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Special at the Core: Aligning, Integrating, and Mainstreaming Special Collections in the Research Library

Lisa R. Carter, Associate Director for Special Collections and Area Studies, The Ohio State University Libraries, and Visiting Program Officer, ARL Transforming Special Collections in the Digital Age Working Group

As collections "generally characterized by artifactual or monetary value, physical format, uniqueness or rarity, and/or an institutional commitment to long-term preservation and access," special collections are typically "housed in a separate unit with specialized security and user services [and] circulation of materials usually is restricted."[1] By virtue of their particular nature, special collections have often been treated separately. And yet, as "distinctive signifiers of excellence,"[2] special collections offer abundant opportunity for the whole of a research library to achieve its teaching, learning, and research mission.

In "Rebalancing the Investment in Collections," Tom Hickerson noted that "special collections can become an increasingly central element of our libraries—but special collections must first become a central element of our libraries. A new alignment is necessary, incorporating special collections, staffing, and expertise into the common asset base of the library."[3] He went on to cite the importance of "mission alignment both with the broader library and with the university mandate" and the need for "new organizational structures [to bring] librarians and archivists together to pursue common outcomes." Finally, he noted that special collections may have "a role as an integral leader in shaping the evolving 21st-century collection—but it will be as a component activity contributing to broad institutional goals."

In its 2012 issue brief on calibrating investment and taking collaborative action, the ARL Task Force on 21st-Century Research Library Collections noted that the "wealth of [library] resources will only

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be realized through coordinated and effective advocacy, discovery, and creativity by research library staff" and that "the enduring need within the library for deep subject expertise will be increasingly met by teamwork and cross institutional partnerships," suggesting the collaboration needed to leverage distinctive collections.[4] While "stewardship of unique assets associated with an institution/library is an increasing priority," this prioritization will take place within a more holistic view of research library collections as "components of the academy's knowledge resources."

A Call for Evidence

As the ARL Working Group on Transforming Special Collections in the Digital Age investigates models to advance coordinated efforts related to special collections, the group is compiling evidence of the incorporation of special collections more holistically into library initiatives. In 2012, the working group issued a call for proposals of case studies that demonstrated how special collections were being aligned, integrated, mainstreamed, or centralized into broader library operations. Twenty-six ARL institutions answered the call, offering a wide array of examples. From that group, six cases were selected to document a diverse set of models in this special issue of *RLI*.

Just as special collections are distinctive "trademarks"[5] of institutions, the ways libraries are aligning, integrating, and mainstreaming special collections are uniquely suited to each local academic environment and the prevailing library culture. And yet some patterns emerged from the case studies, while other anticipated trends did not.

Mission Aligned

Alignment of collecting with university strengths and library mission was well represented throughout the proposals. Many of the submissions described how a specific, significant collection or a targeted collecting area was directly aligned with university priorities and the library's mission to support research strengths and distinguished areas of teaching and learning. For example, Cornell University highlighted its Hip Hop Collection as an initiative that advanced many top institutional priorities and increased academic discourse on campus. The University of Southern California told of the inventive ways it uses special collections as points for engagement with students, faculty, and the community to enrich knowledge building. The case study from York University included in this issue of *RLI* describes how it responded to significant changes in its academic community by collecting in an area of interest to graduate students and new faculty; capturing an untold story of a local community; digitizing for wide, international access; and enabling cross-university collaboration to expose special collections. The working group also included here Syracuse University's story of marshaling resources from across the library to drive the acquisition of and access to its plastics collection to support an area of developing research strength at the university.

Deeply Engaged

A majority of the cases reported on rich engagement in the classroom, in the research process, and with communities of interest. A great deal of evidence surfaced to indicate that many special collections units are involved in reciprocal partnerships that advance learning, inspire dialogue, and draw use. Intense use and curricular development served as markers of success. Given this response and in light of the recent publication of *Past or Portal? Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives,*[6] it

is evident that the current gold standard is a special collections department that is heavily engaged with faculty and students. The working group heard about curricular-based collection development and class sessions tailored for active learning at Dartmouth College. Georgetown University created an intensive special collections–based research experience to develop lifelong academic habits of using primary sources, which is expanding across the university's core curriculum. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign described its special collections as an anchor to the curriculum, a cultural center of campus, and an inspiration for academic discourse among faculty and students. University of Iowa leveraged social networking to enhance Civil War resources, an effort that has created a loyal audience, inclusion in classroom instruction, and donations. In this issue of *RLI*, the working group offers Ohio University's story of a collaborative effort that combined a common technological platform and archival resources to teach writing in a way that reflects the changing model of knowledge construction and demonstrates the relevance of special collections in the digital age.

Centrally Positioned

A smaller group of submissions demonstrated that, at some libraries, special collections are increasingly represented at the core. In these institutions, the move to bring special collections into the center of the organization is a driving force for change. University of California, Los Angeles, shared its effort to consolidate special collections silos in order to reduce redundancies, while pushing special collections work out into other library units to create efficiencies. At University of Utah, special collections sits as an equal partner on the library's leadership team and a variety of library units share the work of surfacing special collections. University of Calgary's reorganization merged special collections into the overall library structure to expose special materials for use and to streamline acquisitions, description, and processing activities. For this issue of *RLI*, University of California, Riverside, documents its long-standing strategy to incorporate its Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy into the center of its mission, planning, budgeting, operations, technical services, outreach, and engagement activities.

Operationally Integrated

Other responses to the working group's call offered exciting evidence that special collections has been integrated, coordinated, or blended into broad library functions. New organizational partnerships, staffing, and workflows result in efficiencies, synergies, and improvements for both the library as a whole and for special collections. At Pennsylvania State University, Special Collections and Interlibrary Loan worked together to appropriately enhance access to unique materials, testing the boundaries of efficiency, trust, and open access. University of Guelph's cross-functional teams have woven special collections throughout the organization and the special collections unit contributes to the development of policies, best practices, and projects. University of Pittsburgh's effort to enhance access to collections through the Documenting Pitt website required unified effort from, and resulted in shared benefit to, various library and university departments. Columbia University submitted case studies describing an organizational turnaround that repurposed staff lines while recasting curatorship as well as intra-library leveraging of efforts to highlight special collections. In this issue of *RLI*, the working group includes the example Johns Hopkins University provided of how to integrate special collections directly into collection development decision making and into the liaison librarian role.

Agents of Change

The working group also looked for evidence of special collections as change agent, where special collections has driven changes or provided solutions that lead to innovation across the whole library program. In some organizations, special collections leads movement towards a prevailing current of activity. This was evident at Vanderbilt University, where special collections curators trained bibliographers to curate exhibits and developed new workflows to digitize, describe, and present resources. The New York University case study told of special collections leading instructional librarians in re-envisioning engagement in the classroom and assessing impact on learning outcomes. Representing special collections as catalyst in this issue of *RLI*, University of Massachusetts Amherst documents how Special Collections and University Archives worked with the Digital Strategies Group to develop digital competencies, collaborative skills, teamwork, and workplace adaptability in colleagues across the libraries.

Areas for Further Investigation

In the responses to the working group's call, the cases did not provide enough evidence that special collections are aligned, integrated, or mainstreamed in several critical areas. Few submissions addressed assessment, although Rutgers University shared how its technical services unit worked with special collections to develop a metadata tool to document use events in the digital environment in order to measure impact. Unified discovery, which Hickerson describes as essential, did not surface meaningfully, although University of Utah indicated that digitized primary sources are included in their main discovery platform and presented on equal footing with books, journal articles, and other resources. Special collections' role in evolving "policies and functional support for acquiring, managing, and supporting use of society's born digital record"[7] did not manifest, although Purdue University did reference the development of PURR (Purdue University Research Repository), which explores the issues involved in born-digital asset management. Bringing this last topic to the fore, ARL has partnered with the Society of American Archivists (SAA) to offer courses from SAA's Digital Archives Specialist Curriculum and Certificate Program to ARL communities in 2013–14, which should uncover concrete examples of where special collections are central to addressing the born-digital challenge on a campus.

This is not to say that stories on these matters do not exist. But the makeup of the submissions as a group suggests that, when asked about aligning, integrating, and mainstreaming special collections, libraries think about mission alignment and engagement first, integrating and mainstreaming workflows for efficiency second, and centralizing at an operational level third. Areas of greatest challenge for both libraries and special collections—assessment, unified discovery, and managing born-digital materials— remain as opportunities for further initiative, innovation, and articulation.

With the case studies included in this issue of *Research Libraries Issues*, the working group hopes that libraries will hear echoes of their own efforts to incorporate special collections into broader operations and initiatives. As research libraries envision how their distinctive collections might be better leveraged and promoted, the strategies described here might resonate with opportunities on the horizon. Further, with examples like these, research libraries may find that efforts to align, integrate, and centralize special collections can drive transformative change that enables the whole library to meet its teaching, learning, and research mission and become an effective partner in advancing the scholarly record.

