# Onsite Investigations of Special Collections and Archives Facilities and Programs at Other Universities to Better Inform the Long-Term Development of OSU Libraries’ Special Collections & Archives Research Center

## Lundeen Award Report

Larry Landis & Tiah Edmunson-Morton

15 February 2013

*Executive summary*

Special Collections & Archives Research Center (SCARC) staff received Lundeen Award funding to conduct site visits of three university special collections that have undergone recent and significant facilities and programmatic changes -- the University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center, Iowa State University Special Collections , and the UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections. The visits consisted of in-depth tours of facilities and discussions with staff of those facilities and programs. This report provides summaries and details of the site visits (the latter are appendices 1-3) and prioritized recommendations for facilities upgrades and changes for SCARC. The report also includes a section on programmatic ideas that were informed in part by the site visits.

The facilities recommendations are prioritized by function: instruction space, staff space, exhibits space, collections space, reference space, and meeting space. The top three priorities are creating a classroom and public event space, relocating all SCARC staff to the 5th floor, and expanding our exhibits space. Other facilities recommendations are also grouped by functions: reference spaces, researcher and staff work spaces, meeting space, and collections spaces. SCARC staff should work closely with the facilities planner who will be designing the new spaces. Close collaboration with the designer was one of the keys to the success of the University of Chicago’s facilities improvements.

*Project background*

The September 2011 merger of the Special Collections and University Archives into a new department necessitated integrating staff and collections, developing new workflows, and coordinating reference and instruction related activities. Beyond administrative concerns, the merger has resulted in a need for expanded and modified physical spaces and facilities to accommodate staff, collections processing activities, public services, instruction, special events and exhibits.

To facilitate the process of planning for new facilities, Tiah Edmunson-Morton coordinated an in-depth review of special collections and archives throughout the country, identifying several that had undergone recent changes to their facilities or had undergone a major programmatic shift.[[1]](#footnote-1) Resulting from Edmunson-Morton’s review, SCARC staff pursued Lundeen Award funding to underwrite the costs of conducting on-site visits to University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center, Iowa State University Special Collections, and UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections.

* University of Chicago [Special Collections Research Center](http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/) had significant facilities enhancements in 2011.
* Iowa State University [Special Collections](http://www.lib.iastate.edu/spcl/index.html) had facilities upgrades in 2004 and 2011; ISU is also a peer land grant institution with very similar collections.
* UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections administratively reorganized various special collections and archives. An additional component of the UCLA Special Collections is its [Center for Primary Research and Training](http://www.library.ucla.edu/specialcollections/researchlibrary/center-primary-research-training), which “integrates special collections materials more fully into UCLA's teaching and research mission and provides a substantive educational experience for graduate students by training them in archival methods, matching them with unprocessed special collections, and thus making accessible lesser-known collections.”

Lundeen funds had been previously awarded to help with the planning of the Libraries’ Center for Digital Scholarship & Services and its Learning Commons.

*Summaries of site visits[[2]](#footnote-2)*

**University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center**

The UC SCRC underwent significant facilities changes and enhancements that were completed in 2011. It has also benefited from earlier changes, such as the 2003 addition of a seminar room. The 2011 changes affected nearly every aspect of the Center’s operations and all of its public service, instruction and exhibits spaces. Key staff offices were also reconfigured.

In the public services space, major upgrades included a new circulation/reception desk, new workstations for researcher registration and reference consultations (not in the reading room), an enlarged collections hold/staging area, and new lockers for use by all patrons, including students being provided instruction sessions by SCRC staff. The most significant change to the reading room was the removal of bookshelves to make room for a computer work station.



Two of the new researcher registration/reference consultation workstations.

The center has four instruction spaces. In addition to the technology rich 2003 seminar room (which includes a digital camera for classroom display of items), the center has a large classroom that can accommodate classes and groups of up to 100 people. The 2011 improvements included built-in media and improved acoustics for this classroom. The remaining spaces are two small group study rooms, one of which was added in the 2011 upgrade.



UC SCRC’s large classroom showing some of its flexible furniture.

The most notable change to the center’s facilities was the addition of a 2,384 square foot gallery located on the hallway that connects the Regenstein Library (where the center is located) and the new Mansueto Library. The gallery contains eleven movable cases of various sizes, plus a 36 foot long glass enclosed space at the back of the gallery. This gallery replaced a smaller gallery that had included 6 glass front cases. Those cases are now in the lobby area across from the circulation/reception desk, and are used for displaying materials from the center’s collecting areas.



New exhibition gallery at the University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center.

