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Archives Annual Report, 2016-2017

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2016-2017 Tate Archives & Special Collections Report

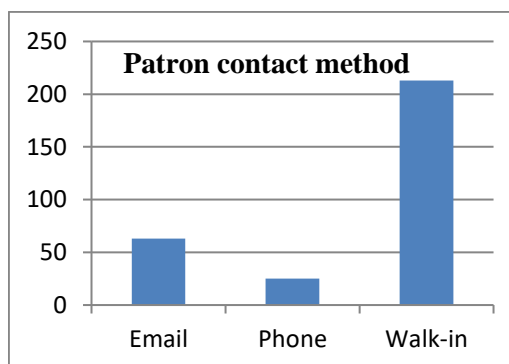
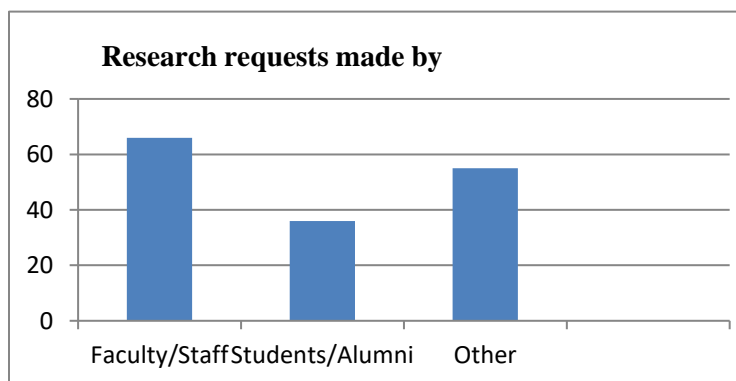
Meg Miner, University Archivist & Special Collections Librarian
December 22, 2017

Staffing, Accessions and Service Summary

Two and one half student assistants helped me provide access to materials and to process digital A/V records during the academic year. Work on the Kindred collection progressed through the overall assessment stage and is now ready for arranging into accessible series. During the summer I hired a student to focus solely on evaluating existing analog and digital media formats with the goal of selecting for digitization (see “Summer of Old Media” below); and I was also able to provide a summer stipend to a person with specific subject knowledge needed to process a specialized, moderately sized manuscript collection.

Regular staff support increased this year when Information Discovery & Systems (ID&S) staff member Tod Eagleton started receiving processing training. He has also received continuing education opportunities in archival theory and practice. Already his efforts have helped reduce our processing backlog for complex accessions and his growing familiarity with collections will enable him to assist Julie Wood with descriptive work. We ceased entering descriptions in Archon this year due to technical difficulties with CARLI’s Archon instance but will be able to report on a renewal of this work next year. Julie and Amy Sutter continued harvesting selected online records for upload to DigitalCommons (additional details below).

Our holdings grew by 40.5 linear feet and 82GB but the start of a reappraisal effort resulted in a decrease of 4 linear so our collections now stand at 1441 linear feet total. We fulfilled 157 requests for research support with 66 of them coming from faculty, staff or administrators, and we accommodated a total of 213 on-site visitors during this year.



One reason on-site visits are higher this year is due to one English class that visited three times in the fall to use special collections materials. Students from that class made return visits after the initial session to examine materials for group presentations which were conducted in the archives reading room over two class periods. Two sections of a Spanish class also received an introduction to the archives and milestones in IWU history. The students then created Spanish-language video presentations about a topic that piqued their interests. Our collections also supported the work of students studying Latin, the History of Décor, Museum Studies and one additional English class.

I loaned materials for several purposes this year: classroom support, an administrator’s research into campus art, assistive services requests and digital collections’ creation. I also sent analog audio recordings off campus to be digitized: one item due to vinegar syndrome and over

140 due to two researchers' needs. I also had a vendor assess and digitize a small set of 16mm films that were recently donated. Further details on these projects are available below.

Finally, I gave one presentation on archives' practices to the Library Advisory Committee and one on IWU history to a session at the annual Council for IWU Women.

Archives Accessions and Activities

There were 36 archives accessions comprised in 28.5 linear feet and 76.77GB. Notable among these are a quilt made by members of the Class of 1931 and presented to Nell Eckley in 1984, ten reels of film taken on campus by an unknown photographer in 1969, and manuscript materials for several faculty members. A donor also provided an interesting personal memento this year: an 1893 gold pocket watch. This acquisition helped to shed light on a little-known aspect of 19th century student life: [boarding clubs](#).

Among our born digital accessions this year were media files from a student's Research Honors project. This individual chose not to share his work online so when the files were extracted from his DVD, they were placed in long term storage in DuraCloud where they can be retrieved on demand. Another significant digital accession was over 100 digital photos submitted by Class of 2015 members for sharing at their Senior Dinner. This photo sharing practice is a fairly new tradition that I am attempting to manage in the DigitalCommons [Student Life](#) series. Each year the contributions have been slightly different so future adjustments to access points may be needed.