Endnotes

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3   H. Thomas Hickerson, "Rebalancing the Investment in Collections," *Research Library Issues: A Bimonthly Report from ARL, CNI, and SPARC*, no. 277 (Dec. 2011): 5, http://publications.arl.org/rli277/6.

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Patron-Driven Acquisitions and the Development of Research Collections: The Case of the Portuguese Canadian History Project

Michael B. Moir, University Archivist and Head, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University Libraries

Established in 1959, York University is Canada's third-largest university, with more than 55,000 students and 7,000 faculty and staff engaged in interdisciplinary research and teaching. York's libraries are visited by more than 3 million people each year to consult in excess of 2.6 million printed volumes and 300,000 electronic resources. Since the late 1960s, this material has included research collections acquired to support the university's mission of "the pursuit, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge," and to "cultivate the critical intellect."[1] Librarians initially pursued the traditional gems of special collections: illuminated medieval manuscripts and early imprints bought from antiquarian book dealers in Europe and North America. Growing interest in Canadian studies, the creation of Canada's first comprehensive Faculty of Fine Arts in 1968, and the consolidation of responsibility for archives and rare printed material into a single department in the 1980s redirected this focus. By 2000, the acquisition policy for private archives stressed the themes of "Canadian women, Canadian writers, the arts, social reform, and the multi-cultural imagination,"[2] while special collections maintained an emphasis on Canadian studies through the addition of rare imprints and pamphlets "made on consultation with the appropriate bibliographer"[3] that complemented the private archives.

Changing Times

The demographic pressures of the postwar population boom that led to the creation of York University continue to play out in this millennium. The first generation of faculty hired to teach at York—those for whom the libraries' research collections were initially developed—have retired. Between 2003 and 2008, the university hired more than 530 new faculty members, a turnover of approximately 30 percent. Canadian studies have waned, while fields such as sexual diversity and environmental history demand greater attention. Both within and beyond the walls of the academy, an aging generation struggles to resolve the fate of their papers and libraries due to retirement; relocation to smaller, more manageable accommodations; financial planning; and serious illness or death. Many baby boomers and their families turn to academic libraries to secure their cultural legacy at a time of growing concern over the apparent disinterest of national institutions in preserving a comprehensive record of the country's past.[4] But what are archivists and librarians to do? At a time when the availability of potential donations far outstrips the resources available to preserve this material and make it accessible, how do libraries ensure a reasonable return on the investment of diminishing funds through collections use by the burgeoning ranks of new faculty and graduate students with new and sometimes unpredictable research interests?

Patron-driven acquisitions, or user-initiated collection development as is it also known, provide some useful answers. This response is by no means new. The case for documentation strategies put forward by Helen Samuels in response to similar pressures during the 1980s proposed the structured collaboration of the creators, administrators, and potential users of records to select material for archival retention that

would be representative of a particular region or theme.[5] While users would have active input into the decision-making process associated with collection development, so would archivists. Such was not the case with the Portuguese Canadian History Project/Projecto de História Luso-Canadiana.

Research Need

This ambitious initiative was started in October 2008 by Gilberto Fernandes and Susana Miranda, two graduate students in the doctoral program of the Department of History at York University, who were later joined by Raphael Costa and Emanuel da Silva. Unable to find sufficient primary sources in public archives to sustain their research, they sought material in private hands among the Portuguese community in Toronto. One of their earliest contacts was Domingos Marques, a devoted collector of documents pertaining to the development of his community. Due to his impending move to a new home, Marques transferred the collection to the care of the graduate students after they volunteered to arrange for its donation to an archival repository. They worked with Marques to arrange the collection and to capture metadata about its content through taped interviews. The success of this relationship led to the formal establishment of the project to pursue two goals: the preservation of records created by individuals or organizations associated with the Portuguese community in Canada, and "the democratization and dissemination of historical knowledge" by exploring formats that take history beyond the monograph or journal article to make it more accessible for "ordinary" Canadians, particularly those of Portuguese descent, to reflect upon their individual and collective experiences.

Responsive Collecting

The path toward the first goal of preserving records was begun by York's Department of History. Professor Marcel Martel, graduate program director, arranged a meeting between Fernandes and the head of York University Libraries' Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections (CTASC) in May 2009. Two years earlier, the libraries had released *Open Doors, Open Minds*, its strategic plan for 2007 to 2011. The plan outlined intentions to acquire unique collections with enduring research value, to experiment with innovative collection activities responsive to the needs of graduate students, to respond to student diversity and curriculum of an increasingly international nature by acquiring non-English-language material, and to develop collaborations on and off campus.

The Marques collection and other personal archives assembled by the Portuguese Canadian History Project closely aligned with these priorities. Much of the material would be used by the graduate students in theses, presentations, and publications. By bringing these documents into the public realm rather than leaving them in private hands, the libraries ensured that the students' work would support the rigor of scholarly criticism through open access to primary sources that were the foundation of their research. Many documents were in Portuguese and concerned events and personalities involved with the Portuguese community's social, economic, and political affairs. The project's team members, who are part of this community, were able to bridge divides of language and culture that would likely be impassible for CTASC's archivists. As graduate students in history, they were trained to recognize the research value of documents, thereby creating confidence in their appraisal decisions. The material was transferred to CTASC in October 2009, and under the stewardship of Anna St.Onge, archivist for digital projects and

outreach, donation agreements were signed between York University and the original owners of the records, inventories prepared with input from Fernandes and Costa, and income tax receipts issued after assessment by an external appraiser hired by the libraries to determine the market value of the gifts-in-kind.[6]

Streamlining Digital Activities

St.Onge also played a key role in ensuring that the project achieved its second goal of democratizing and disseminating historical knowledge. In March 2006, the libraries completed a Digitization Initiative Strategic Plan, which called for the use of scanning and web-based technologies to make unique Canadian research collections available to support research and teaching at York and around the globe. This objective became a component of *Open Doors, Open Minds*, and subsequent planning led by Andrea Kosavic, digital initiatives librarian, called upon the libraries to consider ways of engaging scholars to contribute to this process by assisting in the selection and description of documents for digitization. The libraries' willingness to digitize significant portions of these acquisitions in the context of these plans was a major factor in the project's decision to deposit the material with CTASC. The students discussed digitization with another organization eager to secure unique historical content, but the libraries offered open access through its online electronic document repository. This arrangement would allow researchers in Portugal to examine these images without paying a subscription fee.

The Department of History funded a graduate assistant position so that Costa could identify documents suitable for digitization and work on a virtual exhibit. St.Onge enlisted Kosavic and her digital initiatives assistants (undergraduate students hired on a part-time basis) to scan photographs and issues of *Communidade*, a newspaper for the Portuguese working-class community in Toronto's west end, using the annual operating funds of the Bibliographic Services Department, while Costa added metadata and documented the historical context for the material. St.Onge then collaborated with library computing services' software programmers to forge an online exhibit built using Omeka into a delivery vehicle for images, text, and video recordings. This workflow demonstrated that digital projects cut across departmental lines, and that they benefit from a flexible organizational structure that encourages archivists, librarians, and technicians to collaborate on initiatives. Digital projects also require effective communication among the libraries' management team. While it is generally understood that "[d]igitization and digital curation are no longer specialized activities; they are a part of the life-cycle management of special collections,"[7] such endeavors must be brought into the mainstream of annual budgeting and departmental work plans if the libraries' objectives based on leveraging unique research collections are to be achieved.

Reaching a Global Audience

The project's website was launched in October 2011, and—like the project as a whole—it is a success on several levels. Within 14 months of the site's release, there were more than 32,600 page views. The majority of the activity originated in Canada, but it also included a significant number of visitors from Portugal followed by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Italy. The statistics supported the graduate students' conviction that their work would appeal not only to scholars on both sides of the Atlantic

but also to Portuguese Canadians with an enduring interest in their heritage. The profile of the project has grown through conference presentations and activity on social media such as Facebook, and it has sparked emulation. Professor Sakis Gekas and graduate student Christopher Grafos of York's Department of History approached CTASC in June 2012 to develop a similar arrangement for the Greek Canadian History Project; its website came online in January 2013.[8] Meanwhile, the Portuguese Canadian History Project team continues to scout out privately held material "to preserve a larger and more representative sample of records reflecting the experiences of Portuguese immigrants and their descendants in Canada,"[9] but this time with CTASC's archivists much more involved in discussions with donors once the initial contact has been made.

User Driven, Mission Aligned

York University Libraries' experience with user-initiated development of special collections has been very positive in the context of its strategic objectives. Involvement with the Portuguese Canadian History Project has engaged graduate students in ways that significantly enhanced their academic experience, has brought unique elements of Canadian heritage into the public sphere that would have otherwise remained undiscoverable, has given an enduring voice to a community that was not well represented in archival repositories, and has connected the libraries with a global community of researchers. Will there be a sustained return on this investment? Given that the project maintains momentum after almost five years and that York University will host the inaugural conference of the Lusophone Studies Association in October 2013,[10] it is likely that these physical and virtual collections will only increase in relevance. The timing of the project is also propitious in terms of planning on a larger scale. York University's Academic Plan for 2010-2015 and the provost's white paper outlining strategic directions for 2010-2020 call for enhanced research capacity through strategic collaborations with external partners at local, regional, national, and global levels to become a more engaged university while coping with reduced government funding.[11] As demonstrated by the Portuguese Canadian History Project, patron-driven acquisition of special collections offers an effective mechanism to place academic libraries in the mainstream of achieving the university's core mission of building, disseminating, and preserving knowledge through collaboration and the engagement of external communities.

