

Special Collections – Looking to the Future Visioning: Table Discussions

Table 1

- Consistency in security, collection control and quality service (less fragmented, more cohesive)
- Better communication, thinking as a team

- *Self managed teams/horizontal communication, decision making by consensus (cross training)
- *More parties! Chance to communicate/get to know
- Distributed cataloging rather than centralized
- Conference room completed, greater exposure to public
- Increased marketing of special collections through website, etc....
- To increase access to collection full text content available, digital library
- Greater awareness by faculty and students that we exist, and what we can provide them: work with faculty on course assignments; library instruction
- Special collections web designer to enhance websites
- Integration of other “Special Collections”
- Greater awareness by Public Services staff of what we can offer patrons, increased referrals
- Promote undergraduate education, and graduate research projects
- Continue exhibits/special events
- Experienced staff, pride in what we do
- “Special Collections provides excellent, safe access to its collections (especially where we have compact shelving.)
- “From accepting the material to making it available to researchers, special collections is very good at what it does.”

Table 2

- Preservation & Access
- Internet: Finding Aides; Digital Library projects
- Facility-Space: Storage/compact shelving
- Hours: Weekend hours; Late night hours (evenings)
- Staffing: Asst. UM Archivist; More state line positions; Historical manuscripts; LAB – Mike Henry; Keeping experienced staff; East Asia; Prange
- Looking to the Future: Integration & communication between divisions and public service points; Outreach to younger students (K-12, high school); more integration and communication with faculty and departments on campus; more vigorous PR, higher profile on campus; Freshmen introduction to special collections; outreach & communication with other institutions; donors and funding sources, staffing, shelving; staff training – Professional development, specialized skills; responsible collecting; Special Collections are innovative and fun – Public image

Table 3

- Recognition as the UM's unique contribution to the world of knowledge
- Meeting the challenges of the celebration of UM's 150th anniversary in 2006
- Tenacity and creativity in the face of adversity
- Thinking big
- Commitment to quality and willingness to go the extra mile
- Formal collection development policy that reaches across units
- More involvement in public service
- Integrating East Asia Collection and Prange into Special Collection universe
- Strong donor support
- Strong leadership structure that advocates for special collections with dean and campus
- Reduction of processing backlogs in Special collections.
- Reexamination of TSD resources devoted to Special Collections
- Active [public events program
- Establish Public Services coordinator for entire division
- AV preservation unit up and running with 1 permanent staff person
- More coordination/shared staffing for technology-related projects e.g. EAD, databases
- More of a digital presence
- Permanent lines for key contact staff
- Stakeholders say collections are exciting
- Encourage donor support for processing newly acquired collections
- Integrate external relations into collection development wherever possible
- Reorganization of work structures and how we conceive of ourselves
- Evaluating linkages with PAL in nonprint
- Improved security in HBK
- Collections appropriately housed—e.g. humidity control
- Educate staff and others outside Special Collections on importance of our collections—achieve high visibility on campus
- Filling staff vacancies
- More outreach to campus/partnering with academic departments—resource transfer from academic departments
- Assert “equalness” with academic faculty
- Involve teaching faculty in building collections.

Table 4

- Higher staffing levels
- No contract positions
- Endowments to support programs and operations
- Stronger sense of Special Collections community
- Public programming – seminars, workshops. Lectures, readings, exhibits
- Able to do more outreach

- Resident scholar support
- Compile list of recent scholarship/articles published from our collections
- Providing support for University Relations
- More funding to support all areas
- More space
- Get rid of compact shelving
- Stake holdings expressing high praise for collections and service (skills, knowledge)
- Web-based informational, collections expanded
- Aleph allows wider access to Special Collections
- Providing better tools—guides, etc.
- Not enough remote access
- Balanced in place in libraries, but appreciated for distinction we bring to libraries
- Special Collections better integrated into other Divisions
- Not only survived, but thrived and prospered!
- Contribution to diversity of various communities

Special Collections – 2006 Visioning – Reaching a Shared Understanding

We Agree . . . [based on table discussions]

Staffing

- New people bring fresh perspectives and skills
- Maintain staff we have – expertise, skills
- We are a good training place
- We need to keep a critical mass
- Look across other divisions to incorporate other staff into S.C.

