The institutional archive of the Maritime University of Szczecin

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Abstract

The archives of higher education institutions in Poland are a very important link in the national archive network. Their role arises from the tasks they perform in the creation of the national archive resource. These archives, in addition to serving their basic function, carry out additional tasks in the process of the collection and proper protection of historical resources. The purpose of this article is to present the role performed by the institution's archive of the Maritime University of Szczecin. Among other things, this article discusses office and archival regulation, which is mandatory in the organizational unit and is characterized by the archive of MU.

Introduction

The history of academic archives as independent units in Polish universities is not long. The key factor and principal cause of their becoming separate from the universities' administrative offices was the need for the appropriate storage of the documentation created there (Degan, 2002, p. 25). The two Galician Universities, Lviv University (1948) and Jagiellonian University (1906) were the precursors of independent university archive creation. After World War II, at the end of the 1940s, university archives in Wroclaw and Torun became independent. After that the archives in Poznan, Warsaw, Lodz, and both the Universities of Lublin also became independent. Universities that have emerged since the 1970s tried to create their own independent archives right from the beginning (Degan, 2002, pp. 25–26).

Universities' archives constitute a very important link in the national network of archival institutions in Poland. Their role stems from the task they perform in the creation of national archive resources. Institutions' archives, apart from performing their basic activities, also implement additional tasks in the process of collection and ensuring the appropriate security of the historical resources (Szczepaniak, 1976, pp. 1–7). An obligation of special care for the resources, that they should be collected and properly secured in duly prepared storerooms, is placed on the employees of every university's archive (Niziołek, 2002, p. 240).

The aim of this article is to present the role of the Maritime University of Szczecin's institutional archive. The source database for the research was control protocols, notes from expert judgment, and post-control lustrations performed by the Szczecin's State Archives' employees. Control protocols can be found in the institution's archive of the Maritime University of Szczecin, the article uses the control documents having the following signs: B/018-8/06; ROP/3/2010;B/018-03/13 and protocols of years: 1966, 1971, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1984, 1989, 1997, 2000, 2003 not having the character of the case, or the signature of the archive. Additionally, to characterize the activity of the archive, work schedule reports and the NADZOR database were also used.

Many different and unusual events in the history of the whole country and the region have had an influence on what the Maritime University of Szczecin is today. It is worth mentioning that in 1945 Szczecin was joined to the Republic of Poland, and the Department of Navigation of the

Maritime School of Gdynia was entirely moved to Szczecin due to a regulation of the then Minister of Shipping and Foreign Trade, who wanted to extend the port and fleet of Szczecin. Here, in 1947, the single-faculty State Maritime School of Navigation came into existence. Due to the dynamic development of maritime affairs, in 1962 the State School of Sea Fishery was created here too. As a consequence of the growth in importance of Western Pomerania's shipping, port trading, fishery and port industry, the State Maritime School came into existence in 1963. The following years brought the fusion of the State Maritime School with the State School of Sea Fishery and, as a result, Szczecin became an important maritime education centre. The educational development was completed in 1968 when the State Maritime School was given the title of school of higher education due to a decision of the Council of Ministers. The decision was very meaningful for economic and social life, not only in Szczecin, but across the country. In 2004, accordingly to the Act, the Maritime University of Szczecin was granted the status of university (wider: Fenrych & Sauk, 1977; Jagniszczak, 1987; Lotko, 1987; Techman, 1997). It is now managed by His Magnificence the Rector of the Maritime University of Szczecin, Professor Deep Sea Captain Stanislaw Gucma. The University is governed by the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy. The Maritime University of Szczecin acts in accordance with the Act of 27th July 2005 and with later amendments (Journal of Laws, 2005). The Statute of the University was implemented with the resolution of the Maritime University of Szczecin's Senate on 5th October 2011, later amendments were adopted on 26th September 2012, and the second amendment to the Statute was made on 20th March 2013. The organizational entity also has its own organizational rules which are implemented by Regulation No. 13/2009 of the Rector of the Maritime University of Szczecin (hereinafter: MU Rector) with later amendments (Zarządzenie, 2009).