Endnotes

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4   Joseph Hall, "Historical Letters Not Wanted at Library and Archives Canada, Critics Say," *Toronto Star*, March 10, 2013, http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2013/03/10/historical_letters_not_wanted_at_library_and_archives_canada_critics_say.html. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) is among the most vocal critics of this development. CAUT's campaign to champion the country's libraries, archives, and museums in the face of federal budget cuts, "Canada's Past Matters," can be found at http://www.canadaspastmatters.ca/, accessed April 25, 2013.

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"There's a Great Future in Plastics":[1] Mainstreaming a Special Collection

Sean Quimby, Senior Director of Special Collections, Syracuse University Library

"Sean. Plastic. What do you think?" Those were the dean's exact words. I replied with hesitation, "I like plastic." I did, in fact, like plastic, or rather, the idea of plastic. A few years earlier, I found myself captivated, somewhat unexpectedly, by Jeffrey Meikle's book *American Plastic: A Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), which makes the case for plastic—malleable and imitative—as a defining metaphor for the post-modern age. Then, in the fall of 2008, an alumnus of Syracuse University (SU) and retired plastics entrepreneur alerted the SU Library to the fact that the National Plastics Center and Museum (NPC), situated in the industry's ancestral home of Leominster, Massachusetts, had decided to close and was looking to transfer its collection of books, archives, and artifacts elsewhere. With my enthusiastic support, the dean and the assistant dean for advancement visited the museum and brought back information on its collections to consider whether accepting this gift would add value to our existing special collections. The museum's artifacts included a variety of early plastics made of celluloid; thermoset plastics such as Bakelite; as well as those made popular after World War II, such as acrylics, polystyrene, polyethylene, polypropylene, and nylon. The archival materials documented important companies, including sunglasses manufacturer Foster Grant, as well as papers of inventors and entrepreneurs who helped make the 20th century the "Age of Plastic." The print collection included some 3,000 volumes, from early trade publications like *Modern Plastics* to esoteric books on polymer chemistry. The following case study describes SU Library's strategies and processes for mainstreaming this gift.

Alignment to Mission

Why, in an era of shrinking spaces and expanding backlogs, did the Syracuse University Library agree to accept this unconventional gift? First, the SU Library had a precedent for collecting artifacts. Second, the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) is home to more than 100 archival collections documenting the history of modern architecture and industrial design. Plastic, as a moldable material, has fascinated generations of designers. Among them was Russel Wright, whose dinnerware brought modernism (and plastic) to the tables of everyday Americans in the post-war years. Other designers from the same era, and also represented in SCRC's archival holdings, from Marcel Breuer to Richard Neutra, were drawn to the seemingly limitless potential of plastic. At the same time, faculty in the university's School of Architecture and the SU Humanities Center had recently hosted a symposium called "Plastic Modernities" that brought designers, theorists, historians, artists, and engineers together to consider plasticity as a concept, or design ideal. The symposium lasted just two days, but it helped the library identify a group of faculty members from various disciplines who would form an audience for the plastics collection. Chief among them was a professor of biomedical and chemical engineering, who heads up a research group that develops biodegradable, self-healing, and shape-memory polymers.

Given that the university was in the midst of an ambitious billion-dollar capital campaign and that, in 2008, plastics represented America's third-largest manufacturing sector, the dean, director of special

collections, and assistant dean for advancement agreed that this collection provided an opportunity to establish—and finance—a new research collection that appealed to a wide range of faculty and students, from engineering and industrial design to history and women's studies.[2] The small group imagined public programs, such as the "Plastic Modernities" symposium, courses, exhibitions, and publications that drew on the collection. After consulting widely within the library about the workload associated with this collection, the dean approved the project and assigned the assistant dean for advancement and the director of special collections as project co-managers to interface with prospective donors and coordinate library resources and staff. This set a collaborative tone that has persisted over the project's five years.

Work Begins

The assistant dean for advancement and the director of special collections drew up a fixed-term deposit agreement that allowed the library to take custody of the NPC collection and assured that the library would eventually own it. Then, in November 2008, the director of special collections drove the cargo-van filled with artifacts and several pallets of books and archives from Leominster to Syracuse. Along with the physical materials, the center transferred its archival finding aids, artifact metadata, and MARC records. The donor who initially brought the collection to the library's attention was now a member of the library's advisory board. He worked with some of his plastics business colleagues to provide seed money for the digitization of the artifact collection, something that they felt was vital to the project's success, and followed with time-limited funding for a curator.

To store materials temporarily, the dean reached an agreement with the university's Coalition of Museums and Art Centers (CMAC) to use space in a recently renovated, climate-controlled warehouse. The library plans to move the artifacts in 2013 to a newly constructed high-density storage facility, which has a constant temperature of 50 degrees and a relative humidity of 30 percent. Of the 3,000 or so artifacts, only half had been previously accessioned at the item-level. As item-level accessioning was required for the nascent digital project, this task was an early priority. With a workflow in place for archival collections, SCRC's archivists were able to create collection-level accession records and to import the electronic inventories into the SCRC's Encoded Archival Description (EAD) template.

Mainstreaming the Collection

Difficult-to-find printed volumes—mainly trade publications and obscure company histories, such as the amusingly titled *Be Seated by Bemis,* a history of the toilet-seat manufacturer—were retained in special collections. Other monographs, mostly volumes on polymer chemistry, found a temporary home in an unused meeting space. An item-level review revealed that many of them were duplicated in the circulating collections. The library's data systems administrator was able to streamline this process by extracting bibliographic records from NPC's catalog and matching them with the library's own holdings. With assistance from the library's subject specialist in chemistry, the new titles were integrated into the circulating collection. Where possible, the library retained NPC's copy and added a note that would identify them as being "On deposit from the National Plastics Center." (This was later changed to "Gift of…") New items were cataloged by staff in the cataloging unit. After consulting with NPC's representatives, the library decided to de-accession duplicate monographs.

Thousands of plastic artifacts placed unprecedented demands on the library's preservation program. The term "plastic" derives from the material's most desired quality—malleability. In spite of its reputation for longevity, most plastics degrade over time. As they "off-gas," many plastics become increasingly brittle, sometimes leaving a soupy residue. The library's conservator recommended stabilizing the environment (cool, but not cold, and dry) and re-housing the artifacts in acid-free cardboard containers that facilitated cross-ventilation and reduced the effects of off-gassing. Processing staff were able to fold this re-housing step into the digitization workflow. More recently, the conservator has reached out to institutions, such as the Smithsonian, that are actively investigating plastic's long-term preservation and conservation needs.

Digitization of the artifacts began soon after their arrival. (The library opted not to digitize paper-based materials at this point in part because of copyright considerations and in part because the advisory board felt that the website should feature the artifacts most prominently.) Rather than do this work in the library, which would have involved significant expenditures for equipment and staffing, the library contracted with the university's Photo and Imaging Center, a fee-based unit that reports to campus information technology. The director of special collections negotiated a reasonable per-item cost, which made it possible to present donors with an accurate budget for digitization. The photographer captured the images and used the item-level accession numbers as the filenames, which made it possible to match images to artifacts after the fact.

Newly captured images and existing metadata were imported into an instance of CONTENTdm that had been heavily customized by the library's information technology unit to provide access to the artifacts and associated metadata, as well as a growing corpus of interpretative content. Some of the more interesting objects, including a polystyrene Maccaferri guitar popularized by Django Reinhardt, were imaged as QuickTime Virtual Reality (QTVR) files, which allowed researchers to examine them from a variety of angles.

Ongoing Collaboration

From the outset, the library's assistant dean for advancement played a key role in coordinating the project's advisory group, which includes current and potential donors as well as subject-area experts. Besides co-authoring the deposit agreement, he worked successfully to transform the deposit into an outright gift one year ahead of schedule. Above all, he serves as an interpreter among the donors, translating terms like "metadata" and "faceted browsing" for them. His continuing involvement is particularly important given the degree to which the plastics advisory board is involved in the day-to-day development of the website. Moreover, he has helped secure more than $300,000 in project funding. A portion of that funding was used to hire a temporary curator when, after discussions with the advisory board, it became apparent that the goal was not simply to build a website that showcased the collection, but rather one that functioned as an authoritative resource and included rich interpretative content. A subsequent gift of $150,000 has supported the design and construction of a small reading room in Bird Library that features permanent exhibition space, a selection of books and artifacts, a workstation dedicated to browsing the collection website, as well as mid-century modern soft seating that evokes the "Age of Plastic." The reading room will be dedicated in 2013.

