Surviving an Anniversary: How Not to Go Crazy Fundraising for Digitization and Documentaries

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Surviving an Anniversary
*How Not to Go Crazy Fundraising for Digitization and Documentaries*

Bruce Hallmark, Director of Development
Morgan Library

Overview

- Anniversary Teaser
- So Many Land-Grant University Anniversaries
- CSU’s 150th Anniversary & Documentary
- Project Promotions
- A Vision for Fundraising
- Project Status and Final Thoughts
Anniversary Teaser

https://vimeo.com/326865901

So Many Land-Grant University Anniversaries
Land-Grant Universities

- In February 1855, the Agricultural College of the State of Michigan was established
- It became known as the “the Michigan State model”
- The Farmer’s High School of Pennsylvania, which later become Penn State University, was founded similarly

Land-Grant Universities

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- It became known as the “the Michigan State model”
- The Farmer’s High School of Pennsylvania, which later become Penn State University, was founded similarly
- On July 2, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act (named for U.S. Rep. Justin Morrill, pictured)
- The original Act established 57 institutions
Land-Grant Universities

- A second Morrill Act passed in 1890 added 19 more schools (some of which became the Historically Black Colleges and Universities we know today)
- In 1994, 35 more schools were added (mostly tribal colleges and universities)

- That's 111 institutions total, the majority within a 40-year period
- This is why so many land-grant institutions are celebrating their 150th anniversary milestones
Land-Grant Universities

Upcoming 150th Anniversaries:

• 1870 – Colorado State University
• 1871 – Alcorn State University (MS)
  Texas A&M University
  University of Arkansas
• 1872 – Virginia Tech
• 1873 – University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
• 1874 – University of Nevada, Reno
• 1875 – Alabama A&M University

Colorado State University

• 34,000 students
• 8 colleges
• 69% of students are Colo. Residents
• 25% first generation
• $375 million of research
• $1 billion campaign (June 2020)
Takeaways: Land-Grant Universities

1. Land-grant institutions share a common origin, so focus on what makes your university distinctive and the “firsts” it accomplished.

   For example: There was a woman (Libby Coy-Lawrence) in our first graduating class in 1884, and the college enrolled its first African American student (Grafton St. Clair Norman) in 1892.

2. Many fascinating aspects of your history are unknown to alumni, the administration, and current students.

CSU’s 150th Anniversary & Documentary
CSU’s Anniversary Recognition

- President approached by a large donor in 2016
- Hired a documentary filmmaker friend, assigned to work with the Division of External Relations for three years
- Plan to raise $50K each from 8 colleges and Athletics (partially matched)
- Additional funds raised through donor’s network and private parties
- President’s Office created a Celebrate 150 Years of State fund

Sesquicentennial Advisory Committee

- Goal: campus-wide coordination and collaboration around anniversary celebrations
- 45-person, university-wide team representing all colleges, units, alumni association, student organizations, facilities, etc.
- Creating a calendar of events and activities
- Ensure diversity, equality, and inclusiveness
- Committee work overseen by a 7-person Executive Team (e.g., president, provost, head of external relations, etc.)
Anniversary Creative

- Creative Services
- www.csu150.com (July launch)

How did Morgan Library become involved?

- Extensive collaboration with the Library’s Archives & Special Collections
- External Relations is focused on outreach (news, publicity, promotions) not history
- Documentary filmmaker and External Relations collided
- Good opportunity to raise the profile of the Library
- Build a relationship with one of the University’s largest donors
What was required of Morgan Library?

• Secure office, computers, file storage, student workers, etc.
• Begin process with Procurement to secure a film production company
• Update the filmmaker’s offer letter & job description with Human Resources
• Hire a video assistant
• Create a historic review committee for early cuts of the documentary
• Compile an inventory of historic materials and media on campus

But there were about 10,000 challenges…

A Preservation Problem …

• Approximately 8,000 celluloid films and videos on magnetic tape in various sizes and formats are stored in the Andrew G. Clark Building
• An additional 500 tapes are also stored in the Morgan Library’s Annex on Lake Street
A Preservation Problem …

- More than 1,000 videos held by Student Media
- A large quantity of Athletics materials both on campus and held by known collectors off campus
A Digital Media Explosion

Internet users by world region since 1990

Magnetic Tape is Degrading

• Chemical breakdown of the binders in magnetic tape is causing these media to deteriorate

• Tape manufactured in the 1970s and early ‘80s is especially vulnerable, and must be digitized by 2025 if we want to save their contents
The Culprit: Sticky-Shed Syndrome

- [https://vhsconversion.wordpress.com/2012/03/13/sticky-shed-syndrome/](https://vhsconversion.wordpress.com/2012/03/13/sticky-shed-syndrome/)

The Culprit: Sticky-Shed Syndrome
Vintage Gear Restoration

Outsourcing Digitization

The Association of Moving Image Archivists

- Lots of vendors listed in their Global Supplier Directory under “Reformatting and Restoration Services”
- [https://amianet.org/resources/global-supplier-directory/](https://amianet.org/resources/global-supplier-directory/)

Also, consider vendors that are part of library alliances and associations
Content Creation: Senior Scholars Project

• Started in 2013 to began conducting oral histories with prominent faculty
• Currently have 55 interviews, some of which will be used in the documentary.
• About 15 additional interviews being conducted and the program expanded to include administrators, staff, and others influential members of the campus community

Takeaways: CSU’s 150th Documentary

3. Start early. It takes time to survey existing materials that need to be digitized, and to discover unknown caches of media across campus.