Organization and functioning of the MU archive

The MU archive was created in 1969 following work on the security of the documentation which was left after the former maritime schools formed the Naval Academy (hereinafter: NA). On 1st September 1974 the archive began its activity as an independent organizational administration unit. According to the Rector's Council of the NA decision, from 1st April 1975 the archive changed its

organizational affiliation becoming subordinated to the Main Library of NA. Organizational affiliation of the archive had been changed twice when it became subordinated to the Chancellor; however it finally came back to the structure of the MU's Main Library.

The MU archive acts as an organizational unit with entrusted archive resources, similarly to other university archives and according to the state archival resources and archives act of 1983 (Dz.U., 1983). It has a few tasks to perform including:

– forming the archival resources performed by the supervision of accreting archival resources and their selection;
– collecting – the MU archive collects materials created by the particular organizational units and students organizations;
– storing and protecting the documentation;
– keeping records of the documentation possessed;
– sharing the documentation;
– destroying non-archival documentation.

The MU archive acts upon an annual work schedule which enables the coordination of the tasks performed in the archive. The schedule also defines the co-operation between the archive and other MU organizational units.

In the organizational unit, office and archival regulation are mandatory in respect of the national archive:

– office instruction introduced (Zarządzenie, 2005b);
– single list of files introduced (Zarządzenie, 2013);
– archival instruction introduced (Zarządzenie, 2005a).

In its activities, the MU archive is allowed to use IT tools which help the documentation process and progress of each case. At the same time, work related to the implementation of the electronic transfer of documents is performed. The system is going to facilitate case progress and support the traditional system, and in the future it will enable the execution of all the office services and their documentation.

According to the aforementioned office and archival regulations and official orders by the MU Rector, organizational units are obliged to transfer the documentation to the university archive two years after closing the case (Office instruction, 2005, §31, pkt. 2). It is clear from the controlling protocols' analysis that transferring documentation from a part of the organizational unit is performed regularly. It concerns both archival materials and

non-archival documentation. Students' files are the only documents that are transferred systematically. The main core of the archive resources is constituted of act documentation. There was no distinct collection of technical, audiovisual, film, or electronic documentation on magnetic or optic storage medium reported in any of the protocols. The collection of documentation encompasses a total of 610.6 linear meters of files (situation on 22.05.2013), including:

- category A – 26.4 linear meters from years [1947] 1968–2010;
- category B – 584.2 linear meters from years [1947] 1968–2012, including:
  • category BE 50 – 568.5 linear meters from years [1947] 1968–2012;
  • category B – 15.7 linear meters from years 1947–2009.

In the MU archives there is also a precious collection of photography documenting the development of schooling in Szczecin. Here, among others, are the photographs of the inaugurations of the academic year, university ceremonies, conferences and events, etc. from the beginning of the University's existence to the present day (Office instruction, 2005, §31, pkt. 2).

The University's own documents and inherited documentation is stored in the archives, which encompasses the years 1947–2012. Archival resources concerning the previous forms of the University, i.e. the State Maritime School of Szczecin and the State Deep-Sea Fishing School are partly separated. Unlike other universities' archives, MU has got a very specific structure to its resources. The majority of it (ca. 80%) is comprised of the personal files of the students with attached BA papers, engineering papers, and MA theses. Because of their fast growth in number it can be expected that they will dominate the resources of the archives. It is necessary to mention that the first students' work was transferred to the archives as early as 1969. Thanks to their great number and repetitiveness they constitute a perfect resource base for the research on the University. The MU archives include documents from the following units:

- Human Resources (1947–2011);
- Sea Rescue Training Centre (1986–2011);
- Rector's Office (1975–2008);
- Solicitor (1982–1989);
- Publishing Department (1971–1990);
- Faculty of Navigation (1971–2008);
- Faculty of Marine Engineering (1971–2010);
- Teaching and Certification Department (1993–2009);
- Internship Department (1973–2007);
- The General Council for Higher Education (1996–2002);
- Fleet and Port Operation Institute (1994–2003);
- Science Department (1973–2005);
- Accounting and Bursar's Office (1990–1999);
- Main Library (1969–2008).

Among the separated and ordered files are collected: collective and single-person files: Senate sessions protocols, Rector's Council, documentation from the faculties' committees' sessions; university councils: protocols of Rector's committees for scientific research, publishing committee, recruitment committee; deans' committee.

During the organization of the resources, among the other archival resources, some files were selected, i.e. archival resources remaining after the union of the State Maritime School of Szczecin and the State Deep-Sea Fishing School, which included the acceptance report of joining the schools, teachers' committee sessions protocols, students lists, school ceremonies and events documentation, and guidelines concerning recruitment.