Outreach /advocacy

- Make sure people know who we are
- Effective presence on the web
- Our researchers know us well—good referrals
- The libraries know us
- The campus community knows us: Provost;
Students, faculty

Web Presence

- Can Also Save Time
- Need to Tell stories to Development People
- Funding aids available
- Well-structured digital project – gives info, easy to navigate
(A presence can increase the workload) who sees this?
- Are we reaching the people we need to reach? Ex: the Legislature

Space

- Efficient use of space
- Quality Controlled
- Secure
- Outside funding – to support space (public funding should support this) (we need to advocate that the public should support)

Integration of Collections

- Build strong sense of community
- Sharing resources – people, web, collections

Issues and Ideas that Support the Future Brainstorming and Gathering Ideas on these Questions

#1-SERVICE

- **What are the issues affecting the service provided in Special Collections?**
- **What steps can be taken to address these issues?**

Issues [identified by retreat participants]

- Lack of public services coordinator
- Communication between Special Collections staff and with others outside Special Collections.
- Shortage of staff (coverage of desks).
- Locations (McKeldin vs. Hornbake, etc).
- Hours
- More awareness of collections
- Staff training
- Vacancies within units (NTL, BCAST, Prange)
- Compact Shelving is a big problem
- East Asia – Desk and Stacks not conveniently located
- More OPAC terminals
- Dilution of effort/staff time in multiple reading rooms
- Prioritize personal goals/responsibilities to free up time
- Not having the right equipment to make materials accessible *
- Preservation (ex.'s. handling photos)
- Availability of appropriate software
- Reliance on contract staff to provide key services

Steps [identified by retreat participants]

- Increase communication-more sharing “self-managed team”
- Maintain and increase staffing levels.
- Evaluate and prioritize divisional needs to determine where to allocate staff resources when they become available.
- Combine services if possible. How well are collections processed? (relates to provision of public services)
- Clear collection policies for all units
- Convert contract staff to permanent line
- Devise creative ways to obtain needed equipment, e.g. solicit donations in-kind.

#2-Collections

- **What are the advantages and disadvantages of our current organizational structure as it relates to the management of collections?**

Advantages [identified by retreat participants]

- Knowledgeable, specialized curators/staff
- Ability to combine staff and other resources in Prange, East Asia
- Current structure discourages micromanagement and encourages an ad hoc approach to collecting (latter is a disadvantage).
- Collection-based structure (has pros and cons).
- Draws on individual expertise
- Easier to manage small groups.
- We are “special”! Unique!
- Current structure preserves uniqueness of each collection.
- Freedom of action

Disadvantages [identified by retreat participants]

- Policies vary from unit to unit
- Hard to prioritize division wide because of emphasis on individual units
- Prange/East Asia do not share client groups – don’t have to be a unit; bound only by language.
- May foster “silo” mentality
- Lack of clearly defined collection policy
- Lack of info trading/sharing between ourselves and other divisions.
- Lack of co-ordination
- Division Director not in Hornbake – may be disadvantage also an advantage.
- Too much hierarchy. (Decision making comes from top in some cases/situations)
- No interaction with subject teams
- Lack of parties.
- No interactions with subject teams
- Archives and Manuscripts/Marylandia and Rare books, NTL balkanized by media rather than subject.
- Prange and East Asia will be divided by location.

#3-PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

- **What is the right balance of time and resources to have a successful program? What steps can be taken to realize this?**

Ideas [identified by retreat participants]

- One half year + 20 hours per week. Full-time public services coordinator
- Importance of dedicated staff for this function.

- Difficulty to determine right balance of time and resources.
- Fact-finding to determine workable models.
- If there's a full time coordinator, then other staff should be in a supporting function.

Steps [identified by retreat participants]

- Create Public Service coordinator position
- Curators need to learn to ask for help from others.
- Draw on expertise from across the libraries
- Need to publicize programs better.
- Continue series of events coordinator, Lori Hill.
- Continued cooperation w/ development team.
- Better defining target audiences.
- Seek involvement of top campus administration
- Study to see what is needed/what would appeal to the public. Many programs have aimed at thanking existing donors – what about drawing in new people?
- Develop dedicated position for web/digital library expertise.
- Identify other partners/co-sponsors on campus or beyond.
- Core responsibilities take precedence over public programming, but we have to make time for it.
- Need better idea/assessment of total resources required to do an event or exhibit (i.e., staff time, other resources, etc.)
- Better coordination of knowledge learned at programs/events so we don't "have to reinvent the wheel."

#4-DEVELOPMENT

- **Define roles of Development Team & of other staff in Development – Improve communications between the two.**
- **What are the issues affecting current and future development work?**
- **What steps can be taken to address these issues?**

Ideas [identified by retreat participants]

- Need money – how to get it?
- Pursue our own grants/funding – while working with Development Office Staff.
- More training to develop expertise of fund raising, grants, etc. – current lack of expertise.
- Economic factors (stock market, etc.)
- Political (international market)
(The Governor)
- Flexibility of staff resources (to deal with new grant-supported projects and work on projects driver by outside funding).
- Work with grants office (campus) to maximize use of money.
- Library and campus staff resources devoted to fund-raising.

- Focus on seeking opportunities for donation of goods and services (not just cash).
- Volunteers??
- Lack of time to do external development.
- Last minute demands from development staff.
- Lack of coordination with development staff
- Conflicting goals (money vs. quality).
- Difficulty communicating priorities to development staff.
- Poor gift reporting procedures.
- Reluctance of some staff to share development info.
- Defining role of staff in development.
- Need to have explicit goals, funding priorities.

