



TED STEVENS
FOUNDATION

April 8, 2014

U.S. Mail and Email (pkgamble@alaska.edu)

Patrick K. Gamble
President
University of Alaska
202 Butrovich Hall
PO Box 755000
Fairbanks, AK 99775-5000

Re: Ted Stevens Paper Project

Dear President Gamble:

In the spring of 2009 your predecessor, Mark Hamilton, on behalf of the University of Alaska, signed an agreement with Senator Ted Stevens concerning the deposit of his papers with the University. Those papers have been on deposit since 2009 and are being processed by staff at the Rasmuson Library in Fairbanks.

As the chair of the Ted Stevens Foundation, I have worked with BP and others to facilitate gifts of over \$1,000,000 to assist with the cost of processing the Senator's papers. The Foundation, under its prior name, is a signatory to the November 2009 Partnership Agreement between BP, University of Alaska Fairbanks and the UA Foundation. Over the past several months a number of events have occurred that have caused the Foundation to become more interested in the status of the papers project.

First, late last summer we learned the private funds donated to the University for processing costs have been expended or encumbered and without an infusion of additional funds the processing will be suspended. This came as somewhat of a surprise because we had been told at the outset these funds would more than cover the cost of the processing of the papers. We have since learned there may be \$126,000 remaining of the funds donated to assist with processing the papers.

Second, we learned at the same time that while the over 4000 boxes had been reviewed and the contents by file name had been catalogued, much processing remained to be done.

Third, the Foundation retained a distinguished national expert in the area of archiving and processing of papers collections to assist and advise us. Last fall our expert traveled to Fairbanks to meet with the staff, review the progress to date and advise us as to what an appropriate level of organizing and processing would be for the collection

Fourth, Governor Parnell reached out to Mrs. Stevens to inquire as to the status of the papers and expressed an interest in ensuring the papers were properly processed and potentially digitized.

Fifth, the archivist recruited in the fall of 2010 to oversee the processing of the collection resigned from the University in January and took a position out of state. Her assistant with whom we have worked well was promoted to take her place. She has provided valuable support to the papers project for several years and continues to do so.

Sixth, at the Foundation's request, the staff at the Rasmuson Library provided us an estimate for the time and cost of the remainder of the processing and digitizing the collection. The estimate predicted it could take as long as 40 years to process the collection and cost over \$18 million dollars.

Taken together, these events have caused the Foundation and Mrs. Stevens to pause and evaluate the work that remains to properly preserve and process this important collection. With the departure of the former archivist and the need to obtain more funds, we think it is timely to work with the University to develop a comprehensive plan and budget for the remaining processing of the papers. We seek your assistance to facilitate such a plan.


The Foundation has been actively preparing a plan to raise funds to support the papers, from private and public sources. We look forward to updating you as this effort continues. In the short term, however, we would like to discuss how the approximately \$126,000 remaining from the existing grants from BP and others will be used.

We request, before additional staff is hired, the University agree that in part those funds can be used for a short-term project to provide the University and the Foundation with additional support. Specifically, we would like to obtain the services of an archivist with experience in processing large papers collections to (a) assess the current status of the collection and the processing and report to the Foundation and the University; (b) work with the Foundation to develop a plan for the further processing of the collection; and (c) advise both the University and the Foundation as to their thoughts on the priorities for processing and organizing.

Patrick K. Gamble
April 8, 2014
Page 3

Our purpose is twofold. First, we would like to obtain an independent assessment of the current status of the papers, the processing plan, the priorities of processing the papers and what that is likely to cost. Second, we think that working with someone with extensive archival experience would result in the development of a process which is consistent with other similar collections. We suggest the parties commit to recruiting someone for this task to be done over the course of this summer. The Foundation would be happy to take the lead in identifying such a person and would obviously make sure the person was acceptable to the University. We would ask the University to help with housing if possible, to compensate the consultant and to accommodate them at the library. We anticipate the consultant would work closely with the current archivist of the Ted Stevens Papers Project to develop a solid plan for moving forward.

We would like to move ahead with this review as soon as possible. I hope the University will agree that the process outlined above has value and will work with the Foundation to implement it. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

Timothy A. McKeever
Chair

cc: Mrs. Catherine Stevens (via email)
Chancellor Brian Rogers, University of Alaska Fairbanks (via U.S. Mail and email)
Dean of the Libraries Bella Gerlich, University of Alaska Fairbanks (via US Mail and email)
Carla Beam, President, University of Alaska Foundation (via U.S. Mail and email)

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