In the summer of 2011, the project co-managers decided to move the plastics collection website from the CONTENTdm platform to a custom XML database application that was developed under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Rather than simply transferring images and metadata from one application to another, the project team took the opportunity to reimagine the website altogether. The team included staff from SCRC, library advancement, and library IT, and incorporated input from the advisory group. Early in the project, speed mattered to the donors who were accustomed to the pace of the marketplace, so the initial website was developed quickly. To accomplish this, the team relied heavily on metadata inherited from the National Plastics Center, which was sometimes inaccurate. For version 2.0, all parties agreed to a more measured, methodical approach. The project curator and lead archivist from SCRC undertook extensive fact-checking and copyediting of the existing metadata to insure that the migration process was smooth. Continuing donor support made it possible to hire the Manhattan-based web design firm Flat to develop a clean, facet-driven interface that allowed patrons to navigate the site's multifarious content. The project launched version 2.0 in May 2012.

The position of curator, a temporary donor-funded position, was critical. The curator, a PhD in architectural history with relatively little library experience, faced a steep learning curve, having to familiarize himself with the jargon of two fields while accessioning the remainder of the objects (with assistance from a museum studies intern), drafting a collection development policy, acquiring and processing new archival materials, helping to raise funds, organizing an exhibition, and leading the campus outreach effort. He also worked with the library's Program Management Center to organize a user study of the website prior to the redesign. The user study helped the library to differentiate better between the collection itself—artifacts, books, and archives—and the interpretative content written by the curator. Unfortunately, donor funding for the position has run out. For the time being, many tasks have been incorporated into special collections day-to-day work while the dean and assistant dean for advancement work to endow the position permanently. Website development has been assigned to the SCRC staff member responsible coordinating the digitization of the Marcel Breuer archive. She has experience with the new technological platform and has established a strong working relationship with the advisory committee.

Integrated for Sustainability

So, what is the future of plastics at Syracuse University? The collection is here to stay. The SU Library has committed considerable time, space, and expertise to caring for it. Because the plastics collection aligns with emerging academic programs in the sciences and humanities, it has been a strategic priority for the dean. She has ensured that stewardship is shared across relevant library units and has maintained an active involvement with the project, especially in donor cultivation. The director of special collections has been responsible for managing the collection. The associate dean for administration helps coordinate budget planning, the director of communications ensures that the collection publicizes new developments, and the assistant dean for advancement continues to seek permanent funding for the curator position. On the ground, the library's main cataloging unit makes sure that any newly acquired circulating volumes relating to plastics or polymer science are linked intellectually to the larger plastics collection, while programmers from library IT are working to enhance the website's functionality.

The success of this project to date is due in part to the extensive network of collaboration across the library, the campus, and among donors. The project's "hands-on" advisory committee comprises plastics donors, scholars, and librarians. Such collaboration is not always easy; it requires patience, attention, and flexibility from all parties. The dean, assistant dean for advancement, and director of special collections engage in frequent—and sometimes spirited—debates over how to best synchronize donor goals with those of the library. At the same time, the plastics project signifies the sort of interdisciplinary cooperation that is much talked about, but not always realized, on college campuses. The dilemma is that, while this is a great collection, it falls low in priority when measured against other critical position needs in the library. Looking ahead, the library continues to acquire new materials, notably a world-class collection of celluloid, to refine the collection's web presence, and to encourage faculty use of the collection. When all is said and done, the future of plastics at SU Library will depend upon the ability to raise the funds required to support the ambitious program envisioned at the outset—visiting scholars, seminars and colloquia, changing exhibitions—the sort of activities that signal a truly vibrant library.

Endnotes

1   *The Graduate*, directed by Mike Nichols (1967).

2   Society of the Plastics Industry, "New SPI Report Shows Global Recession's Impact on State of US Plastics in the International Marketplace," news release, October 21, 2009, http://www.plasticsindustry.org/Press/newsdetail.cfm?ItemNumber=3381.

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Integrating Special Collections into the Composition Classroom: A Case Study of Collaborative Digital Curriculum

Matthew Vetter, Assistant Director of Composition and Graduate Teaching Associate, English Department, Ohio University

Sara Harrington, Head of Arts and Archives, Ohio University Libraries

In 2010, 73% of college students reported using the online encyclopedia *Wikipedia* for course-related research.[1] As the encyclopedia becomes a given in student research processes, librarians and teachers are increasingly recognizing the importance of teaching students about this source. *Wikipedia* also offers a number of opportunities for librarians and academics interested in digital curriculum development. The following case study describes a collaborative project to embed *Wikipedia* and special collections into the student experience. The project was designed by authors Matt Vetter, PhD candidate and teaching associate in English, and Sara Harrington, head of arts and archives, at Ohio University. New to her position, Harrington wanted to collaborate with a teaching faculty member in a way in which "the boundaries separating the disciplines begin to blur, and the partners are in the space of collaboration or of listening together in this special way. The partners find a language and common goals."[2] The project was executed with significant contribution from Bill Kimok, Judith Connick, and Doug McCabe, staff at Ohio University Libraries' Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn Center for Archives and Special Collections.

In Line with Strategic Directions

From the Ohio University Libraries' strategic perspective, the project modeled a programmatic direction for the use of special collections that addressed a number of goals. First, the project supported the integration of special collections and archival materials, alongside "regular" library collections, into departmental and course curricula. Because the project entailed direct partnership between the libraries and the composition program, it also promoted interdisciplinary collaboration and aligned with initiatives to "embed" librarians into the work of university departments and programs. Engaging directly with *Wikipedia* further allowed the utilization of digital technologies for mainstreaming activities. Mainstreaming special collections in the undergraduate classroom is increasingly part of information literacy efforts.[3] Knowledge creation by students is also an information literacy priority.

Organizational change within the Ohio University Libraries was foundational for the project. Enhanced collaboration with faculty and colleagues and fostering new uses for special collections were imperatives outlined for Harrington's position by the library administration based on current strategic directions. Additionally, the libraries used the balanced scorecard methodology to produce a living strategic document that guides the daily work of the organization. Building on the Ohio University Libraries' mission, vision, and values, the organization defined strategies and measures to assess work done towards achieving the mission of the libraries. The measure most pertinent to this project is the "number of classes where students are interacting with the Libraries' unique materials to produce a publicly visible product." This project thus served as a model for the libraries in both the nature of the collaboration and the product. Harrington hopes in the future to partner with subject librarians and faculty members to produce similar products using special collections materials.

Knowledge Production as Process

This project and related curricular efforts also promoted a conceptual notion of libraries and special collections as more open, democratic, and fluid spaces for information creation and dissemination. The article "The Museum: A Temple or the Forum" by Duncan Cameron[4] provided a conceptual framework for this project. Cameron sought to open up the museum world to new audiences. The article's precepts are particularly relevant for libraries today, especially for special collections, with its tradition of hushed halls and closed stacks. Cameron argued that "the forum is a **process**, the temple a **product**." The dialogue libraries increasingly seek with students and faculty is characteristic of a forum in its exchange of ideas and mirrors the increasingly open, democratic process of knowledge creation in the digital age.

For the English department, the project accomplished a number of learning outcomes. Writing in *Wikipedia* allowed students to study the social nature of knowledge production and to engage in writing for a rhetorically active discourse community with "real" publics and committed audiences. Students involved in this project were more motivated, more aware of an increased set of outside audiences for their writing, and more engaged in the research process, findings made apparent through Vetter's collection of data throughout.

Embedded into Curriculum Design

The project's design and implementation reflected both the goals of the libraries and the desired outcomes of the English department and was built directly into the course curriculum of a junior-level, general education composition course, Writing & Rhetoric II. In designing this curriculum, Vetter and Harrington paid particular attention to what roles the curators might play, given the potentially labor-intensive nature of the assignment. From the perspective of the libraries, a significant feature of the assignment was that students would work with special collections materials and with Mahn Center staff. Over the course of five weeks, students in this course engaged in a variety of processes with the ultimate goal of revising or publishing a new article in *Wikipedia* based on research performed in the Mahn Center. Because a large majority of the materials in the Mahn Center focus on regional and Ohio University–related topics, students were encouraged to formulate articles in these areas.

To learn more about special collections and archival materials, students attended a presentation led by Mahn Center staff. This presentation was held in the reading room and served two purposes: to highlight special collections and archival materials, especially those easily adapted to a *Wikipedia* article, and to become more familiar with the Mahn Center's procedures. Following the presentation, students also workshopped topic ideas for *Wikipedia* articles in groups and consulted with the instructor (Vetter) about their ideas. Students continued to brainstorm about topics outside of class and were instructed to study corresponding *Wikipedia* articles that existed on a given topic and think about how they might be improved. Students were directed especially to look for a "gap" in the article: What important information is missing? What might be added to the article? In some cases, students created new articles on topics that were not represented at all in *Wikipedia*.