**Iowa State University Special Collections**

Iowa State University Special Collections underwent facilities changes in 2004 and 2011. The 2004 changes included a major upgrade to its reading room -- new reference desk, new electrical outlets, and new flooring. New lightweight, moveable furniture is a more recent upgrade to the reading room and gives it better functionality. The reading room door knobs and tables are ADA compliant.



Iowa State University Special Collections reading room.

The 2011 change was the addition of dedicated classroom space. The classroom is technology rich. It is adjacent to the other Special Collections facilities and includes a secure door into the work area/office space for easy transport of collection materials into the space. Both the reading room changes and the new classroom were funded with grants from local foundations.



ISU Special Collections’ new dedicated classroom.

Within the past three years Special Collections has installed five new free standing, glass exhibit cases of various sizes. They were purchased with donor funds. Two are outside the reading room door and three are inside the reading room.

 

Left -- All glass exhibit cases outside the entrance to ISU Special Collections; right – tall exhibit case in the reading room.

**UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections**

UCLA YRL is in the process of consolidating service points. They’ve also undergone significant administrative changes, with the addition of several new staff at department head level and people in new positions. However, staff noted that the new roles were well-articulated, which reduced the stress on staff and allowed for an easier transition for those in new positions.

The instruction spaces are limited to 2 small seminar rooms with an overhead projector. The head of reference and instruction said that she’d like new or improved classroom facilities, as well as a more robust and proactive instruction program. She feels like the program is currently only able to react to outside requests rather than strategically think about where their staff or collections might have the most impact. The reading room is small. They do have an exhibits space in the lobby that features exhibits designed by the curators; however, staff said a lead exhibits curator (department head level) would be welcome.



Special Collections reading room in UCLA’s Young Research Library.

The Center for Primary Research and Training (CFPRT) was created to give graduate students a chance to work closely with collections in which they had a research interest in or strong subject knowledge. CFPRT students balance learning about professional archival practice combined with their own interest level and subject expertise.

 

Collections work area in UCLA’s CFPRT. Student processing work space in CFPRT.

*General Conclusions Drawn from Site Visits*

1. Close **collaboration** between the facilities planner and staff is essential for the success of new and improved spaces. Staff at the University of Chicago specifically mentioned this, and this point was also mentioned by other institutions as part of the facilities surveys conducted in the spring of 2012.
2. **Flexibility** was important for all repositories, particularly as it pertains to spaces and furniture.
	* Furniture in classrooms, reading rooms, and public use spaces should be moveable and reconfigurable.
	* Public spaces, particularly classrooms, need to be designed to accommodate a variety of instruction related activities.
	* Work areas should be as flexible as possible in order to accommodate changing priorities.
3. Facilities benefit from having a **dedicated instruction space**.
	* Both the University of Chicago and ISU emphasized the benefit of their improved instruction spaces for their instruction programs; however, staff at all facilities noted that having a space that is exclusively or primarily for instruction is the ideal.
	* ISU staff said that their new classroom has greatly enhanced their instruction program.
	* UC has a large enhanced classroom space that holds 50-60 people; staff indicated that they want to develop a dedicated event space to reduce the use of its large classroom for events.
	* The on-site instruction space at UCLA is dated and inadequate for the current or future needs. Most instruction is done off-site in university classrooms.
4. **Exhibit and display space** is an important component for all three institutions.
	* Exhibits are an outreach opportunity as exhibits are tied to events, community interest, and student projects.
	* All three institutions had an exhibits tech position or staff member with exhibit installation experience to take the lead. Staff at UCLA said that their exhibits program is currently managed by a team of curators, but would be more effective with an Exhibit Development Coordinator position for consistency in vision and planning. SCARC and the OSU Libraries generally would benefit from a staff position that was dedicated to exhibits and related outreach activities.
	* Students help with research and installation.
* **Collections**
	+ Collections storage varied at all three institutions, but all three have at least some offsite storage (most collections are stored offsite at UCLA).
	+ Significant storage space for collections being processed is key to the success of UCLA’s CFPRT.

*Detailed facilities recommendations*

These recommendations are prioritized into two groups: first level and second level priorities. The recommendations under each section are not in order of prioritization, rather grouped by function. There are also some technology or supply recommendations for some recommendations that could be easily be purchased sooner rather than later if funding allows.

