

Public Records Overview

Joel Curran
Vice Chancellor
Communications and Public Affairs

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THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL



National initiative to promote a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information.

What is a “record?”

The University defines a “public record” as all records created or received in the course of University business, in whatever format, including but not limited to paper, photographs, recordings, emails or digital images, unless an exception applies under federal or state law.

<http://policies.unc.edu/policies/public-records/>

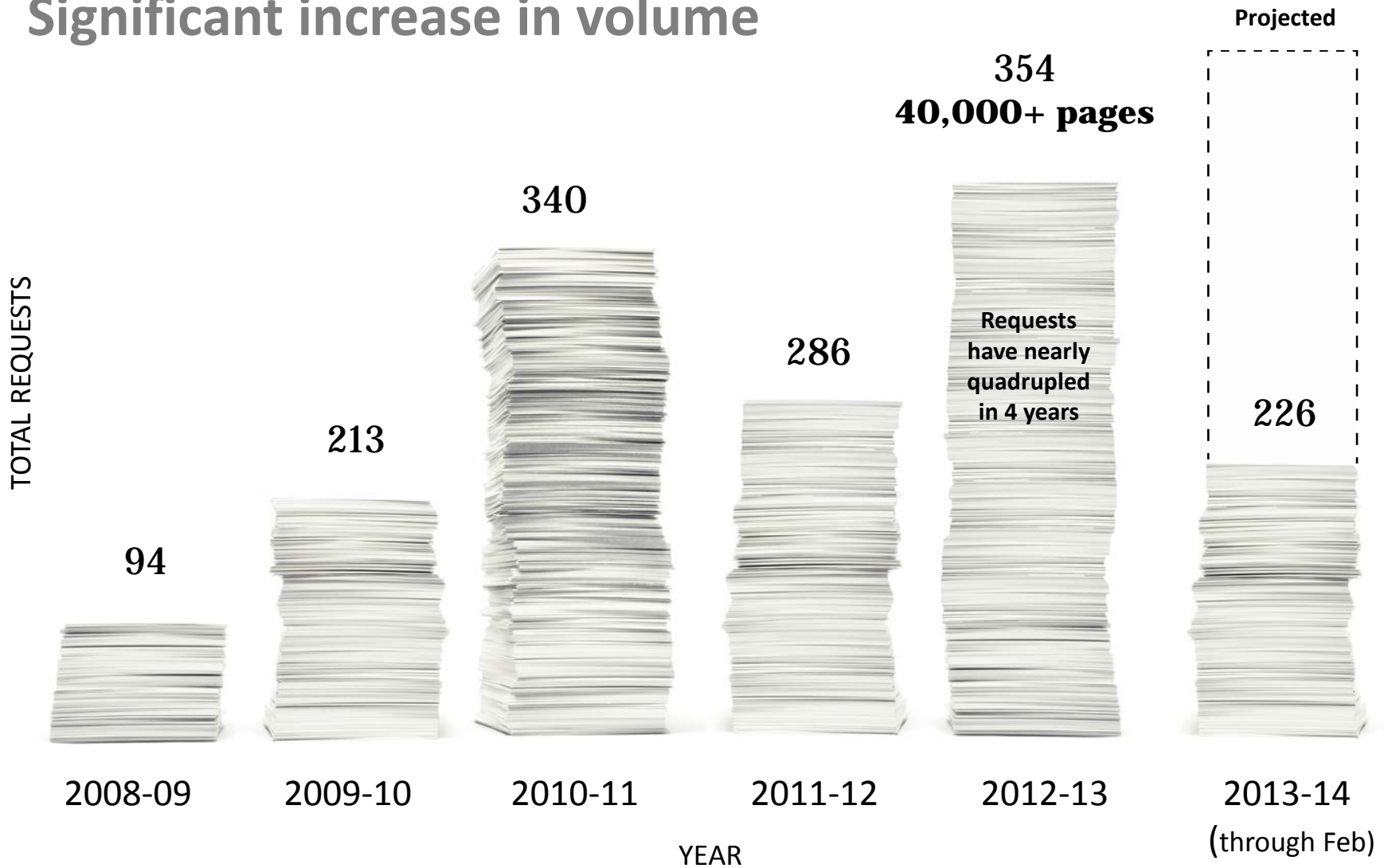
Who makes records requests?