Once they had completed these steps and had chosen a topic and corresponding article, students wrote a proposal letter to the Mahn Center staff member whose expertise related to their topic of study. The proposal letter outlined the students' interest in the topic, the identified "gap" in the *Wikipedia* article, and their plans for further research. Students were also directed to ask for staff member guidance about particular materials they might find useful in their writing process. Proposals were forwarded both to the instructor and the Mahn Center staff, and were followed up by an in-person interview between staff member and student. During these interviews, students were directly exposed to further research avenues and had the opportunity to discuss their research and writing plans with an engaged guide. In this way, all staff in the Mahn Center became partners in teaching the course and impacted each student's growth as a researcher in very direct ways.

Collaborative Knowledge Building

The Mahn Center staff were less prepared, however, to answer questions concerning *Wikipedia* policies and processes. For this, the project relied on *Wikipedia* "online ambassadors," individuals who volunteered their time to help students work on particular articles in the encyclopedia. Students submitted drafts of their articles through an automated system to these ambassadors. In return, they received feedback on article structure, style, and content. Students valued this feedback precisely because the ambassadors are experienced Wikipedians and have knowledge of article conventions such as the neutral tone of voice and specific article structure conventional in *Wikipedia*. In engaging with these more fluent members of the *Wikipedia* community, students also began to realize how significant genre and social norms are when it comes to writing as well as how acculturated members of a writing community can be great resources in any writing project. Mahn Center staff also became more fluent in *Wikipedia* policies and practices as they attempted to help students navigate these writing situations. One particular lesson staff learned was about the concept of "notability," which determines whether a topic is noteworthy enough to warrant the creation of an article. Gaining a better realization of how notability is assessed in the *Wikipedia* community better prepared the staff to help students make appropriate contributions to the encyclopedia and helped them to better understand *Wikipedia* as a resource and platform for exposing special collections.

In the final phase of the project, students were encouraged to "go live" with their articles, that is, publish their articles or edits officially on *Wikipedia*. A few of the students met with some difficulties in this phase of the project if their edits or articles were not deemed suitable by other editors. Yet many students were successful in publishing their articles and edits to *Wikipedia*. Their articles represented a diverse array of topics, including biographical articles on Vernon Alden, former president of Ohio University and namesake of Alden Library, which houses the Mahn Center, and George Kahler, a professional baseball player who once played for the university. The fact that students wrote or edited *Wikipedia* articles that focused largely on Ohio University or Southeast Ohio served to further connect students to the university community and exposed historical information about these regional topics to *Wikipedia* readers everywhere. All of the students, regardless of publication, learned a great deal from the experience, as became evident from data collected by Vetter through process logs and student surveys.

Engaged Students

Among the more significant findings, the data collected suggest that students were more motivated by this assignment than previous writing assignments. Fifteen out of sixteen students identified themselves as "more motivated" on a survey, citing a number of reasons: real public audiences, innovative pedagogies, personal connection to topics, and—perhaps most significantly—active research partners and situations. One student wrote the following assessment of the assignment:

> At first I was scared of the workload. How to balance between classes, but once I got into the library I knew this was something I was going to enjoy. The researching aspect was definitely my favorite. I had never before been in the University archives, so that experience was awesome. Not only did I research for my own topic, but also went in and researched my true passion: photography. The curators even let me scan an old photo and create a poster of it to hang in my room. They were amazing which pushed me to do my best. (Student Survey 1)

As is evident from this response, the relationships developed with staff proved to be a motivating factor for students, but they also appreciated the opportunity to gain knowledge of special collections and archives. The assessment research that Vetter undertook proved useful to Harrington and the libraries because it provided qualitative, concrete information about the meaning and impact of students' interaction with special collections. In short, the data demonstrated that the assignment helped build relationships between Mahn Center staff and undergraduate users in a curricular context.

Special Collections as Forum

Student gains like these reflect positively on the pedagogy and interdisciplinary engagement apparent in this collaborative project. Yet, on a broader scale, this kind of project echoes larger shifts happening with regard to knowledge production and dissemination. Web 2.0 technologies like the wiki, which enables effective collaborative writing and makes *Wikipedia* the most successful encyclopedia to date, are dramatically challenging traditional knowledge structures. Top-down, authoritarian structures, like traditional modes of bibliographic instruction or library engagement in the research process, are being surpassed and replaced, in many instances, by structures and processes that are more open and democratic. Libraries can find a place at the forefront of this movement by engaging more fully in interactive and collaborative knowledge building. This assignment provides a model for cross-disciplinary relationships between academic library special collections and writing programs and offers a framework for increasingly programmatic thinking about the broader engagement of special collections with the university community. Special collections and archives, especially, need to initiate more programs that move information out of the closed stacks and into the wider knowledge-producing forum.

Endnotes

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3 Martin Aurand, "Teaching and Learning with Collections: The Library as a Site for Exploration and Inspiration," *Art Documentation* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 12–20.

4 Duncan Cameron, "The Museum: A Temple or the Forum?" *Curator* 40, no. 1 (1971): 21.

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The Eaton Collection and UC Riverside Libraries: A Study in Driving Alignment

Ruth M. Jackson, Former University Librarian, University of California, Riverside, Libraries

The Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy is the largest publicly accessible archive in the world of "speculative fiction" or SF. This category includes not only science fiction and fantasy but also horror and utopian literature. The collection came to the University of California (UC), Riverside in 1969 when the family of the late J. Lloyd Eaton was looking for a library to take his book collection of about 7,500 hardcover editions of science fiction works ranging from the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries.

At a time when even public libraries refused to collect science fiction, UC Riverside was fortunate to have the now deceased Donald G. Wilson as university librarian. A science fiction enthusiast himself, Wilson rightly reasoned that a genre as popular and influential as science fiction was worthy of academic attention, and that if no reputable institutions were building science fiction collections it was time for at least one institution to do so. Wilson acquired Eaton's collection in toto for the library's rare book department (now called Special Collections and Archives).

Wilson's decision to add a popular genre to a university collection was met with some criticism and even ridicule, but UC Riverside has had a succession of university librarians who shared his vision for a research archive of science fiction and fantasy. As a result, the Eaton Collection has grown from its original nucleus of 7,500 works to over 100,000 volumes, ranging from the 1517 edition of Thomas More's *Utopia* to the most recently published titles in many languages. As a Level-5 collection, it encompasses not only printed monographs but also serials, comic books, anime, manga, and realia. Presently, the total number of items in the collection is well over 300,000.

In an independent study published in *College & Research Libraries* in January 2006, the Eaton Collection was ranked as the leading science fiction collection among all ARL Libraries.[1] The attainment of this status has been the result of strategic efforts to mainstream the Eaton Collection into the libraries' mission, budget support, overall operations, cataloging and processing of materials, preservation, community outreach, the university's academic and research programs, and student use.

Central to Mission

Most important to integrating the Eaton Collection into the central fiber of the UC Riverside Libraries has been the libraries' alignment of the collection's mission with the goals of the university for academic excellence, premier scholarship in selected areas, and the development of interdisciplinary alliances across a spectrum of research centers, academic departments, and faculty groups. From the perspective of the libraries, showcasing the Eaton Collection as one of the campus's most unique and valued collections has been successfully advanced over the past eight years in the following ways: (1) revitalizing the biennial Eaton Conference in 2008 after a 10-year hiatus, involving the University Libraries and the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CHASS) in the planning; (2) providing curricular

support for the newly established "designated emphasis" in science fiction studies at the undergraduate and graduate level, the first steps towards a establishing a degree in this area; (3) using the Eaton Collection as an asset in attracting two leading literary scholars and an award-winning creative writer to the university to establish the academic program; (4) securing support from the Creative Writing Department to implement a Student Science Fiction Short Story Contest with awards announced at the biennial Eaton Conference; and (5) serving as the lead institution in developing a national consortium of research libraries with significant science fiction collections.

The first revitalized Eaton Conference, held in 2008, was funded by three entities: the libraries, CHASS, and the Office of Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. The conferences have been attended by the science fiction scholarly community, scientists, and leading science fiction writers, and regularly attract several hundred attendees.

One of the highlights of the revitalized biennial Eaton Conference has been the presentation of the annual J. Lloyd Eaton Lifetime Achievement Award to a prominent author. The award was created by the University Libraries to honor luminaries in science fiction and to cultivate fan interest and participation in the conference. Ray Bradbury was the inaugural recipient of the award in 2008. His presence on the program brought in an audience of more than 400 for the presentation event. The other recipients of the Eaton Award to date have been Frederik K. Pohl (2009), Samuel R. Delaney (2010), Harlan Ellison (2011), Ursula K. Le Guin (2012), Ray Harryhausen (2013), and Stan Lee (2013).

The libraries view the Eaton Collection as one component of a "three-legged stool," as described by UC Riverside's previous chancellor, which includes the collection, the science fiction academic and research program (encompassing faculty researchers and national and international scholars who travel to Riverside to use the collection), and the Eaton Conference.