 **SCARC’s top facilities needs (in priority order)**

1. Classroom and public event space: create a teaching and event space on the 5th floor.
* Utilizing the reading room for classroom instruction and special events disrupts the availability of that space for researchers. All instructional activity should happen apart from the reading room, in spaces designed for instruction purposes.
* New classroom space should be flexible
	+ Moveable furniture
	+ Portable white boards
	+ Tables that can accommodate use of physical collections, as well as the various technologies listed below.
* Features of the new space include the ability to accommodate
	+ 30-35 students in standard classroom seating at tables and in other configurations (e.g., group work/discussion)
		- Lockers for students’ belongings should be included in an adjacent area (and separate from the reading room researcher lockers)
	+ 55-60 people for public events such as lectures, films, and receptions
	+ 40-45 people for special luncheons and dinners in order to limit the use of the Reading Room for this purpose.
* The space should be technology rich with components such as
	+ A documents camera similar to that in the University of Chicago’s seminar room
	+ Computer workstations with laptops or tablets available for students
	+ Computer projector and screen
	+ Window blackout shades
	+ Built-in PA system, including technology for recording lectures and events
	+ Desktop scanner for duplication purposes
1. Staff work space
	* Staff offices: co-locate all the current SCARC staff on the 5th floor.
		+ Currently, staff is on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th floors; Ryan Wick also telecommutes part time.
		+ Eight offices and/or cubicles will need to be created -- six for the 3rd and 4th floor staff and two additional for Trevor and Ryan.
		+ A few offices could be established in the existing 5th floor workroom, provided that additional collections workspace and student work stations are relocated, but we also see this as prime space for a processing center.
	* Student/intern/volunteer: install 6 work stations
		+ Currently, there are five student work stations between the two floors.
		+ To accommodate our current student staff, a minimum of six stations would be ideal; stations would be divided up between the collections processing areas.
		+ A work station or departmental laptop should be available for use at the collections processing area in the stacks.
		+ Additional work stations will be necessary if our internship program expands.
2. Exhibit space: develop a gallery-type exhibit space to enhance SCARC and OSULP outreach.
	* Exhibit space would have many of the features of the University of Chicago SCRC gallery (though on a smaller scale), including
		+ Moveable exhibit cases of various sizes
		+ Exhibit friendly lighting
		+ UV sleeves for the lights in the existing exhibit cases
		+ Picture rail on some of the walls in order to accommodate framed items without having to nail into walls
	* New gallery space would be used to host traveling exhibits and non-SCARC exhibits developed by other OSULP faculty and staff
	* In the interim, prior to the development of new gallery space, identify existing 5th floor space that can be used for exhibit purposes, including the display of student work.
		+ More and more student work using SCARC collections is resulting in projects that lend themselves to display, such as the illuminated manuscripts.
		+ Existing spaces include
			- Avenue where NW Art Collection pieces are located
			- SCARC foyer spaces for upright display cases
			- Wall space adjacent to the rotunda
	* Utilize the space in the Learning Commons near the vending machines for smaller traveling exhibits and to give SCARC a second floor presence
	* Reconfigure the existing exhibit cases to make them easier to work with and more environmentally friendly
	* Other ideas include the creation of a permanent university history exhibit space in line with the Linus Pauling office, which draws an audience and relieves the pressure off office and desk staff to conduct tours.

**Note: this call for increased exhibits space ties to the “Programmatic Recommendation” for an expanded exhibits program and the creation of an Exhibits Technician Position.**

1. Collections space: increase space for processing and consolidate some storage spaces.
	* Processing workspaces: consolidate on the 5th floor.
		+ These spaces should include large, flat surfaces and shelving that can accommodate new accessions and collections being processed by staff and students.
		+ Processing workspaces should be close to the offices of staff whose primary responsibilities are working with collections – this would likely necessitate two primary collections processing areas plus the tables in the 5th floor stacks
		+ Each primary processing area should include a substantive amount of shelving for collections “in process.”
		+ Additional collections workspace will be needed to accommodate the expected increase in processing activities that will result from a more formalized or robust processing internship program (similar to UCLA’s CFPRT).
	* Collections storage space
		+ Add shelving to the safe/vault room.
		+ Consider relocating the three safes presently in that space.
		+ Add a freezer to the catering kitchen for cold storage of nitrate film material
	* Create a receiving room for new collections
		+ Close to freight elevator
		+ Use for new collections staging; mold/pest control when necessary
2. Reference spaces:
	* Reading room:
		+ Reference desk: replace existing reference desk chairs with adjustable, higher swivel chairs.
			- The existing reference desk was not designed with current dual monitor setups in mind. As a result, the reference desk does not allow adequate sight lines for monitoring researcher use of collections.
			- It is difficult for someone entering the Reading Room to see staff at the reference desk.
		+ Reading room windows: Install UV filtering film
			- First priority -- high windows on the east and west sides. Second priority -- the bookcases.
			- Consider treating the north windows only after testing to determine how much darker this would make the reading room on overcast days and if the cost is feasible.
	* Researcher interview space: create a quiet, semi-private space for conducting reference interviews outside the Reading Room.
		+ Conducting in-depth interviews with new researchers is a common practice for SCARC and special collections everywhere.
		+ Currently, staff on the reference desk must conduct these researcher interviews in the Reading Room – which can be disruptive to other researchers.
		+ A research interview cubicle could be carved out of the existing 5th floor workroom; this space could double as a student or intern work station when not in use for researcher interviews. Existing cubicle panels, not needed for the 3rd floor remodel, could be used to create this interview space.
3. Meeting space
	* Add technology to the Wilson Room to make it a fully functional meeting and small seminar space (10 or fewer people).
		+ Wall mounted monitor, similar to what is in VL 3755, though larger
		+ Laptop
		+ Speaker phone/Polycom phone

