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Archives Annual Report, 2020-2021

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2020-2021 Tate Archives & Special Collections Report

November 29, 2021

Meg Miner, University Archivist & Special Collections Librarian

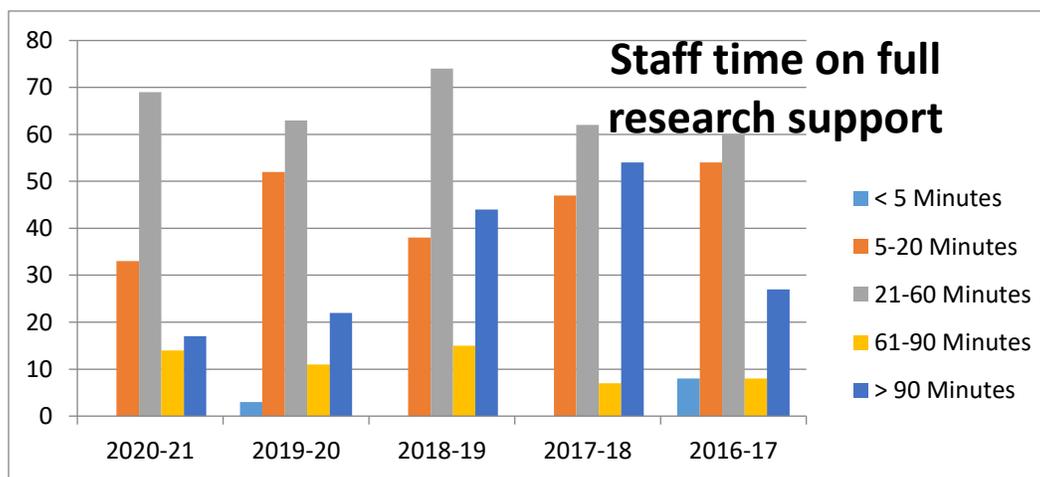
Staffing, Accessions and Service Summary

One student assisted me in processing collections and providing services to our community this year. Both Julie Wood and Amy Sutter continued harvesting selected e-records (distributed online and by email) and added them to DigitalCommons. Late in the spring I learned that Julie's position was being redefined so that she would officially be working as Archives Processing & Metadata Specialist in the archives beginning in the fall. Late in the summer we started training in her new role but I will wait until next year to offer a full accounting of this transition.

Our holdings grew by 40 linear feet and so our collections comprise a total of 1504 linear feet for materials housed within the department. We also accessioned 491 GB of digitized and born-digital materials; we have a total of 2.2 TB in our preservation account with DuraCloud.

There were 51 on-site visitors this year. Forty students in six classes (one each from the Sciences and Social Sciences divisions and the rest in the Humanities) explored archives and special collections materials. Due to some scheduling needs, in part because of the global COVID19 pandemic, three of those encounters took place in their classrooms. One of these classes visited Tate Archives & Special Collections in groups divided over two class sessions.

We fulfilled 133 requests for full research support with 74 of them originating with faculty, staff or administrators. The following chart shows that over the last five years, the most frequent use of staff time on requests is in the middle range of 21-60 minutes. This year there were 29 patron encounters of a less research-intensive nature compared to 125 last year; all of the latter were prior to the pandemic closure. We also loaned materials (described below) to six individuals.



Archives Accessions and Activities

The student assistant who started working with me this year has experience with music compositions and finished processing and describing [the R. Bedford Watkins collection](#) that I reported on last year. A volunteer had been working on it before campus closed due to the global COVID19 pandemic, but he was unable to return due to the building access restrictions.

We processed 34 new accessions this year which resulted in adding 33 linear feet and 491 GB to our holdings. The largest single donation came from David Vayo, Emeritus Professor of Music. We are fortunate that Dr. Vayo was available for consultation and the same student who completed the Watkins collection began processing [Vayo's works](#). Materials include Vayo's original compositions, comprised of print and pdf copies of scores; recordings on both analog and digital media; teaching materials for some courses; and posters and programs for performances he coordinated or participated in. With Vayo's permission, Amy Sutter will create a Selected Works page for the digital files and I will work from a list of priorities Vayo made of his analog recordings to arrange transferring them to digital formats.

In response to the cancellation of in-person Homecoming I prepared exhibits that were relevant to the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1970 and to student protests from that year to the present. Campus photographer Nick Helten filmed me on a walkthrough of the exhibits and the Alumni Engagement office distributed the video. They also distributed a list of digitized videos I prepared at their request. Other online activities I engaged in for Homecoming include [a timeline](#) of activists who have visited IWU since 1961, and several Tweets posted with #IllinoisWesleyanHomecoming in the hopes of generating alumni engagement with archival collections. I tried a similar barrage of postings for the All-In campaign in 2020. Very few of these were retweeted or liked by alumni so I do not consider this a successful outreach venue.

