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Archives Annual Report, 2017-2018

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2017-2018 Tate Archives & Special Collections Report

Meg Miner, University Archivist & Special Collections Librarian
December 21, 2018

Staffing, Accessions and Service Summary

Four student assistants helped me to provide collections access and to process digital accessions during this academic year. Two other students worked primarily on digitized collections during the summer. The project archivist's work on the Kindred collection continued.

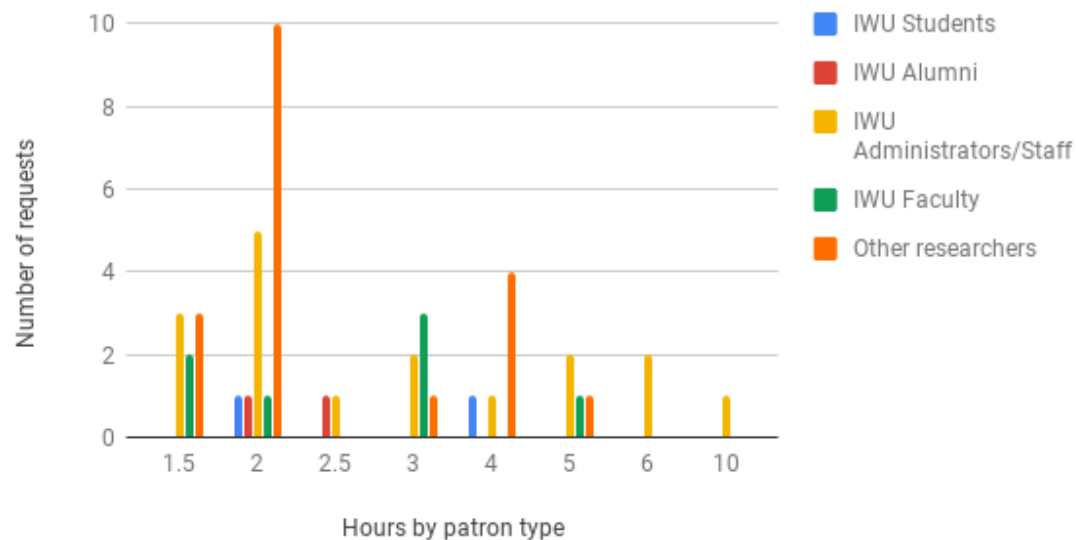
Staff support from Information Discovery & Systems (ID&S) continued with the assistance of Tod Eagleton (3 days, 6 hours/week) for processing manuscript collections in both archives and special collections and of Julie Wood (2 days, 4 hours/week) for enhancing and entering archival descriptions in our CARLI-hosted version of Archon. Both Julie and Amy Sutter continued harvesting selected records (distributed online and by email) for addition to DigitalCommons.

Our holdings grew by 22 linear feet but we deaccessioned 90 linear feet (see Special Collections section below) so our collections comprise 1373 linear feet total. We also accessioned 1.82 TB in nearly equal portions of digitized and born-digital materials.

We fulfilled 175 requests for full research support with 80 of them coming from faculty, staff or administrators. There were 115 patron encounters of a less time intensive nature, 97 of whom were students or alumni. Full research requests requiring between 21-60 minutes of staff time remained steady (62 this year and 60 last year), but there was a significantly higher amount (54 this year and 27 last) of requests requiring ≥ 90 minutes of staff time. Eight class visits fell into this category but I removed them from the analysis below for the sake of examining this expenditure of staff time on individual patron needs.

Research requests needing 1.5 hours+ staff assistance

(excluding class visits)



The questions in this category required the type of archival research that takes substantive amounts of time, primarily when biographical information was needed. Last year I established a fee structure for people who are not affiliated with IWU and who make off-site requests for staff assistance. I would have expected a relationship between the length of time and this researcher type to be more pronounced but this was not the case. Nineteen of the requests that fell into the ≥ 90 minutes were from non-affiliated patrons but eight of them were walk-ins. On the other hand, 17 were email or phone requests from Administrators/Staff.

The two longest time expenditures, one for six hours and one for ten, originated with questions from Administrators/Staff. The latter is most noteworthy on two counts: 1) the requesting department sent a student to help, and 2) the result of the work will benefit the department as well as the Advancement and Communications offices and possibly researchers interested in the hundreds of alumni we now know a little more about. This work required the skilled labor I could bring to identifying places to search across many collections and formats and the student's close examination of the sources to verify individuals' identities.

In all, we accommodated a total of 188 on-site visitors during this year. Faculty teaching ten courses (Humanities and Social Sciences divisions) brought students in course levels ranging from Gateway to Senior Seminar. Typically, class visits are used to introduce students to materials that are available during the visit but several students made return visits to complete both regular- and extra-credit assignments. Our collections were also used on-site by a summer seminar for visiting scholars and by an alumnae group who chose the archives as the site for their reunion during Homecoming.

Archival and special collections materials were loaned for the purposes of students' classroom presentations, a special event a class held in Evelyn Chapel, and for digitization. As a result of last year's [Summer of Old Media](#), and thanks to newly-established budget line within the library's budget, I was able to send 235 audio/video recordings off campus to be digitized. Approximately 100 recordings remain to be reformatted.

I presented at two Non-orgs on campus this year; one of which was provided in collaboration with Stephanie Davis-Kahl. The goal of both was to highlight services offered through the library as much as the availability of and uses for archival collections.