In the collected resources newspapers cuttings concerning academic life in the period of 1947–1990 can be also found. They come from the regional press, or other publications which relate to the school's profile. They provide very important information on the beginning of the MU's existence. The first newspaper cuttings are a very important source of knowledge on the beginnings of maritime schooling in Szczecin; they concern the origin of the University and the following academic year's inaugurations. In these resources one can also find information concerning different ceremonies, for example anniversaries, famous people visiting the University, or the ceremonial ship launching of the first ships designed for the needs of the MU. The collection of this type of documentation is an extremely precious resource which perfectly complements the written sources.

Due to its characteristics the archive possesses in its resources documentation concerning training vessels; these are the documents of MU's ship building and ship's log books from m/v Nawigator from the years 1989–2014, partly transferred to the archive.

In 2010, due to the Military Training School of Szczecin's closure, 54 archival units from the years 1974–2014 were transferred to the Navy Archives of Gdynia. However, only the non-significant part of the files, ca. 1 linear meter of category B, was transferred to the MU archives.

The range of MU's activities is extremely wide; apart from its scientific and researching role, the University takes part in social life through the organization of numerous events and ceremonies. It therefore became necessary to collect and secure the resources which document these important events, for example scientific anniversaries, symposiums, conference, and graduate reunions.

The MU archive keeps recordings correctly and accurately, and the features are defined in the archival methodology. The recording is kept both ways – in traditional and electronic form. The following recording means should be mentioned: a list of acceptance protocols; acceptance protocols, separately for categories A and B. In two collections, one collection encompasses lists made in order of reception, while the other one encompasses lists in order of the University's organizational units division; lists of non-archival documentation meant to be destroyed with performance protocols and permissions for destroying, cards allowing sharing, and indexes of personal documentation of students and employees.

The files are made available by the archivist on site for job-related, and scientific research, or other reasons, or they can be loaned by an appropriate department only on the basis of a card permitting the sharing of the files. If outsiders wish to inspect the files on site or loan them (only for judicial authority), they have to receive the MU Rector's permission. Every loan or inspection of the files has to be reported in the sharing register. The activity is kept on a small scale as far as organizational units' archival resources are concerned, although it is increasing. Personal documents of MU employees and students are the resources most often shared.

Destroying documentation takes place regularly in accordance with the adequate national archive. The last document destruction took place in 2014 when there were ca. 80 linear meters of non-archival documentation of years 1987–1999 was destroyed.

The increasing number of documents, their wide range and type, content, utility for the further work in the organizational unit, and more often transferred responsibility for the final condition of documentation from the organizational units to the archive, place very specific demands on the archive's staff. The staff responsible for keeping the MU archive are two people with tertiary education, and one person with secondary education.

The MU archive is housed in three rooms with a total area of 285 m, equipped with wooden and compact bookcases. All of the rooms are appropriately adapted to work with future documentation.

The rooms are protected from bystanders and from fire (smoke alarms, dry-powder extinguisher, external shutters, and anti-burglar blinds). The glass in the windows is dark-tinted for sunlight protection.

The MU archive obtained control of all the organizational units functioning in the area of the registration of documents. The archive may expect some benefits of document registration supervision in the University. Thanks to the archive's activity in the so-called foreground, preparation and transferring the files to the archive has been improved. The MU's organizational units control allowed for the evaluation of office and archival regulation application in the MU's everyday activity, enabling the possibility to show of any deficiencies. The main problems were improper methods in the recording of files, classification, signing, and joining the documents in cases, and overdue documentation transfers.

Conclusions

Archives of the scientific institutions and universities play a very important role in society. It needs to be emphasized that the Maritime University of Szczecin's archive tries to complete all the tasks required by the national legislature as far as storing, developing, collecting, securing, and sharing its resources is concerned.

The resources which have been collected over the years constitute a treasury allowing for exploration of the history of the University and the region, as well as the issues related to maritime schooling development in Western Pomerania. The archive has become a real resource for the academic society's memory due to its inextricable link with the University's history and its rich scientific, didactic, cultural and social activity. It comprises a significant amount of documentation created since 1947 by particular organizational units, beginning with the Maritime State School and continuing on to the Maritime University of Szczecin.

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