#5-TEAMWORK

- **What structure needs to be in place to effectively position Special Collections for the future?**
- **What steps can be taken to support the structure and build on new or existing relationships?**

Ideas [identified by retreat participants]

- Team to better support communications – need to support collection and staffing strengths. *
- Hybrid structure – Focus and flexibility of a team along with recognition that there needs to be formal leadership. *
- More cooperation with Public Services Division *
- How to integrate East Asia with Hornbake units? Is it more like a branch library?
- Cross Training – more collections
- Breaking down other collections’ knowledge.
- Breaking down perceived barriers to a true *team* structure, i.e. language and culture.
- Create a cohesive community.
- Bring all Special collections on campus together.

Steps [identified by retreat participants]

- Eliminate rude behavior on the part of colleagues.
- Create a collegial atmosphere.
- Eliminate “us vs. them” mentality.
- Create policies, procedures, guidelines that govern all special collections.
- Decisions made by *team* members.
- More open lines of communication/information sharing:
Monthly meetings? E-mail reflector? Team t-shirts?
Share monthly reports; Special Collections (staff and students) newsletter – highlights- researchers, projects, gifts

- Eliminate departments/units – create flexible teams by subject collections: Broadcasting, East Asian Studies, Maryland, Literary Studies, Labor History, Historic Preservation.

#6-TRAINING

- **To achieve our vision what skills and training do we need? How can we accomplish this?**

Ideas [identified by retreat participants]

- Peer training – especially of skills used in Special Collections.
- Emphasis on new digital and computer developments.
- If we spend less time attending meetings we will have more time to learn skills we need. (!!)
- Formal recognition of dedicated time to gain new expertise (needs to be balanced against core responsibilities).
- Leave with pay for lengthy workshops.
- More resources to attend off-campus workshops.
- More strategic thinking about staff training (relation to mission statement, goal statements; staff expertise; who needs training the most).
- Training in donor relations and fund raising
- Training in ordering supplies and training videos
- Website development principles

Steps [identified by retreat participants]

- Attend professional meetings
- Barbara Harr has valuable info she can share w/ us.
- PASD conduct training in purchasing, supplies and financial accounting.
- Peer Training for Special Collections required for all library staff.
- More flexible Work Plan/PRD expectations. Does *everything* have to relate *directly* to the job? Otherwise, how will we develop?
- More staff cross training on specific skills (computer) and techniques within Division. Brownbag lunches.
- Take advantage of campus training opportunities (OIT).
- Libraries-Learning Curriculum – Special Collection subset: Donors/dev issues, security, collection development project.
- EAD expertise and concerted training.
- Digital remastering in broadcasting.
- Management training
- More formal instruction (language, info management) (minor foreign language instruction as needed, i.e. East Asian character recognition)
- Dedicated funding, including grants (e.g. IMLS) grant writing.
- Encourage use of tuition remission benefit to support work-related issues.
- More focused use on in-house expertise.

Development of Goal Areas and Priorities

[Based on preceding brainstorming and gathering of ideas. Numbers in parentheses indicate total votes cast by retreat participants for that item.]

Service Goals

1. Increase communication and sharing of information and resources throughout Special Collections. (14)
2. Realize importance of dedicated staff to providing uniform and thorough information and Research services. (4)
3. Sufficient tools (software, computers, scanners, preservation resources) to properly maintain collections and to serve/provide access to the public. (11)
4. Clearly defined priorities to achieve balance in Special Collections (desk time vs. processing time vs. outreach time, etc.) (6)

Collections Goals

1. Develop a clearly defined collection policy (12)
2. Reevaluate the organizational structure as it relates to collections (11)
3. Develop a mechanism to draw upon special expertise and emphasize uniqueness of collections. (15)

Public Programming Goals

1. Staff resource planning: what we need to make it happen (5)
2. More focus on the “goal” of each event – audience, outcome, etc. (5)
3. F/T Events coordinator (16)
4. Partnerships on and off campus (6)
5. Post-event evaluation/future event (0)
6. Planning Task Force – record what worked, what didn’t – whether event met goals (10)

Development Goals

1. Provide more training to develop expertise at fund-raising, grants, etc. (9)

2. Improve and broaden existing procedures relating to gifts, appraisals, donor relations (4)
3. Emphasize setting priorities and long-range planning. (5)

Teamwork Goals

1. Create more cohesive relationships and a better sense of community via a flexible team structure. (12)
2. Create a hybrid structure that takes the best of teams along with the best of current structure. (13)

Training Goals

1. Develop SC training curriculum. (7)
2. Enhance cross-unit/peer training. (11)
3. Emphasize strategic relevance of training opportunities – “all training is not created equal.” (12)

What I Expect from the Working Group

- Thinking outside the box
- Proposal for positive change
- Consideration of all ideas
- Communicate w/staff; periodically seek input and feedback from staff.
- Be mindful of fairness to all different units in deliberations.
- What the Working Group Can Expect of me---
- To provide input, feedback when asked.
- Thoughtful consideration of proposal
- Constructive criticism
- Share information that Working Group could benefit from.