Connecting to Research

The Eaton Collection has been a major focus for growth, visibility, and prestige of the libraries and a key component in building bridges with faculty, students, and CHASS. Planning for the future, the libraries have followed trends in publishing and fandom, investing in genres such as manga and role-playing board and electronic games. Faculty have also been heavily involved in requesting materials for their instructional and research needs. As one example of bridge building, the dean of CHASS made a decision one year ago that he would generously fund, from a grant, $30,000 to acquire the media resources needed by a new faculty hire in the science fiction studies program. The current head of Special Collections and Archives is integrated in faculty communications channels, collaborating with creative writing and science fiction faculty on preparation of grant proposals as well as in the planning of the Eaton Conference.

One of the most recent and exciting outcomes of the collaboration between the libraries and CHASS is the publication of a new open access and online peer-reviewed journal, the *Eaton Journal of Archival Research in Science Fiction*, the first journal published by the college and the libraries. Launched in April 2013, the journal is managed by graduate students with faculty advisors. In addition, both the university librarian and head of Special Collections and Archives are members of the editorial board of this journal.

Budget Alignment

One of the strategies the libraries have used to communicate the value of the preservation and access to special collections is to have the head of Special Collections and Archives report directly to the university librarian, rather than to an AUL for collections and scholarly communications. This decision was made early on in the tenure of the recently retired university librarian Ruth Jackson because, in the absence of a full-time development officer, she felt it was essential that the head of Special Collections and Archives be an active member of the libraries' newly established development team.

This strategy has allowed the Office of the University Librarian to develop funding guidelines and policies to protect the Eaton Collection during periods of fiscal constraint within the UC system. During fiscal year 2010, for example, the university's budget reduction target ranged from 6 to 10 percent across all departments in order to meet the campus-wide target reduction of $45 million. During budget hearings for the libraries, the question was raised by a faculty member of the Budget Advisory Committee on the wisdom of exempting the Eaton acquisitions budget from cuts, suggesting that science fiction was somewhat ephemeral as compared to research needs in other major disciplines. The libraries' prompt response was that attainment of recognition as a world-class collection is not easily accomplished and that the mandate from the chancellor was that star and unique programs should be targeted for continued investment to further strengthen UC Riverside's national profile.

Having Special Collections and Archives report directly to the university librarian has also provided an opportunity to profile the uniqueness of Eaton and other special collections, not only in the university community, but also with the central Development Office to insure collaborative planning for fundraising initiatives. Special collections provide unique opportunities to attract donors.

Mainstreaming Workflows

Interdepartmental guidelines for both the Collection Development Department and the Cataloging and Metadata Services Department document that Eaton, as one of the libraries' most important collections, will continue to be maintained at Level-5 in the collection profile. This focus has been maintained to fulfill the libraries' role as a unique center for preserving and making accessible, in perpetuity, the genre of science fiction. The libraries have also promoted the idea that the revitalized Eaton Conference should not be viewed as a "special collections" activity but rather as a library-wide event with the full support of the library administration. The first call for volunteers for the conference in 2008 received a remarkable response from staff across the libraries. Conference participation by library staff has been one of the best internal tools for communicating the value of special collections and their contributions to the library image. Staff view the conference as a fun event to support, and it has high visibility within the libraries, the university at large, and among the rapidly growing number of science fiction scholars.

Processing and cataloging work flows developed by the head of Metadata and Technical Services to reduce the library backlog directly impacted the accessibility of the Eaton Collection. The backlog reduction plan implemented the concept that gifts—many of which were Eaton materials along with government documents and other unprocessed materials—would be mainstreamed into the

cataloging workflow along with new acquisitions. This has been a remarkably successful strategy that has dramatically reduced all library collection backlogs, including Eaton. In essence, the libraries have developed a plan that insures all donations of English-language materials collections are cataloged as rapidly as possible by a number of skilled catalogers rather than one specialist. This has helped to eradicate the perception that too many cataloging and processing resources were being allocated to Eaton as compared to other disciplinary areas.

Community Engagement

As a premiere science fiction collection, Eaton serves three distinct groups of important users. The first is the community of national and international science fiction and fantasy scholars. The second is the science fiction fandom community, which has a high interest in fanzines and the lore of science fiction characters. The third is science fiction writers, some of whom are scholars and some of whom are creative artists. The libraries now collect artifacts and action figures to remain connected to all three audiences through an evolving exhibition program. Although fans like to see "things," the libraries have established collecting guidelines that limit artifact additions to a "representative sampling" of items rather than a comprehensive collection.

Fans are pleased that UC Riverside librarians attend conventions and collect and preserve fanzines and the papers of science fiction and fantasy writers. The libraries rely on enthusiasts for gifts of fanzines, books, magazines, small artifacts, etc. Due to the blockbuster films that have been released over the past several years, the libraries expect more opportunities to cultivate supporters who desire to give collections, cash gifts, and endowed funding. The largest gift the library system is poised to receive in its history—a seven-figure endowment for the collection—will come from a well-known member of the science fiction community who photographed 20 years of conventions. His bequest also includes the 66,000 negatives of his photographic record of SF fandom, including candid shots of many of the leading authors in the field.

Future Directions

The "three-legged stool" as envisioned in 2007 by the then-chancellor continues to govern the role of the Eaton Collection and its impact on campus. The libraries partnered with CHASS and the Science Fiction Research Association to hold the 2013 Eaton Conference April 11–14, 2013. Over 200 paper proposals were received from around the world. To strengthen the collection, the libraries will maintain investment based on the needs of its constituents and integrate it into the digitization program, with special attention to developing methods of capturing, preserving, and making available the increasing number of "born-digital" science fiction materials. To continue alignment with the university science fiction academic and research program, the libraries host an annual lecture series showcasing science fiction writers and scholars, attend conferences geared to fandom, and pursue an endowment for funding competitive travel grants to bring scholars to the collection. Finally and most important, the libraries continue to work closely with the professors teaching science fiction to provide guest classes in Special Collections and Archives to introduce each group of incoming students to the rich resource available on their own campus.

Endnotes

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The Confluence of Collections at Johns Hopkins's Sheridan Libraries

Liz Mengel, Associate Director, Scholarly Resources and Special Collections, Johns Hopkins University Libraries

Since the creation of the Milton S. Eisenhower Library in 1964, Special Collections at Johns Hopkins University (JHU) has been housed in the main library and has been a part of the daily flow of overall library operations. As with many other special collections departments, this department was securely sheltered behind doors where the staff performed similar activities to other library departments such as collection development, reference, and instruction. Over the past four years, the Sheridan Libraries have been making deliberate efforts to remove the metaphorical silos that separate Special Collections and other library departments. In particular, the libraries have done this by looking at how collection funds are used and by blending positions to work in both Special Collections and the Academic Liaison Department.

Disciplined-based Collecting Teams

JHU's collections-funding model is fairly complex. In the simplest terms, 95 percent of the libraries' annual collections budget comes directly from the four schools that fund the libraries. These funds are designated as "general collections funds" and are further subdivided by format (print, electronic, etc.); then along broad discipline lines (engineering, science, humanities, social science, etc.); and finally, for print only, by department (sociology, mathematics, English, etc.). It is within the general collections fund structure where the libraries allocate funds for special collections purchases. The remaining 5 percent of the collections budget comes from endowed funds, of which some are specifically designated for special collections.

Overall responsibility for all collection budgeting, allocation, and strategy resides with the associate director, scholarly resources and special collections. Individual subject specialists or curators manage departmental-level funds (sociology, mathematics, English, etc.) and discipline teams manage the broader discipline funds and some of the endowed funds. The libraries have been using the discipline-group model since 2006. In allocating for special collections, the goal is to ensure that the funds available for special collections purchases are approximately 4 to 5 percent of the total collections budget (both general and endowed funds). This percentage is based on the libraries' own internal commitment to special collections in a science- and engineering-heavy environment. The amount that is designated for special collections purchases in the general funds is split between four separate funds that support specific collecting areas: the George Peabody Library (a 19th-century collection), 19th- and 20th-century American literature, archives, and rare books (pre 1801) and manuscripts.

Integrated Decision Making

Three of the four general special collections funds are managed fairly informally by small discipline-oriented teams: the George Peabody fund, the 19th- and 20th-century American literature fund, and the archives fund. These teams are made up of the curators and liaison librarians whose expertise matches

the particular collecting area. Usually their work is conducted via e-mail or informal conversations. Everyone on the team has authority to spend on the fund and so far there have been no complaints about someone overspending.

The rare books (pre 1801) and manuscripts fund is managed by the curator for rare books. However, the curator is expected to actively solicit input and suggestions from other curators and liaison librarians. Due to the cost of rare books, a collecting strategy was developed that requires items acquired from this fund to have a direct tie to current teaching and research. To accomplish this, a process is in place that calls for proposals with an explanation of how the item will be used in current scholarship. Based on the funds available, the rare books curator has final say on the purchase.

