



Amy Surak  
Distinguished Lasallian - Administrator  
2017-2018

Amy Surak, Director of Archives and Special Collections, is an outstanding Lasallian administrator. Her central role within the community is clear from the very nature of her work. She preserves, studies, and interprets our Lasallian heritage for students, scholars, and others worldwide.

Teaching and scholarship are the main components of Amy's work. She lectures on Catholic history, the history of the Brothers and the College, the mission of the Archives, the history and significance of relics, and the preservation and conservation of cultural materials. Her teaching shows our students the breadth of historical inquiry as well as the value of careful attention to detail. She captures their interest and engages their minds.

Amy also teaches through the exhibits she develops for the College and the Brothers. This requires effective management, substantial investigative work, outstanding written and visual communication skills, and an ability to develop and maintain good relations with artists and sponsors who are not always easy to work with. Amy also recognizes the importance of digital collections and their potential for making key documents and artifacts freely available to the public. She recently developed a new Archives web site as well as a new online catalog, and she is currently working on the next stage—a series of digital exhibits.

Last year Amy assisted patrons with nearly 200 major research requests, many of which required considerable investigation on her part. Amy is responsible not just for providing information, but for interpreting archival materials so that patrons fully understand their historical and cultural context.

Amy's teaching role also extends to her student workers—Manhattan College undergraduates as well as the NYU graduate students who work with her as interns. Over the past decade, Amy has helped her students secure professional positions as well as admission to the top graduate programs.

Amy's commitment to service can also be seen in everything she does. She routinely helps student journalists conduct research for the *Quadrangle*, and she has been continuously involved in projects with Advancement, Athletics, Marketing and Communications, and other campus agencies. At the same time, her work extends well beyond the boundaries of the College. Amy's expertise and commitment are appreciated by scholars worldwide, especially within the Lasallian community. She recently hosted the international meeting of the De La Salle Archivist

Association and played a key role in last summer's Buttimer Conference. A Google search for her name will reveal just a few of the projects she's worked on. I did that search, and I was delighted to find that three-quarters of the top twenty search results refer to *our* Amy Surak.

Amy's work is of particular importance because it helps us evaluate the impact of the Lasallian tradition on education, student development, secular culture, and Catholic history. The work of the Brothers *is* the work of the Archives. In recognition of this, most of the North American districts of the Christian Brothers have transferred their archival collections to Manhattan College and placed them under Amy's care. She helps ensure that our Catholic and Lasallian identity is visible throughout the College, and her work promotes a deeper understand of what that identity means.

Amy is invariably respectful of all who use the Archives. She provides information, artifacts, and documents to the academic, Lasallian, and local communities, along with the advice, assistance, expertise, and judgement that allow them to make good use of our collections. *Then* she helps them find the information that satisfies their newly discovered need for *more* information, *more* documents, *more* history. Amy is consistently generous and patient with those who need her help.

I am honored to introduce Amy Surak as this year's Distinguished Lasallian Administrator.

Presented by William H. Walters, Executive Director, Library