

Learning About the World of Special Collections: Stewardship, Inventories, Treasure Hunts, Genealogy...

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Objectives

Is there a formula for librarians, evidence, or proof (of value) that pertains to historical queries and work when staffing devoted to activities is not full-time, and is also interim or transitional?

A case study of one institution's Special Collections and related historical work of the past year reveals lessons learned that might resonate with others...



Inquiries / activities (September 2014 - August 2015)

	TOTAL:	109
• Research genealogy, etc.	47	
• Tours/Exhibits	16	
• Donations	14	
• Collection Mgmt	11	
• Other/Misc.	21	

• Internal (current affiliates)	62	
• External (alums / others)	47	



Treasures

- Identification
- Storage
- Organization
- Description
- Display



Stewardship

- Identifying stakeholders
- Finding policies, procedures, contact lists, permission statements...
- Receiving to incoming inquiries, requests, gift offers
- Doing research and providing responses
- Finding and doing inventories
- Ensuring that housekeeping and collection management are done

- rare books
- photos
- plaques
- portraits
- instruments...

- gifts
- unexpected finds
- temporary loans and storage

Planning

- Digitization
- Exhibits
- Restoration
- Renovation
- Outreach

- university community
- alums
- affiliates
- other institutions
- independent researchers
- other



Communication and Outreach

- Tours
- Visitors
- Correspondence
- Reports and Articles
- Publicity

- library's website, Facebook
- e-mails
- medical school communication vehicles
- listservs

Methods

- Collect and show evidence of value: Collections are used and services are provided
- Be responsive and available
- Use and build on skills, knowledge
- Identify policies, sources, and contacts
- Find existing documentation, and build on it
- Do inventories and go on treasure hunts
- Research and / or ask (as appropriate)
- Don't reinvent the wheel (whenever possible)
- Be aware of standards, competencies
- Even in an interim, transitional time: Move matters forward...