The last group of funds designated for special collections purchase is endowed funds that fall into what the libraries call "general humanities" funds (excluded from these funds are those that have specific donor requirements, such as "to be used for rare economic books," etc.). These general humanities funds are managed by the Humanities Discipline Group. The chair of that group, which rotates every two years, is the designated fund manager for those funds. The group uses a proposal process to choose items for purchase. Anyone in the Humanities Discipline Group can submit a proposal. The proposal provides the details of an item and how it supports a specific collecting area, teaching, or research. Group members weigh in on the appropriateness of the purchase. Proposals have time limits on the comment period; the libraries operate on the principle that a proposal is automatically approved if it receives no comments in the time allotted.

Holistic Results

The Humanities Discipline Group members include all curators and any liaison librarian with humanities departments or interest. The libraries allow liaison librarians to participate in as many discipline groups as they like, but they are required to choose one group as their primary affiliation. Broadening the team membership allows for some interesting cross-disciplinary discussions. The discipline-group model was originally conceived to manage electronic-resource acquisition decisions. The model has evolved into a very effective way to manage special collections funds, which extend across all the humanities sub-fields. It seems like a simple model now, but seven years ago moving from a model where everyone had their "own" money to a model of collective decision making was not always smooth. There were discussions about how much should be designated to various funds, why one fund had more than another fund, and general issues of "fairness" that often needed to be addressed both collectively and at an individual level. One practice that the libraries put in place that has had surprising benefits is a meeting of the associate director for scholarly resources and special collections with each discipline group collectively before the annual budget allocation process. Those meetings are used to discuss how well the funding worked in the past year and what might be needed in the coming year. Curators and liaison librarians present their collecting strategy for the coming year, where they see growth, where they are pulling back, and how the last fiscal year's funds either can or cannot support their strategy. This process is very transparent and allows fund managers to help make decisions on which fund gets more or less. In this way, the fund managers help determine what is fair.

In the end, the discussions and collective decisions on some of the special collections purchases mean that there is more communication about what is being purchased and how it can be used for research and teaching. Also, because most of these discussions are happening within the discipline-group meetings, the connections among what is being purchased for the whole collection provide all the curators and librarians a greater understanding of what the libraries are collecting holistically rather than just their small portion of the collection. Given the interdisciplinary nature of research and the complexity of some of the resources available now, this understanding helps develop more informed staff, which hopefully serves the patrons better.

Blended Liaisons

That holistic vision of the collection is also reflected in the libraries' blended librarian positions. The model started quite simply: in 2007, the liaison for history left and the libraries engaged the current manuscripts curator, who happened to have a history degree, to be the interim history liaison librarian. This redefinition of one position proved to be a successful blend of responsibilities for special collections and general collections. The blended position was able to provide instruction not just in relevant databases, but also in introducing special collections material, to provide a "one-stop" experience. Given the success of the interim position, a new way of thinking began. While the humanities liaison librarians had often worked with special collections, in both managing aspects of the collection and teaching with rare books, never before had the day-to-day activities of both positions been blended to this degree. While day-to-day activities vary based on subject area, common activities include instruction (both one-off and semester-long courses), collection development, outreach, exhibits, donor stewardship, and identifying material for conservation, to name a few activities.

Since that first interim position, the libraries have been consistently looking for ways to blur the lines between the Academic Liaison Department and the Special Collections Department. Today three positions are blended librarians: (1) curator of 19th- and 20th-century rare books and manuscripts and academic liaison for history, African studies, and Latin American studies; (2) curator of literary rare books and manuscripts and academic liaison for the Writing Seminars; and (3) special collections outreach coordinator and academic liaison for philosophy and English. Each of these positions operates differently based on the needs of the departments involved.

Organizationally, the blended positions raised many questions. Who pays for what? Who does the blended position report to? What percentage of time should be devoted to each activity? How do the libraries create equity within each of the departments? Some of these questions were even more challenging at JHU because the special collections are housed at multiple locations throughout the city of Baltimore—which means these positions are often roving between locations. The libraries worked on answers to these questions using a common-sense approach. Bottom line, the key to making this model work lies in the working relationship between the two managers of the blended position; they must agree on the value of the model and be willing to be flexible and open to experimentation.

Collaborative Leadership

Rather than splitting salaries, benefits, and other expenses such as travel across two budgets, the libraries determined which department would be the primary for that blended position and all expenses for the position would then come out of that budget. This allows the libraries to avoid a lot of unnecessary cost transfers within the organization. As far as reporting goes, rather than have the blended position meet separately with each manager, all three people meet together. In addition the libraries developed quarterly "touch base" meetings with all the blended librarians and their managers. The meetings help the staff involved understand overall workloads, any scheduling issues, and ensure continued improvement of the model. Also, these regular meetings ensure that priorities can be reevaluated and issues can be resolved quickly.

The libraries learned rather quickly that having a set percentage of a staff member's time devoted to one department or the other **does not** work. These positions must be highly flexible and scheduling should be based on the departmental needs, the liaison's department activity level, the skill set of the librarian, and the developmental interests of the librarian. Any workload and prioritization conflicts must be resolved without putting the blended librarian in the middle.

One question that remains is what might happen if someone in a blended position were to leave. While this has not happened, the libraries would likely do the same thing they do when anyone leaves—reevaluate the position in light of the skills needed and the skill set of the remaining staff, determine any shifts that may need to happen, and then hire for the best role to support the libraries' constituents, even if that means reworking job descriptions.

Having a blended position also means that the department heads need to address overall workloads across the two departments. One thing the libraries have learned as this model has grown is the importance of flexibility, not just for the blended positions, but also for all the staff in the departments. There needs to be a strong understanding that not everyone's job should or will be structured the same way, not everyone will do the same work or have the same number of desk hours, and, if one position's collection is spread over three locations, that person will likely not be in their office the same amount of time as someone else and that has to be acceptable. Surprisingly, the concept of varying workloads and perception of what is "fair" was one of the more challenging and unexpected issues for the libraries to resolve. In the end, it takes time and a lot of communication across the departments to find the right blend and balance. Much of the libraries' success can be attributed to hiring the right people to fill these pivotal experimental roles.

Transformative Change

So what does all this mean in terms of broader organizational transformation? Libraries know that the roles of librarians have to change. Libraries know patrons are not interested in understanding the arcane internal structure of the library in order to do their research. Finding ways to blur or eliminate the boundaries between two departments that are providing similar service is a great way to move away from a siloed environment to a more holistic user-centered environment. Libraries need human-resources

systems that allow for flexibility and blendedness. Libraries need managers thinking more about the work to be done than the lines between departments. Libraries need librarians and curators who are interested in collaboration and teamwork. And overall, if libraries are to remain relevant, they need to be thinking much more about how they organize and manage new ways to engage with their community and show their value.

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Metastatic Metadata: Transferring Digital Skills and Digital Comfort at UMass Amherst

Robert S. Cox, Head, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries
Danielle Kovacs, Curator of Collections, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries
Rebecca Reznick-Zellen, Digital Strategies Coordinator, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries
Aaron Rubinstein, University and Digital Archivist, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries
Jeremy Smith, Digital Project Manager, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries

In autumn 2011, the Digital Strategies Group of the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Amherst Libraries was grappling with the challenges of charting a path through the analog world of the recent past into the digital future. Like many libraries, UMass faced the refractory fact that some members of staff lacked a detailed understanding of digital standards and many lacked practical, hands-on experience. The task set by Digital Strategies, a group comprised of senior-level managers with significant investments in digital technologies, was to devise a means of bridging the gap between analog skills and high-tech demands and to develop comfort with digital technologies throughout the organization, top to bottom. Such staff development would allow the libraries, as their strategic plan suggests, "to build competencies across the organization rather than create units where digital expertise would be isolated" and to create "opportunities for creative collaboration among units…positioning the Libraries for future expansion, innovation, and growth." Having observed that the usual rounds of workshops, talks, or brown-bag lunches had only marginal impact in raising the skill level, the Digital Strategies Group theorized that lasting organizational change would require sustained opportunities for staff to take part in concrete digital projects in a real-world setting.

While Digital Strategies strategized, the libraries' Department of Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) faced its own digital dilemma. As home to much of the libraries' original digital content, including born-digital and converted assets, SCUA might be considered a digital oasis, having organized and managed two large-scale mass-digitization projects in recent years. Recognizing that the future of special collections—and libraries more generally—lies in the ability to be fluent in both traditional and digital documentary forms, the SCUA staff have dedicated themselves to building a foundation for the future through self-education, collaboration, grant writing, and strategic hires. One of the digital collections under its purview, however, had become something of a thorn in its side. A decade previously, SCUA had digitized over 13,000 photographs in a one-off project, making the results available through a web-accessible database developed in collaboration with the libraries' systems department. Documenting the visual history of UMass from its founding in 1863, these photographs were heavily used, and with the university's sesquicentennial looming in 2013, it appeared that use would increase significantly. Thus the problem: this valued digital collection was a product of its time. In other words, it was a relic. While the scans were of high quality, the metadata were not compliant with current standards nor were they consistently applied, and the technology powering the database had been superseded by a new, more robust digital repository, Credo, built on the open-source software Fedora. Worse, the descriptions themselves were too often inadequate, incomplete, or inaccurate, posing a stiff challenge for discovery.