As shown above, most of our research request required less than 60 minutes of staff time to resolve. However, there were 17 requests requiring over 90 minutes; 30% of these originated with IWU Administrators, Faculty or Staff. The most time-intensive work was a collaboration I undertook with the University Chaplain for the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Teach-in that resulted in a Zoom-based presentation. Rev. Dr. Monica Corsaro wanted to understand the national and local context for King's 1961 and 1966 visit. Over a period of about two months we had numerous conversations and I identified relevant audiovisual sources from IWU history to complement the narrative. I [created a Powerpoint](#) with embedded photos, audio and video clips that Chaplain Corsaro presented on January 18.

Special Collections Accessions and Activities

We accessioned 12 donations for special collections which equaled a little more than 7 linear feet. Most of these were materials purchased from booksellers or donated by alumni and emeritus faculty. I transferred a small (4 linear inches) collection of local theatre programs to the McLean County Museum of History. They arrived several years ago with a larger collection.

The new accessions count does not include the almost 1300-piece Campus Art Collection. In January we made the [online catalog](#) of this collection available to the public. These works will now be part of the responsibilities of this department but the inventory, metadata creation and digital surrogates are the work of others. Library Technology & Resources Director Suzanne Wilson led the project over a four-year period with the assistance of library staff Tod Eagleton and Julie Wood and with Elizabeth Jensen, spouse of former president Eric Jensen. This team deserves praise for the efforts involved in locating and describing the works. The Jensens also supported the project with funds for flat-file storage. Photographers Jason Reblando, Trey Frank III, and Nick Helten created images available online. Past University Librarians Karen Schmidt and Scott Walter supported the project from its inception. Physical Plant crews moved parts of the collection in need of secured storage to a space in another building that they also adapted for this purpose.

All of the loans permitted this year were from the Campus Art Collection except two. The exceptions were loans back to the collection donors: one was a community organization, for a milestone anniversary celebration, and the other for personal research needs. All of the art loans except one were for use by campus personnel in their offices. The exception was a loan of 36 works in a specific medium for exhibition in the Merwin Gallery on campus.

Notable encounters for research support with special collections this year include materials selected from the [Dave Kindred Papers](#) for review in advance of his interview on CBS's *60 Minutes*. A producer visited to make the final selections that I scanned for their use. The show aired on March 28 and the producers sent a few DVDs of it to Dave who contributed a copy to his collection.

We also hosted Loyola University's Dr. Ian Cornelius as part of a 2019 multi-institutional CLIR *Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives* grant. The pandemic delayed the start of activities for [The Peripheral Manuscripts Project](#), but our site visit was able to take place in late spring 2021. Dr. Cornelius spent a day examining 16 of the items that I proposed for inclusion. He recommended against one of them due to the small amount of *in situ* fragments that are visible. The fragments are part of a tightly-bound book and so it would also be difficult to get meaningful images. The work remaining for us on the 15 items we will contribute is to identify appraisal values before we will receive a date in the digitization schedule at Indiana University.

Progress on last year's goals

Work continued on processing and describing previously digitized A/V recordings until the start of the semester; more files remain to be assigned access and preservation locations.

I still have not made any progress on preparing cost estimates for the preservation needs in the Arends Collection.

I had one exchange with School for Music faculty to formalize preservation plans for recordings but additional decisions remain.

Before Julie Wood's official start date in August, she and I were able to begin discussing which series in ArchivesSpace would benefit from enhanced descriptions. I am confident that Julie's expertise will be valuable across the University's archival and special collections.

I did not formalize criteria and access policies for the pandemic Zoom sessions. I remain interested in doing so but as I observed last year, the issues surrounding these events are unique and don't lend themselves to blanket policies. I will look for commonalities as I continue to capture and assess preservation and access needs for each video I am able to capture.

I have not created a comprehensive publicly-accessible finding aid for links to digitized audiovisual materials and will seek insights from Julie on how they might be described better and be made accessible in the online catalog.

Goals for 2021-2022

As mentioned in every report since AY2016-2017, Julie Wood has been working on different aspects of processing and description for archival holdings. With Julie's transition into a fulltime role in the archives, training her on processes she hasn't engaged in previously will be our focus for the year.

I will also work more on the goals listed above that remain from previous years.