

CHAPTER VI

The Open Society Archives and the Central European University

The Archives in the University

Ties between the Open Society Archives (OSA) and Central European University (CEU) go far beyond their current institutional framework. Their organic bonds were established as early as the Archives materialized, given that many OSA staff members joined the organization from the ranks of CEU's teaching and administrative staff, as well as from its student body. Thus, despite the fact that it was at first located in its own home a few subway stops from the university campus, from its earliest days the Open Society Archives had started its gradual move, both symbolically and literally speaking, toward its current position within CEU.

From the very beginning, one of the Archives' main goals was to establish itself as a reliable research facility and to provide creative support for CEU's academic community. Indeed, it took less than a year from OSA's official opening in 1996 for both institutions to realize the mutual benefits arising from their newly established ties. While profiting greatly from conducting research at OSA and from taking part in its public programs, academics from CEU largely contributed to the process of shaping the Archives' profile in its early days both with their helpful remarks as well as through their seats on the OSA Board. Thus, the Archives' eventual move to the Central European University complex seemed rather evident.

From that moment on, with its Research Room discreetly but visibly incorporated into the CEU Library, OSA became not only a physical part of the CEU campus, but an inseparable, active part of the academic environment which allowed CEU students and its own researchers to make the best use of both facilities. It was probably the combination of the Archives' unique holdings and the appeal of its public programs that made OSA, soon after its move to CEU, one of the favorite places to take the university's academic visitors and distinguished guests. (There are some 60 CEU-related visits per year.)

Ever since it moved to CEU, OSA has primarily focused on establishing itself as the natural research base for the university's academic community. This effort has resulted in the fact that, on average, 25 percent of the approximately 350 researchers who register at OSA each year come from CEU. In addition to contributing to the personal academic efforts of CEU students and staff, OSA engages in the university's educational process by providing teaching staff with textual and audiovisual materials to strengthen their syllabi. In this respect the closest cooperation so far has been established with CEU's Legal Studies and History departments as well as with the Human Rights and Southeast European Studies programs. However, initiatives to broaden this cooperation are well underway, the most significant being OSA's plan to put together a comprehensive collection of teaching aids and readers based on its holdings to support CEU's courses.

Apart from its involvement in CEU's academic life, OSA also became a noticeable participant in CEU's extracurricular activities, mostly through its public programs such as lecture series and film weeks related to the region's history, culture and current social issues. In this respect, probably the most visible OSA contribution to CEU's academic and cultural profile is the ongoing exhibition series, mainly presented in the Archives' exhibition hall, Galeria Centralis.

Finally, a joint OSA/CEU project was launched in 1998 in order to establish the CEU Records Center, thus making OSA a vital provider of records-management services to CEU's administration. This project also marked the last step towards the OSA's admission as a full member of the CEU family. In March 1998, the Open Society Archives finally officially became a part of Central European University.

Summer University

OSA, in close cooperation with the CEU Summer University (SUN), organizes intensive summer courses each year. The Summer University is an academic program offering two-, three- or four-week courses in the social sciences and humanities for university professors, administrators, and professionals.

Its primary aim is to strengthen, encourage and promote academic cooperation and curriculum development, as well as to build a network of faculty and professionals in the region to facilitate the exchange of ideas and projects. Another significant goal of the courses is to increase interaction between academics and professionals from the East and West.

The Summer University courses invite applicants from all over the world. The courses are designed both for junior faculty and researchers involved in teaching, and for professionals such as archivists, librarians, environmental experts and computer experts. These courses offer full funding for those participants from Central and Eastern Europe, Mongolia, and the countries of the former Soviet Union. Grants for these participants cover travel, accommodation, a stipend, insurance and a book allowance. Other participants must pay for the courses. There is, however, a limited number of scholarships for Western students.

Summer University courses are led by a course director who is an outstanding professional in his/her field. The task of the course director is to prepare the academic content of the course and supervise its organization. The course director submits a proposal that is evaluated by an external evaluator and the SUN Board, which is chaired by the President and Rector of CEU and composed of members including CEU faculty, the Director of the Higher Education Support Program (HESP), the HESP Advisory Board members, the Dean of CEU's Special and Extension Programs, external higher education experts, and the SUN Director.

The course director recruits an international team of instructors or “resource persons”, preferably both Eastern and Western professionals and scholars and they cooperate closely to design the course content, syllabus etc. of the courses. While the resource persons help the course director with the academic part of the course, each course director gets help from a coordinator in completing administrative tasks. The SUN office is responsible for the overall organization of the courses: recruitment, processing applications, accommodations, travel arrangements etc.