4. University administration needs to devote time to discussing an anniversary 3 to 4 years prior to the celebration. Having a basic plan for a pending anniversary helps prevent voices from the margins from driving the conversation while leadership is occupied with more pressing matters.

5. Long-range planning helps the campus engage potential speakers, plan around construction projects, obtain donor buy-in and participation, start preservation efforts, etc., all of which set the stage for a great anniversary.
Takeaways: CSU’s 150th Documentary

6. Have a seat on your anniversary committee, and help create a university-wide strategy that includes the library.

7. If making a documentary, determine whether you need to retain a third-party historical documentary filmmaker, and what specific deliverables you want.

8. Ensure your filmmaker has the resources, talent, and budget required to do the job.

9. The narrative of the film drives the visuals, not the other way around.

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Takeaways: CSU’s 150th Documentary

10. Commitments to diversity and inclusiveness will be front and center when making a documentary. To help ensure the full history is told, start working early with campus groups who represent women, people of color, LGBTQ, etc.

11. Establish an oral history program that captures a digital record of the prominent, accomplished, or influential members of your campus community (not just faculty), and preferably on camera.

12. Even if a documentary is not made, archival resources and materials will be needed for anniversary celebrations.
Project Promotions

Building Awareness

• Coordinate promotions but plan to do your own

• Generate articles and provide images and clips for social media, print and electronic newsletters, university magazine, websites, etc.

• Celebrate gifts and discoveries of new materials

• Ask for donations of old film and video from alumni and friends
Collateral Materials

- Project overview for Dean and others
- One-pager (at right and on your tables)
- College PowerPoint presentation
- Talking points for Dean and President
- PBS sponsorship package
- Grant proposals for film preservation
- Online giving page

Trailers and Teasers

- What’s the difference?
- Documentary crew’s teaser
PBS

- Explore broadcast with local station
- Sponsorship opportunities
- Lots of guidelines (see The Red Book: www.pbs.org/about/producing-pbs/red-book/)
- PBS app (Android, Apple TV, Roku)

Takeaways: Project Promotion

13. It takes time to build awareness and anticipation for an upcoming anniversary among alumni, potential donors, city officials, faculty and staff.

14. Anniversaries are great opportunities for historic reflection and can be used to raise the profile of your Archives & Special Collections department.

15. Rather than create a lot of new events for an anniversary, consider instead highlighting the anniversary through existing events.

16. Consider a traveling exhibit of university memorabilia to generate state-wide interest in your anniversary by potentially partnering with your alumni association, athletics, etc.
A Vision for Fundraising

Fundraising: Your Audiences

- Library Donors
- Prospective Donors (small and big)
- Campus partners
- President’s Office
Fundraising: Library Donors

- Capitalize on anniversary to showcase Archives
- Solicit existing library supporters
- Opportunity to build larger donor base
- Hire additional staff (e.g., digital preservation archivist)

Fundraising: Prospective Donors

- Project overview (one-pager)
- Value proposition of Archives
- Presentations at donor parties & other gatherings
- Day of Giving campaign
Fundraising: Prospective Donors …
Higher Capacity

- Closely held by other development officers
- Could serve on an anniversary committee
- Big donors know each other (networking)
- Not on the same time table as you (busy, no metrics)
- Can overestimate their influence
- Can overestimate the project’s appeal to others

Fundraising: Campus Partners

- Colleges Deans and Development Officers (and Athletics)
- Their visual history (not seen or used before)
- Proof of concept – Demonstrate the value of digitized materials for use with capital campaigns, individual proposals, websites, etc.
- Access to larger donors or those with affinity
- Joint proposals
- Support giving through their college (track with appeal codes)
Takeaways: Fundraising

17. Fundraising strategies for anniversaries are best directed by the head of your fundraising group or division in consultation with those most directly involved.

18. The digitization challenge for most university archives is to “get caught up and stay ahead.” Anniversary celebrations provide a rare opportunity to highlight the important work your archive and cultivate new donors.

Project Status & Final Thoughts
Project Status

- PBS sponsorship packet in process
- Outsourced digitizing magnetic tapes (arrival June 2019)
- Big donor ready to resume fundraising efforts in June
- President onboard with preservation message
- $1 million fundraising backstop from the President
- Meeting with colleges to gauge commitment and to identify potential donors

Takeaways: Final Thoughts

19. Seek the support of your president’s office when launching a large-scale preservation project. This could come in the form of funding, public endorsement, suggesting donors, or assisting with corporate sponsorships.

20. Given the degradation of old magnetic tape, the entire campus needs to begin working with your Archive to locate and digitize those aging media as soon as possible.

21. Learn from other universities:
   - Indiana University (https://200.iu.edu/)
   - Wayne State (https://150.wayne.edu/)
   - Univ. of California System (https://150.universityofcalifornia.edu/#intro)
   - Kansas State (http://www.k-state.edu/150/)
Thank you