The size of the corpus made it difficult to imagine resolving the problem with available staffing in SCUA, but staff set it as a priority to revisit this nagging collection to emend the records, roust them into the 21st century, and fold them into the new repository.

Building Digital Capacity

At the intersection of opportunity and craven self-interest, the University Photos Project (UPP) was born. One member of the SCUA staff, Danielle Kovacs, noted the inherent synergy between the libraries' larger goals and SCUA's needs, and with Tom Sawyer intentions, the head of SCUA worked with the Digital Strategies Group (on which he serves) to promote the concept of appropriating labor from other library departments to whitewash SCUA's digital fence. Although this plot might seem nefarious, it was fundamentally an exercise in biblio-mutualism. In return for the labor, SCUA would help demystify digital technologies for its peers and assist them in acquiring skills in three distinct areas: creating and interpreting digital content, working with the Metadata Object Description Schema (MODS), and gaining comfort in using XML-authoring software. In some ways, SCUA was well poised to help, not only because of its experience with digital projects, but because three members of its staff are adjunct instructors in a library science program. There were some fairly high-level complexities, of course. This was no simple exercise in applying MODS encoding. It was, in effect, original cataloging and, to do the job properly, it required participants to develop an understanding of visual materials cataloging and contemporary content standards, and to tap into a sometimes arcane fount of knowledge about the university and its history. From the outset, however, it was clear that the UPP would allow SCUA to chip away at a timely, even essential project while providing a test bed in which the library staff could confront the changing digital climate and hone their metadata skills.

Organizational Integration

After vetting the formal proposal through the Digital Strategies Group and ensuring that it aligned with the library's current strategic plan, the proposal was approved by the Senior Management Group (consisting of library administration and department heads), and the UPP was launched as a one-year experiment in January 2012. SCUA began by evangelizing for the project at one of the libraries' regular all-staff meetings, encouraging peers to enlist for a glorious term of enjoyable work with original materials and highlighting the benefits that would accrue not only to the university's sesquicentennial and the library, but to their own professional development. Self-interest, SCUA said, would align with self-interest.

Individuals who chose to participate consulted with their department heads and arranged for five hours of release time per week to devote to UPP. To defuse concerns over the impact of the project on the productivity of their home departments, the UPP calendar was limited to three 10-week sessions, corresponding roughly to the university's spring, summer, and fall terms, although with the approval of their department head, volunteers were permitted to register for more than one session. To spread the impact of the project as broadly as possible, participants were solicited not only from the professional and paraprofessional ranks, but from other areas of the staff as well, including security and office staff.

Integrating Workflow

Philosophically, the heart of UPP lay in three principles: the work must be practical, routine, and intensely collaborative. To be practical meant keeping a razor-like focus on providing direct experience with metadata as quickly as possible, thrusting participants directly into the mode of learning through actual production, and sustaining the work long enough for it to become routine. Each UPP session was launched with SCUA convening a quick four-hour introduction to the project, to the MODS standard, and to the Oxygen XML-authoring software. After the introduction, participants were assigned one box each of university photographs, and with little ceremony, sent straight to work.

To make the UPP work routine required some conceptual adjustment, leading SCUA to turn away from its inborn affinity for notions of productivity and efficiency. Abandoning all productivity goals in order to keep the focus on learning, SCUA asked only that participants establish a regular schedule to prevent UPP work from being devoured by the creeping sands of daily life. Similarly, SCUA rejected the idea of having participants work in groups in a lab-like setting, reasoning that metadata work should be an everyday part of library life, conducted wherever workers actually work: their own desks and offices. The library's systems department installed Oxygen on each participant's workstation, enabling them to explore the new standards in the comfort of their native habitat. Ordinary, routine, and comfortable were the watchwords.

Once participants settled into their offices, the workflow was straightforward. Since each image had already been scanned and described—not always accurately—UPP participants began by selecting a photograph from their assigned box, locating the record in the outdated online repository, and checking it for sufficiency and accuracy. Then they set about creating a new MODS record, using a template supplied by SCUA, that would be ingested into Credo. Participants worked directly from the original photograph, rather than the digital surrogate, because some images contained captions or other valuable contextual data that had not been captured previously. This was not simple data entry. Indeed, nearly every record in the project required intervention to bring it into conformity with current content standards and to add subject tracings, and many records required significant editing or emendation.

Collaborative Investment

The final principle of UPP, that the project should be intensely collaborative, placed the greatest demands on the SCUA staff and UPP participants alike. At the top level, collaboration began with the support of the director of libraries and the heads of other departments, who saw that short-term reduction in staffing would reap long-term benefits in the form of a more flexible and up-to-date staff. SCUA, too, felt the sting of short-term reductions, as its staff mentored three to five UPP participants each session, paying an initial onsite visit to each participant to provide one-on-one orientation, followed by rounds of encouragement and consultation as the project progressed. SCUA also monitored completed records for accuracy, sufficiency, and validity, addressing issues as soon as they arose. During the course of the project, the average burden for the three SCUA instructors was roughly on par with the five-hour per week commitment of other UPP participants, although of course the load spiked during planning, training, and the first week of production.

Collaboration, however, means more than top-down mentoring. In several ways, UPP participants were encouraged to help themselves by helping others. SCUA began, for example, by seeding a local authority file to facilitate consistency among participants, but asked UPP participants to refine, correct, and extend the file as they went along. More importantly, SCUA encouraged participants to contribute to a project e-mail list where anyone could post—or answer—questions regarding content, strategy, standards, or technology. Although SCUA staff members took part, a handful of UPP participants rose to the challenge and rendered highly effective service to their peers, crossing departmental boundaries with abandon. The ultimate impact of UPP, the authors hope, lies as much in facilitating a culture of cooperation on digital work as in facilitating digital skills.

Communal Purpose

Intentionally small in scope and simple in design, the UPP trained a total of 26 volunteers in three sessions, of whom 17 completed at least one box and four reenlisted for a second session. Only one-third of volunteers came from the professional ranks, although professionals comprise over 40 percent of the aggregate staff. Given the heavy workload in the library and reluctance to enforce participation, SCUA anticipated that some individuals would not be able to fulfill their five-hour weekly shift—many could not—and others would drop out. Five of the nine professionals failed to complete a session. The day-to-day pressure of work simply overwhelmed good intentions.

For all the effort, however, two measures of productivity stood out. First, UPP participants corrected and encoded approximately 3,100 images during the project, over 180 for each person who completed the course; and second, nearly 20 percent of the libraries' total staff volunteered to take part. The stellar performance of the paraprofessional contingent was particularly noteworthy, as was the generous support they provided for one another. For them, UPP represented a respite from their regular workday and an opportunity to contribute directly to the libraries' future. Participants singled out the collaboration, hands-on mentoring, and support for acquiring new skills as critical to their experience. Rather than fear change, paraprofessionals embraced it. One staff member even continued to volunteer three months after the end of UPP. Given the limited duration of the project and its voluntary nature, and given the limited time commitment of participants and the emphasis on training, the modest productivity of this experiment seemed reasonable.

A Versatile, Collaborative Workforce

Reflecting on this experience, the authors speculate that one of the implicit factors in the success of UPP was the quiet extension of the staffing model employed in SCUA to the rest of the library. Like most special collections departments, SCUA is not so flush with staff that it can afford to dedicate individuals to discrete functions. In fact, SCUA has consciously rejected such specialization in favor of having curators who engage in the full range of departmental activities, and SCUA has sought to build a departmental culture emphasizing versatility, cross-training, collaboration, entrepreneurship, and collective problem solving. The reasoning is simple: Skills in modern libraries are highly integrated and top-flight service demands functional experience across regimes. The demands of the future workplace require a flexibility

that results only from technological breadth, diversity, and catholic experience with the broad spectrum of publics. In the authors' experience, shared responsibilities and intensive collaboration are bred in the bone of special collections departments, even those bereft of digital expertise. This may be the point.

In a project like UPP, the question of sustainability hovers always overhead, and to be sure, sustainability is no more guaranteed than success. UMass enjoyed some structural advantages in conducting the experiment thanks to the peculiar skills resident in SCUA, but, advantages or not, scaling up from instruction to mass production would require a shift away from voluntary participation and an increase in time commitment, upping the conflict with other, daily work. But this misses the point. Just as most academic libraries face similar challenges to UMass, most have similar skill sets resident somewhere on staff that can be put to the same ends. What is needed is what the authors consider the heart of UPP: administrative support for a model for conveying the cooperative ethos of special collections across departmental boundaries, using an engaging project and a sense of communal purpose as a bridge to the digital future. It is the ethos that needs to be sustained, not the project per se, and if the adaptation the authors witnessed among UPP participants is any guide, UMass Libraries may have taken their first steps.

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