Applicants must meet the following criteria upon applying: they must have a university degree and hold a teaching job at a university or college, or work as an administrator or a professional. Graduate students with teaching experience may also apply. Undergraduates without a university degree will not be considered. As the language of the courses is English, all applicants must demonstrate a good command of English to enable them to actively take part in the workshops and to follow the lectures.

The SUN office began to operate in 1996 and the Archives’ first SUN course was held in the same year. Ever since then, the Archives has organized a two-week course each summer.

The archival courses are intended for professional archivists in the region, as the course topics are closely related to archival issues (e.g. preservation, appraisal methodology, records management, automation).

The first course was entitled *Managing Modern Archives*, and the course director was Trudy Huskamp Peterson, then the Executive Director of the Open Society Archives. For this course she recruited a team of internationally recognized archival professionals, mainly from the Western archival community.

Participants in the course had the opportunity to study issues such as international standards for archival description, and to attend lectures covering a wide range of topics such as preservation management, disaster planning principles of archival practice, archival management of electronic records, access policy, reference administration, archival ethics, professional issues, and the profession itself.

The course also offered participants an excellent chance to exchange ideas, as they came from diverse backgrounds and had different work-related experiences. Participants took a break from their academic pursuits for a visit to the Hungarian National Archives and a boat trip on the Danube. They also had a chance to visit OSA, (which was at that time in Eötvös Street), and the CEU building including the Library and the computer labs.

The first course had 25 participants from 12 countries, including two OSA staff members.

The Archives’ second Summer University course, in 1997, was entitled *Archival Management of Modern Records*. Again, the targeted participants were archivists from the region with special interest in current records management practices in automated office environments.

The course took up the challenge of introducing course participants to the practice of modern records management in the context of modern office technology, and also to the techniques for managing electronic records. They were able to build on their knowledge and experience of traditional appraisal methods by attending a lecture entitled *Modern Archives Appraisal Methodology*. In the final part of the course, they learned about archival ethics, and afterwards the participants engaged in a debate on ethical issues that affect archivists in the transition countries.

The course director was again Trudy Huskamp Peterson, who invited many well-known experts from Europe, the United States, and Canada, and utilized the expertise of her OSA colleagues, who also gave lectures during the course.

The number of participants increased from the first year: there were 29 participants from 15 countries, including the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Finland, Norway and Turkey. Three staff members from OSA also took part in the course.

The third SUN course was *Management Issues in Archival Preservation*. This course was intended for professional archivists from the region who are expected to develop their skills and work with preservation strategies and programs. It offered the opportunity for participants to continue their professional development by exploring preservation issues and finding solutions.

The resource persons recruited for this course came not only from the Western archival community, but from Hungary as well. Again the Archives' staff actively contributed the course, with three of them giving lectures.

The two-week course began with a discussion of how to plan a preservation program. Apart from the lectures, the tentative schedule also included discussions of preservation needs assessment, appropriate environmental control, and practical conservation monitoring procedures. An entire day was dedicated to disaster prevention and emergency planning, which also included identification of vital records and their maintenance. As the course proceeded, the participants were allowed to explore how important preservation issues can be focused upon during archival moves. During the second week the focus of the course shifted to preservation issues concerning the three major archives formats: paper, electronic and audiovisual.

A half-day roundtable discussion followed on the use of reformatting as a preservation measure. The closing session of the course dealt with the international context, and initiatives that are mobilizing professional expertise across international borders. As usual, a boat trip on the Danube and other social events served as good occasions for the participants to get to know each other and make valuable professional connections.

Altogether 30 participants took part in the course, including two OSA staff members. The majority of the participants came from Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The Archives' 1999 SUN course, *Archival Automation*, followed in the footsteps of the previous courses. The course director was Margaret C. Crockett, former Deputy Executive Director of the Archives.

Because computer-based archival management systems are being introduced to more and more archives all over the world, the course tried to focus on this very current issue. Archival automation was adopted gradually in the archives of Western Europe and North America, and now many of the archives are adopting fully-integrated systems. In Central and Eastern Europe, archives are also interested in developing their computer-based archives management systems, but the lack of resources is slowing this process.

The 1999 course was designed for mid-level archival managers who will be responsible for making decisions on automating their institutions. The course had two parts. In the first week it concentrated on planning for automation, trying to cover issues such as the goals of automation, the identification of users who are affected by automation, and choices of integrated and function-specific applications. The second week offered a more practical approach to the issue, as two archives specific systems were demonstrated and evaluated by the class. Additionally, there were lectures about applying various technologies in archives, and comparing and contrasting information system development methods. The course concluded with discussions about personnel management issues related to introducing systems in archives.

Again, the resource persons for the course came mainly from Western countries, while in contrast, the majority of participants came from Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. There were altogether 32 participants from 15 countries.