Finally, we transferred historically valuable content from six of the ten 16mm films we received to digital file formats. The content includes footage of President Eckley's Inauguration, and visits by a former U.S. Vice President for a Stevenson Lecture and an astronaut who placed a time capsule in the Mark Evans Observatory. These are accessible in Vimeo, have appropriate discovery points in DigitalCommons, and are securely stored in DuraCloud.

The Summer of Old Media project was an evaluation of current media holdings for suitability for further retention, a process archivists call [reappraisal](#). In addition to the risk of losing access to the machines needed to playback media, the magnetic media types in particular are fragile. By applying selection criteria to reduce the number of items retained, we ensure we are serving IWU's historical information needs and lessening the cost of transferring to digital file formats. My student assistant assessed the rarity, quality and duration of 130 reel-to-reel tapes, 300 audio cassette tapes, and 600 analog and digital video tape formats. A total of 240 different audio and video recordings will be digitized along with approximately 100 other audio cassettes selected from over 500 School of Music performances that were previously selected by Fine Arts Librarian Bob Delvin. Recordings that are not digitized will be disposed of. Michael Limacher was instrumental in supplying all the machines needed for playing these formats and for splicing several breaks in the reel-to-reel tapes. There are approximately 100 BetaSP tapes left to review, and a local business has agreed to let us use their BetaSP player at a future date.

Special Collections Accessions and Activities

We accrued 12 linear feet and 5.37GB in 14 special collections accessions. These were primarily purchases with a majority of them becoming available due to the closing of Kay and Ginny Kramer's *The Printery* in Missouri. The most significant of these purchases is a reference collection for book evaluations: the entire run, 40 years' worth, of *The Month at Goodspeed's*. A significant individual book was donated by a generous alumna: *The Historie of the Council of Trent* (1640) which had been in her family since the 1800s.

The College Alumni Club deposited one hundred and fifteen digital images following their 125th Anniversary dinner. I extracted these from a flash drive and they are now in long term

storage in DuraCloud. We do not have a dedicated electronic access point for such additions to Special Collections at this time, and I will be giving some thought to establishing policies for this aspect of our services. For now, a selection of these photos were also submitted as PowerPoint slides and those are accessible in near-line storage.

The library's funds supported the digitization-on-demand requests for two distance researchers who needed access to interviews on cassette tapes from two different manuscript collections. These media are fragile and were in need of transfer to preserve their content regardless of these requests but we also needed to convey that there were limitations to our agreement for providing this digital access so in consultation with the University's Counsel and the University Librarian, I established a [licensing request form](#) and a policy for [research and image reproduction services](#). A large portion of these recordings required editing once they were digitized. The analog originals were often spread across several tapes and so the files are being rejoined so that they make sense as digital objects. That work consumed a 5 hour/week student's time this year and is not yet complete. After editing, the recordings are stored in DuraCloud.

Lastly, as a result of my sabbatical I have a better understanding of the rationale that President Myers used when donating books to Special Collections. These insights helped me reappraise the research value for two large collections of published materials that we began to deaccession this year. Work on identifying appropriate institutions to transfer these materials to is underway.

Progress on last year's goals

As noted in an [earlier report](#), IWU does not support or subscribe to a Web-harvesting tool. Thanks to the initiative of Reserves Coordinator Amy Sutter, harvesting permanent records posted to IWU Web pages in HTML became a little less cumbersome this year. After consulting with Instructional Technologist Rick Lindquist, Amy tested a tool called [Snagit](#) that she used to take screenshots of pages, create TIFFs, and convert to pdf prior to loading in DigitalCommons. As an added precaution against the possibility of file degradation, this workflow includes saving the TIFF as a hidden supplemental file in DigitalCommons. Using the library's Preservation & Reformatting budget line, Amy purchased licenses that enabled her student and Julie Wood, who also harvests permanent records for the archives, to conduct this workflow.

I began the process of culling the electronic holdings on the LaCie drive using the [archives' decision making flowchart](#) and creating an inventory with storage locations (online and near-line). As of this writing 1.16TB have been deleted and 175.7GB are securely stored in DuraCloud.

Goals for 2017-2018

I've explained the storage decisions for the digital accessions above to illustrate the point that archival materials in digital formats require risk assessment in ways that are more complex than analog records. The Ames Library supports Open Access and whenever possible, historical records are also openly accessible online but intellectual property rights and privacy concerns often make access mediation necessary. In the coming year I will continue defining these digital collections preservation and access decisions. Collaborations with ID&S staff on cross training needs and collections' descriptions will also continue. Special Collections transfer work will be completed.