I would like to preface my remarks by saying that working with faculty and students is one of the most rewarding aspects of my job as Archivist at Oberlin College. In this particular project, the enthusiasm of the faculty member, Carol Lasser, and her students is very contagious. The Archives staff is motivated not only to provide excellent reference assistance, but to also to look to other resources and colleagues for assistance. Partnering with reference librarians and technical staff has proved most helpful. As College Archivist, I have used this experience to help make connections with other faculty to create opportunities to use primary materials for their courses. It has also reminded me to better appreciate the role of the archives across campus, in the community, and beyond.

The Oberlin College Archives and Library staff supported three Mellon projects involving primary source materials from our archival holdings. The first round of the Mellon Grant, 2010-12, involved collaboration with faculty, students, and an administrator to create two online digital collections: The King-Crane Commission and the Shansi: Oberlin in Asia. Screen shot one displays the landing page of the Shansi: Oberlin in Asia online collection that contains letters, photographs, reports, maps and other materials related to Oberlin missionaries and Shansi representatives service in China from 1881-1949. Screen shot two shows a photo from the King-Crane Commission members. The 1919 King-Crane Commission, co-led by Oberlin College President Henry Churchill King, traveled to the Middle East after World War I to ascertain the effects of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the needs of the native people.
The main objective of these two projects was to provide access to archival materials through CONTENTdm. Archives and Library staff created a standardized template with approved metadata fields for entries. These materials are available for teaching, research, and scholarship.

Screen shot #1

Screen shot – Homepage of the Shansi: Oberlin in Asia online digital collection http://www.oberlin.edu/library/digital/shansi/

Screen shot #2
In 2012 Professor Lasser and I attended a workshop on “Teaching the Archives” at Smith College. The attendees, mostly faculty members and archivists from various colleges, discussed ideas about using primary resource materials for teaching and scholarship. Professor Lasser and I used this workshop experience to create projects for her First Wave American Feminisms class during the 2013 spring semester. Students transcribed and wrote historical analysis statements and annotated footnotes of primary source documents related to female Oberlin students, women’s organizations, and student organizations. The projects were mounted on the Oberlin College Archives web site. Screen Shot three displays the homepage of these projects.
When the second round of Mellon Grant funds became available, Professor Lasser and I applied for a grant to continue the work begun in the spring of 2013. Screen shot four shows the online announcement of the second round of Mellon Grants.
During the 2015 spring semester Professor Lasser’s students in HIST 213, First Wave American Feminisms students once again transcribed and wrote historical analysis statements and annotated footnotes of primary source documents related to female Oberlin students, women’s organizations, and student organizations. These are the projects that our student team worked on this summer. You will hear more about this later in the session. These projects along with those of spring 2013, and future projects from the Second Wave American Feminisms course in the spring 2016, will eventually be included in an online Word Press digital collection.

The collaboration with Professor Lasser and her students has provided many things to consider and continue to improve for future projects.

1. We have identified strengthens and weaknesses in our collection as they relate to supporting the curriculum. Further, student projects
included materials from infrequently used collections or more recent acquisitions, thus providing visibility to the broader scope and extent of the holdings of the archives.

2. The role of the Archivist in support of the curriculum continues to develop. The Archivist is involved in the selection process of materials for class assignments because of his/her knowledge of the collections, but also learns about and contributes to the pedagogical discussion.

3. The Archivist helps to teach research methods to the students through instructional sessions, and provides further assistance in navigating the collections and related resources during the research visits. This includes providing assistance with finding guides, citations for footnotes and bibliographies, and scans for inclusion in documents. It also includes a more extensive discussion of the collections, how they may or may not relate to one another, and what other resources (both internal or external to Oberlin) can help expand the teaching, research, and scholarship.

4. In this particular project, Digitizing American Feminisms, the end result is digital images, transcriptions, annotated bibliographies and footnotes, and other resources all wrapped into the various projects that show the depth of research, relationship of documents to collections, and tell a story that goes far beyond the scans and metadata that were part of the first round of the Mellon Grants.

I would like to elaborate on this statement. I am not minimizing the work that went into creating and maintaining The King-Crane Commission and Shansi digital collection projects, and other digital collection on our web site. These projects have involved many people, much research, and resulted in online resources used for teaching, research, and scholarship by Oberlin faculty, students, as well visiting researchers to College Archives. We have created digital collections for various themes in Oberlin’s history such as Oberlin and Civil Rights. The landing page and an example of the descriptive fields for an entry in this collection are depicted in screen shots five and six.
Oberlin and Civil Rights landing page -
http://dcollections.oberlin.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15963coll16
Finally, this collaboration provides a unique opportunity for an Archivist to have an integral role in the learning process. Faculty and Archivist work as a team to create a framework for the research projects. Primary source materials are being used extensively. The students are very engaged in the work and they are learning to analyze the documents and also to put ideas into a broader historical context.

And, most important, students are enjoying their work!

Thank you.