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Archives Annual Report, 2011-2012

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To: Karen Schmidt, University Librarian

From: Meg Miner, University Archivist & Special Collections Librarian

Date: August 9, 2012

Re: 2011-2012 Tate Archives & Special Collections Report

Service and Accessions Summary

Five student assistants helped me provide access to Tate Archives & Special Collections material during 2011/2012; I also employed two students over the summer. Our holdings grew by 27 linear, so our total holdings as of this year are 1,307 linear feet.

We fulfilled 160 requests for research services with 81 of them coming from faculty/staff/administrators. Requests for service most often arrived via email (79 of the 160 this year) but we also had 48 walk-in patrons who needed full research assistance.

Our other types of patron requests are of a more “ready reference” nature. Typically these interactions involve people needing yearbooks or access to course catalogs and other publications; sometimes they involve people who are following up on earlier visits to continue the research we previously provided assistance with. Of 54 people who came to the archives for these kinds of purposes this year, 34 were alumni/students.

Archives Accessions and Activities

We added 21 linear feet to the archives this year. While there was not one specific “gem” related to IWU history this year, the number of individual items donated directly by individual alumni or through the Alumni Relations Office seemed more numerous than in the past. We also received filmed theatrical performances from an emeritus faculty member who participated in our Oral History project. Clearly, outreach activities such as the Oral History interviews, and the Homecoming Mini Museum on the Quad as well as stories published in the *IWU Magazine* benefit these types of donations.

The Registrar’s Office formalized a records retention plan this year that may allow for the deaccessioning of the microfilm we acquired last year from the Dean of Students Office. This plan was agreed to by all stakeholders who contribute to student files and all confirmed that in the future, very few of the previously microfilmed documents will be retained. Work remains between my office and the Registrar’s about how best to separate the permanent documents and in what form they should be retained but this was a positive development in the Records Management initiative.

In last year’s stated goals, I planned to have the photographic negative file re-housing project completed. A small portion of this work remains. Additionally, the digital preservation policy was approved and posted on the library’s policy page, but action on the analog policy was deferred by the head of Technical Services until work on the library’s Collection Development Plan takes place.

Special Collections Accessions and Activities

Six linear feet of material were added to Special Collections this year. This includes a collection donated by emeritus Professor of Theatre Arts Jared Brown. The bulk of the collection consists of transcriptions and audio cassette recordings but also includes some correspondence

with approximately 150 named subjects used as sources for Dr. Brown's published books on Moss Hart, Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontanne, Zero Mostel, and Alan Pakula.

Among the special collections purchases are 20 texts that will be used by an English Department avant garde literature course that is offered every other spring. In consultation with the requesting faculty member, it is also apparent that many of the works held in the Artists' Books collection will also be beneficial to these students. As with the Beat Generation course, purchasing to support this course will become a regular practice.

Goals for 2012/13

As mentioned above, I will continue to work with the Registrar's Office on separating and storing microfilmed documents. This work involves decisions on the format the separated files will be held in and where they will be retained. It is probable that this will take longer than one year to resolve.

Finally, as reported last year, access and storage for digital and digitized content remains a problem for the archives and issues with normalizing digital file management processes continue. I hope that my involvement in the coming years with the IMLS National Leadership Grant on digital preservation will offer helpful insights. Caring for digital records being created in every office on campus presents challenges for both the archives and for the direction I hope IWU's Records Management program will take. A rapidly increasing issue in this area is the seemingly new emphasis on digital audio/visual content creation. Contrary to all recommended practices, critical selection decisions are being deferred for these records, too. The eventual overload of IWU digital storage space seems a likely outcome.