A Look Toward New Initiatives: Felician College Library Archive

by Angelica Diggs, Archival Associate

The archive at Felician College was first established in 1998 and managed by Sister Mary Victoria Olender, who worked within the Office of the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance. Similar to many archivists beginning a new project, Sister Victoria transformed hundreds, if not thousands, of documents into a functioning college archive, and Felician’s archive now stores over 600 boxes of flat file materials documenting the college’s functions and history, over 500 photographs, newspapers, books, audio cassette tapes, slides, and more. In 2002, Sister Victoria commissioned a Caucus Archival Projects Evaluation Service (CAPES) report completed through the New Jersey Historical Commission that outlined the steps needed for a successful archive collection, all of which was executed during her tenure. In 2013 Sister Victoria retired from her position, and the administration of the archive at Felician College shifted so that it is now under the supervision of Library Services, creating new opportunities in archival management and collaboration.

The archive is now managed by Archival Associate Angelica Diggs. In January 2015 the archive commissioned a second CAPES report, documenting the achievements made by Sister Victoria and prioritizing next steps. Important conversations have begun around records management, digitization, relevance to the college and outside researchers, and academic engagement. One priority is to revise a records management policy to ensure the transfer of materials to the archive and make available all finding aids and metadata on the archive webpage. As the amount of digital materials transferred to the archive has grown, the overall goal is to maintain and develop a digital storage plan and to begin to digitize parts of the existing collection. With the help of student workers, a photograph collection was digitized and organized into an online gallery in early 2015. Projects such as these will be completed over time, but the goal is to partner with funding organizations in the future to ensure the digital preservation of the material, create a dynamic online gallery, and strengthen research opportunities.

A new initiative for the library and archive is the development of a digital repository. Faculty, undergraduate-level, and graduate-level student work will be presented and downloadable. The repository reinforces the importance of archiving college scholarship of both students and faculty. While records management and a look towards digitization opportunities are vital to the success of the archive, we have begun to ask ourselves how to promote intellectual discovery of the material and integration into the curriculum. The archive is to become a part of this success by creating academic opportunities and partnerships within the college and inter-institutionally. These collaborations will shift the archive from serving solely as a repository to providing primary material for courses. The first step in this vision is to work with Felician College’s Library Committee and begin the conversations on what is possible. While these goals outlined will take time, the prospect of what can be achieved is exciting for the archive at Felician College. The archive is embracing changes in management and mission, confident that these changes will make an impact.
From the Felician College Archive: Commencement, 1969
From the Felician College Archive: Felician College Library, 1960s