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Archives Annual Report, 2014-2015

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2014-2015 Tate Archives & Special Collections Report

Meg Miner, University Archivist & Special Collections Librarian

September 3, 2015

Service and Accessions Summary

Three student assistants helped me provide access to Tate Archives & Special Collections (ASC) material during most of AY2014-2015 and one worked through summer 2015.

We fulfilled 149 requests for research support with 73% of them coming from members of IWU community (*i.e.*, administrators, alumni, faculty, staff or students). The number of walk-in patrons who needed full research assistance was 124. With the addition of 96 walk-ins needing staff assistance of a less time-intensive nature, the total number of on-site visits to use our collections reached 220, and IWU community members represented 93% of that number.

Direct classroom support declined from eight last year to five. Seventy-three students taking courses in English, History, Humanities and Theatre Arts worked with our collections during these classes. All of these classes carried General Education attributes; two were in the lower division levels and three were in upper classes.

Our holdings grew by 41 linear feet (23.5 for the Archives and 17.5 for Special Collections), so our total holdings as of this year are 1,380 linear feet.

This year I established, but have not fully implemented, workflows for analyzing born-digital content that will require processing for digital preservation storage. Future reports will contain data on the amount of materials accessioned and processed in this manner.

Archives Accessions and Activities

Notable additions to the archives this year include records of the Minority Alumni Network, a script and a musical score for a play produced in honor of IWU's Centennial Anniversary, and over 70 Summer Music Camp photos (with names) spanning the 1950s-1990s. Prior to that last donation, we had only a few group photos from this long-running program.

We provided extensive research support on behalf of the School of Music's Sesquicentennial activities, an Office of Communication's initiative for a local history book, and a community-sponsored local history exhibit. Typically, the nature of such support includes conducting initial research to identify collection locations, providing materials to others for their own analytical research and creating digital surrogates of holdings, if requested.

My most significant achievement on behalf of IWU's long term historical legacy this year was the completion of the Institute of Museum and Library Services National Leadership Grant (2011 award date) titled Digital POWRR. Over the course of the dissemination phase of the grant (spanning spring 2013-fall 2014) I presented at two conferences and was sole author of two publications (see http://works.bepress.com/meg_miner/). A report I contributed to and its companion workshop (the main deliverables from our grant, completed in fall 2014) received the Society of American Archivists [Preservation Publication Award](#) for 2015. I also co-facilitated two workshops on the topic of digital reservation and participated in a separate but related open-source preservation tool test in the fall. POWRR has a grant from the NEH Division of Preservation and Access to continue workshops during 2015-2017, and I am committed to conducting two at this time in a "consultant" rather than a "partner" capacity.

As a result of these grant-funded investigations and activities as well as in the opportunities I had to travel and speak with experts and practitioners during the three years of

this grant, my recommendation for securing IWU's digital legacy is for the library to subscribe to DuraCloud at the Enterprise level. This subscription will allow us to store and stream (through staff mediation only) audiovisual digital and digitized objects from IWU's holdings. The current price is \$5,750 per year for 1TB. Options do exist for allowing patrons to access this kind of content without staff intervention, but products that provide those features cost approximately twice as much per year. DuraCloud will not provide automate file format normalization, so being aware of media obsolescence and keeping abreast of changes in the field of digital object curation will continue to be part of my work and my advocacy in our community.

My plan for DuraCloud does not address IWU's need for Web site harvesting. Records that should be transferred regularly to the archives continue to be disseminated via unit Web sites and e-mail. In recent years I reported on workflows that others in the library now help with in order to capture known electronic records, but I am sure there are other Web-based records that I have no knowledge of. Some content on third-party sites IWU uses also have enduring value but sustainable long term preservation plans are unrealistic without a harvesting tool. Subscription-based products exist to capture this content, and I recommended one in my [SAA Case Study](#) (p. 13), but I will note here that all such products are based on [an open-source tool called Heritrix](#). I cannot install and sustain its use but it is an alternative for IWU to consider.

The final activity this year was planning for continuity of records collection during my Spring 2016 sabbatical. I began training a new student assistant in Spring 2015 who will be staffing the archives in the spring. I created a list of e-records for ID&S staff to collect from Web sites and Chris Sweet will monitor e-mail distribution lists for substantive message traffic. Finally, Stephanie Davis-Kahl will communicate with the Associate Provost's Office about Research Honors project submissions.

Special Collections Accessions and Activities

I made significant purchases for the Beat Writers' and Book Arts' collections, both of which provide direct support to courses in the English Department's curriculum and carry General Education attributes. Most often these purchases are in monograph format but in addition to books this year I purchased two complete runs of ca1960s poetry magazines and a Beat-era map. We are the only I-Share library that holds all issues of the magazines, and only the second that holds the map. These purchases were made late in the year when funds from Special Collections could not cover the entire costs, so I want to acknowledge support from Marcia Thomas in authorizing cost-share from the English and General budget lines.

Two community organizations donated significant quantities of their organizational records, and I added a new collection, with a solely political purpose, to our Environmental Studies community organizations collection.

The most significant activity supported from a special collections standpoint came close on the heels of the archives' activity that surrounds Homecoming each year. After nine months of preparation, The Ames Library hosted William Morris collector Jack Walsdorf and scholar Florence Boos. Details on funding and our preparations are available in the [2013-2014 archives report](#). Books and ephemera loaned from Walsdorf's personal collections were displayed in the library for two months and students interacted with the loaned materials during class visits. At the end of their three days on our campus, our visitors had helped 110 students in seven classes and 66 guests (students, staff, faculty, community members) at four public events understand the life and works of Victorian-era artist, author and activist William Morris. A summary of events and photographs are available [on the archives blog](#).

Notes on progress meeting last year's goals

One of my goals from last year was working further on an electronic thesis deposit process for the Honors program. Associate Provost Boyd determined we would require Honors theses to be submitted in print this year and make electronic thesis deposits optional. Students were still asked to sign a Non-exclusive License if they wanted their work scanned and posted on their behalf. This process resulted in better deposit compliance and some students did deposit directly to Digital Commons.

Another goal was to work with IT to discover if document iterations on Web sites and in Moodle can be harvested in batches with existing software but they cannot. Web-based records are of most concern to the longevity of IWU's legacy because reports and private photos continue to be uploaded by departments. IWU needs to commit to records transfer processes or subscribe to a Web-harvesting service in order to prevent overwrite or other threats to loss.

Syllabi are the Moodle content with historical value, and Department/Program Chairs and the Mellon Center are responsible for collecting this content according to the *Faculty Handbook*. Therefore, I will not be pursuing strategies for ensuring these e-records are secure.

Lastly, ID&S staff supported creation of one sub-record group in ARCHON. We are evaluating how this kind of support might extend into the unpublished manuscript parts of our holdings.

Goals for 2015-16

This fall I am focusing on one-on-one training with the student who will staff the archives during my spring sabbatical. I will also work with the designated ID&S staff member on collecting e-records through e-mail in addition to Web site harvesting.

Due to the need for extensive training on principles of archival arrangement, I do not expect to work with staff on describing more content for ARCHON until after my sabbatical.