Archives Accessions and Activities

There were 17 archives accessions comprised in 16.25 linear feet and 1.76TB. Notable among these are [materials donated](#) by the family of Frank Bohnhorst, Class of 1944. Bohnhorst was a composer, organist and choir director and he returned to IWU to serve as composer-in-residence from 1952-56. He is the founder of the still-popular [Symposium of Contemporary American Music](#) held annually at IWU.

Our largest electronic accession for the archives this year was the result of the above-mentioned digitization work associated with the [Summer of Old Media](#). I hired a summer student for post-digitization processing, but the work also required frequent item level decision making on my part. Another substantive digital accession this year was the recordings I created during my sabbatical project. A [final report for that work](#) may be consulted for additional details. The 59 interviews represent 2.65GB of the electronic accessions in archives this year.

Once again I supported Homecoming activities by creating an off-site exhibit of archival holdings, tailored to the milestone events being promoted by the Alumni Office. As a result of a conversation with University Librarian Karen Schmidt, I created a [blog post](#) that describes this exhibit to ensure for a continuity of service if I am unable to provide it. The amount of work

selecting material; preparing it to be handled by people in a busy, public location; and rehousing it afterwards is significant but every year the Advancement staff remark on how much our alumni value these glimpses into their past.

The 50th anniversary of the Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination created interest in King's visits to IWU in 1961 and 1966. In January, a local TV station (WEEK) used the Tate Archives Reading Room for a series of interviews on the topic with emeritus faculty and alumni. I made a display within the archives to complement the discussion and participated in the interview. The University held a [formal press event](#) in February for the acceptance of a donated sculpture of King that is housed in The Ames Library's entry level and for the purchase of a rare 1st edition (details in Special Collections section below). I created exhibits on the entry level to highlight the historical significance of both. In March I assisted the host of "The 21st," an [Illinois Public Media show](#), in finding alumni to interview about King's visits, contributed previous research findings for background information, and shared my own reflections on the topic.

Special Collections Accessions and Activities

Accruals in special collections equaled 5.85 linear feet and .06TB in 10 accessions. Our [most notable purchase](#) was William Wilberforce's 1807 (1st ed.) *Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, the volume that was profiled in the [formal press event](#) described above. Other significant purchases were a 1541 Aldine press volume and one 1932 specimen book (in folio): *Liber Chronicarum*, an explanation of Anton Koberger's *Nuremberg Chronicle* with a leaf from the 1493 volume inserted. Both of these will serve courses in the Humanities and are also unique additions to the Book Arts collection. We also deaccessioned the entire *College & University Publications Collection* (9,500 volumes in 90 linear feet). [I reported](#) on this decision last year and through the outreach and coordination efforts of Tod this year, the bulk of this collection is now at Lindenwood University.

A five hour/week student finished three semesters' work on a post-digitization processing project and a summer student conducted a quality control review on 176 interviews from one collection. The content was originally on 125 cassette and six microcassette tapes. Many interviews had been recorded on a single tape but were split across different sides; other parts were on different tapes altogether. This kind of collection is not common in our holdings, but it illustrates the type of work that is common with digitized audiovisual files across our collections. Events recorded in real time need curation through content selection, editing and metadata assignment in order for the files to be understood as standalone digital objects.

A unique collaboration occurred this year when University Chaplain Elyse Nelson-Winger asked for support with hosting two volumes of *The Saint John's Bible*. The volume *Gospels and Acts* arrived in January and was replaced by the *Pentateuch* in July. The archives was used just a few times by Chaplain Elyse and/or others to view the volumes. The primary responsibility for this department was to provide safe storage and frequent access for the docents to transport the volumes elsewhere at varying times. I also took part in the docent training in the spring but only needed to make the volumes accessible a few times on my own. Most often these activities did not involve IWU's collections and so they are not reflected in our statistics.

Progress on last year's goals

I stated I would continue my work on documenting preservation and access decisions and have contributed documentation on this and other aspects of work in the department to a GoogleDrive folder under the Library Procedures folder that was created by the Services Team.

Last year I also stated that I would continue collaborating with ID&S staff on cross training needs and collections' descriptions. That goal is evident in the increased time Julie is devoting to her descriptive work and the great progress Tod is making on organizing and creating better descriptions for manuscript collections.

One collection transfer item from last year's goals will carry over into the coming year (see below).

Goals for 2018-2019

In addition to the *College & University Publications Collection*, one collection of books was selected for removal from Special Collections last year. As of this writing, we have not found a home for these titles but we will continue to explore our options. The distinction should be made that these were never formally accessioned when they were donated in the 1980s (due to being duplicates or inappropriate for our repository), so they will not require formal deaccessioning.

I will work with Tod on finding appropriate projects for him to start supervising archives student assistants on. Due to his work on our manuscript collections, I know he will be a good resource for guiding student assistants on smaller but similar types of collections work in the future. I also hope to start engaging Tod on the processes I use in responding to research requests.

When I established the [archives' decision making flowchart](#) I noted my plan to make long term access and storage decisions for digital files at time of accession but did not comment on what to do with the transfer media. This year I started a practice of disposing of CDs and DVDs or deleting files from drives once the content was transferred to DuraCloud. One exception is for the School of Music's performance CDs. We have entered into discussions with members of the School in an attempt to identify a reasonable portion of this material to retain. The library will continue to accept and catalog one CD in order to meet the School's needs but for the archival copy, I hope we will eventually be receiving only the native digital file so that we can more easily provide long term preservation of the content.

I will also continue the process of evaluating the electronic holdings on the LaCie drive and creating an inventory with storage locations for both the access and the dark archive copies in DuraCloud, as applicable.