Media, civic groups, policy groups, researchers, faculty, staff, students, general public

Public Records Policy

- North Carolina citizens and members of the North Carolina media are given highest priority.
- General rule: first-in, first-out basis (exceptions are made when deemed essential by the University)
- Records reviewed for compliance with FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) and the N.C. State Personnel Act, among other federal and state laws

Significant increase in volume



Public Records Requests

No two requests are the same

Straight-forward: Seeking the public information available for one University employee

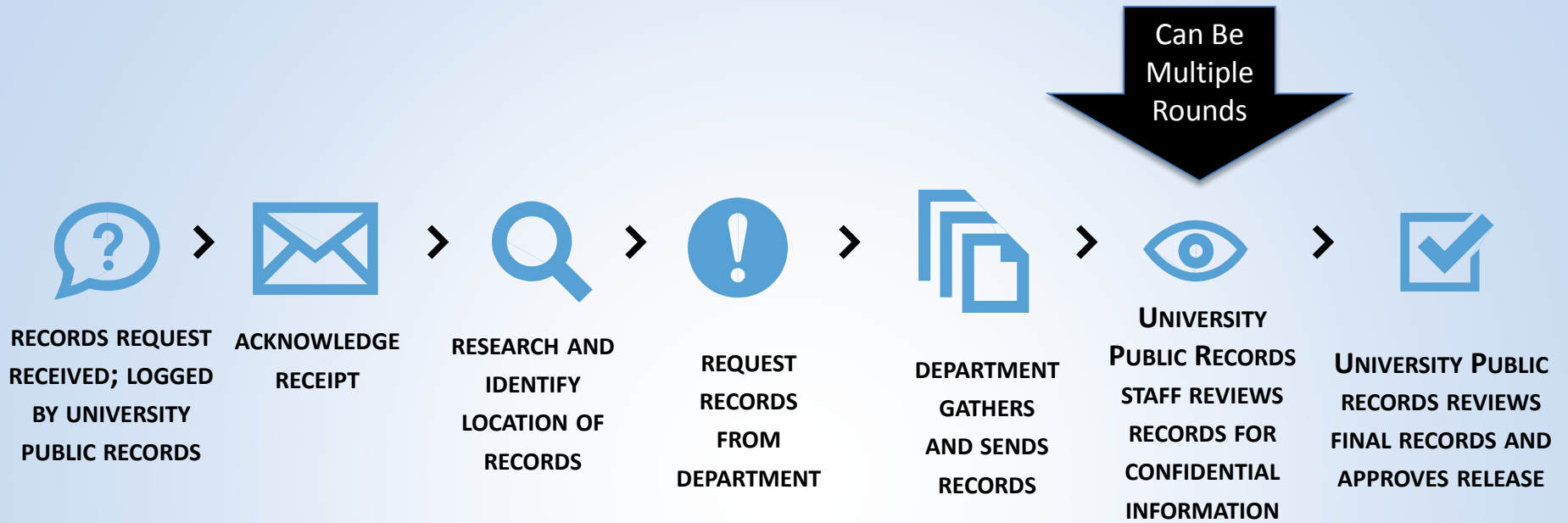
Complex: Seeking sent and received emails for 5 employees in a 6-month time period referencing any of 5 specified words

A single request may contain multiple parts

Example: Requesting a 10-year breakdown of a, b, and c and the expenses related to x, y and z

Public Records Processing

- Dedicated records employees: 9
- \$600,000 per year in personnel costs for UNC-Chapel Hill records team
- Other departments regularly involved (costs not included):
 - Human Resources, Registrar's Office, Athletics, Public Safety and University Relations
- Other University faculty and staff who are subjects of records requests



Complexity + Volume + Speed = Process Time



UNIVERSITY PUBLIC RECORDS RELEASES RECORDS

How does the N.C. Public Records Law affect you?

- Faculty, staff and (occasionally) students are subject to records requests
 - Emails, documents, phone logs, budgets, expenditures, etc.
- If your records are requested, we will need your help in gathering what is responsive to send to University Public Records office.

Ways to Improve

- Keep requesters informed
- Fill partial requests when possible
- Continue enhancement of I.T. capabilities
- Continue improving team efficiencies

2015 GOALS:

- **Records website**
- **Continue to improve overall efficiencies**
- **More regular communications throughout processing of request**



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