment, with a series of important measurements at the Z-pole, that concluded data-taking in 1998. As a current experiment, Babar has to maintain some of its documents in confidence, so was not a good candidate for this pilot project. The SLD experiment maintained an extensive web-site with reports, meeting presentations, and other documentation online. As such, a demonstration that the SLD electronic records can be archived would be enormously

useful both to preserve the history of SLD and to point the way for other experiments at SLAC. In addition, the PAT project's connection with GRID computing technology is particularly appropriate for SLAC and SCS.

The committee also notes that the electronic records of Babar have not been ignored. Since the 2002 review, both the SLAC and Babar web space have been backed-up as part of a yearly effort.

The PAT project is an ongoing and ambitious project. The AHO effort should continue its efforts to reach the goal of an automated system to archive electronic records. The committee's recommendations are:

- The AHO should continue its efforts to archive SLD records as part of the PAT Project.
- The AHO should request a modest increase in the computational for the PAT Project. In particular, the automatic generation of meta-data for the archival system is an aspect of the problem that requires such effort.
- The AHO should explore additional sources of outside funding to aid in the development of archiving electronic records.
- The AHO should continue taking a leadership role in the development of archiving electronic records.

4. **50th Anniversary Celebration:** In order to facilitate and encourage early planning for the 50th anniversary of SLAC, the committee recommends that the AHO develop for presentation to SLAC management a list of possible projects (and products) that might be undertaken to celebrate this milestone. The AHO should look at what other labs have done for similar anniversaries and also what has been done at Stanford and prepare as detailed and varied a list of projects as possible. Where feasible, the list should include at least ballpark estimates of the costs, resources that would be required (including archival resources and expertise), and time frames for successful conclusion (eg, a full length book project might require a 7 year lead time). The AHO should also prepare a timeline of important early milestones that might be targeted for the celebration. As the anniversary is fast approaching, the report should be prepared within the next 6-9 months if possible.

Recognizing that the AHO can contribute the most to such a celebration by supplying historical documentation and expertise, the committee also recommends that the AHO conduct video oral histories with selected individuals. It is expected that the AHO will be able to partner with SciArts staff in TIS as appropriate in the preparation of these oral histories. These oral histories will serve to enhance and expand the intellectual capital of the Archives while undoubtedly also proving useful to the Communications Office and others for programs or projects selected to mark the 50th anniversary as well as ongoing outreach activities.

In addition, the committee would like to recognize the efforts made by the AHO to work with the Communications Office. In particular, the articles written for the ‘Interaction Point’ which publicize sources now available on the history of SLAC are to be applauded. The AHO is encouraged to continue to work with the Communications Office whenever and however possible to enhance the knowledge of SLAC’s history both within the organization and outside.

5. **Staffing of Archives and History Office:** The current practice of funding summer student help is essential and should become a standing agreement with Laboratory management. It is necessary to cover on-going needs such as reducing the back-log, indexing, web-site development and maintenance, etc.

Given the limited FTEs dedicated to the AHO function, a few hundred hours of summer student help can have a significant impact on the ability of the Office to perform its function. With the active support of her management, the Head of the AHO has been able to acquire summer help for the past several years. Because this help is essential to the effort to stay ahead of accessions and to reduce the processing back-log, SLAC management should consider this support to be a part of the office’s annual baseline budget.

Another source of potential help for the AHO is the retiree pool at SLAC. The AHO office might consider establishing a Docent program whereby retired staff who might have an interest in helping to preserve the history of SLAC (which many of them lived) would volunteer to assist the AHO. In this Docent program, the volunteers might agree to put in a minimum number of hours in a year and, in exchange, the AHO would provide limited training that would enhance their usefulness in the archive effort.

6. **Outside Funding/Support:** The committee recognizes that the AHO needs additional resources to pursue at least some of its recommendations. Since obtaining significant additional support from within SLAC is unlikely, the committee recommends that the AHO explore possible sources of outside funding/support. Several options are available that the AHO may want to explore:

- Grants for special projects: The AHO should investigate grants or other outside funding for projects to process major collections of papers. Potential sources include: Private foundations and organizations (check the Foundation Directory - possibilities include AIP, Delmas Foundation, Lounsbery Foundation) State Resources, such as the CA Humanities Council Federal Agencies, NHPRC, NEH, the Office of Museum and Library Services, and the NSF Office of Science and Technology Studies. The AHO could also consider in-kind contributions for video and history. For example, seek retired scientists or other qualified people to do interviews, or contact AIP about doing transcriptions.
- The committee recommends that the Director’s Office or other administrative unit create a ‘Friends of the 50th’ program to raise funding for archive projects in

conjunction with the anniversary. The effort should be kept simple with modest goals and have a rough allocation of \$25,000 - 50,000. Senior scientists with an interest in SLAC history should be invited to chair the Friends committee (such as Drell, Richter, etc). Letters to SLAC retirees, senior staff, etc. should be sent to enlist their support. Initial results should be evaluated and a decision made as to whether the program is worth continuing.

- The AHO should consider creating a volunteer program, keeping in mind that volunteer programs can be a drain on limited resources.
7. **SSRL:** The committee notes that the archival needs of SSRL are not being addressed. The committee understands that this is a large task and that additional staff would be necessary to cover the full workload and that this seems unlikely. In addition, SSRL falls outside of the purview of the SLAC Research Division which funds the AHO. However, the committee would like to encourage an increased interaction between the AHO and SSRL, at an appropriate level.
  8. **Photographs:** Approximately half of the photographs held by the AHO are cataloged and indexed. The committee encourages the AHO to work with retirees to assist in the cataloging and to provide captions for the old photographs.
  9. **Next archive review:** The committee endorses the plan proposed by Pat Kreitz to hold staggered reviews for each of the three TIS departments. The SLAC AHO office is well managed and is doing an outstanding job in performing their tasks; the committee hence feels that a review of the AHO every 3 years would be adequate. However, the committee notes that work must commence during this period to prepare for the upcoming 50th anniversary.