**Other SCARC facilities recommendations (not in priority order)**

1. Reading room: install new technologies, explore sound-dampening options.
	* Digital photo station: the Book-Eye works well for duplication, but there are still instances where oversized materials cannot be used on that machine. We recommend purchasing a camera stand for researchers and staff to use with their personal camera or mobile device.
	* Digital kiosk: create a technology rich station for audio/visual viewing and listening and for accessing born digital records. SCARC presently has audio/visual viewing and listening equipment that is several years old.
	* Options for sound-dampening: because the echoing in the reading room is considerable and makes even low level conversations difficult, we recommend exploring options for dampening the sound.
		+ One idea would be to engage an engineering or physics class to come up with potential solutions that are feasible at a reasonable cost.
2. Small group study/work space: create a space for small groups to use collection materials without disturbing other patrons.
	* This space would need to be visible from the current reference desk or be monitored directly by staff.
3. Scholar office space
	* Currently, our Resident Scholars and other visiting scholars have no personal space in the Libraries.
		+ Permanently assign one of the long-term faculty study rooms on the 5th floor to SCARC.
4. Collections storage:
* Additional collections storage space on either the 5th floor or in an offsite facility should be developed for collections presently housed in the 3rd floor compact shelving
	+ Shelving should have a manual opening system or a combination electronic/manual backup system.
* Install additional flat storage space on the 5th floor.
	+ Materials currently housed on the 3rd floor, and are difficult to transport to the reading room, should be housed on the 5th floor.
	+ Some new flat storage has been created in the 5th floor stacks, but accommodating most of SCARC’s flat storage materials will require identifying new space outside of the stacks.
	+ An alternative would be investing in a book truck modified for transport of flat oversize materials.
* Explore options for changing the fire suppression system in the 5th floor stacks from its current wet pipe configuration.

*Programmatic ideas based upon the site visits*

The main impetus of the site visits was to gather information regarding facilities; however, staff at each institution discussed programmatic aspects as well. We found some of these compelling and worth considering for SCARC. Some of them will require funding to initiate.

We would like to **expand and formalize aspects of our internship program**. An ad hoc internship team has been formed to develop a plan for accomplishing this.

* An expanded program would offer opportunities for students to create content or work on research projects, assist with exhibits or outreach, and work with digital projects. The program would have a formalized application and evaluation process.
* As a component of a larger internship program, we would like to create a program similar to UCLA’s Center for Primary Research and Training to match students with collections needing processing support[[3]](#footnote-3). An expanded internship program would not replace the internships for credit we currently offer.
* SCARC would offer one (or more) paid internship(s) per term for a graduate student or upper level undergraduate. Internships could entail
	+ Processing a collection in their field of interest. The collections would be chosen by SCARC staff. The internship would rotate from term to term among SCARC’s four signature collecting areas. Each intern would be required to do a public presentation on their work.
	+ Developing a website or online exhibit, particularly developing and selecting the content (textual and visual) to be included. Projects could be selected from a list maintained by SCARC or be an original student idea that heavily utilizes SCARC content.
	+ Researching, creating resources, and/or writing about OSU history in advance of the Centennial in 2018.

To complement our recommendation of an increased exhibits space, we would also like to **create a more formalized and expanded exhibits program**.

* This program would include a workflow for “pre-planning” of exhibits, similar to the programs at UC and ISU. SCARC saw the benefits of having a dedicated exhibits staff member and group planning process last fall then the Instruction and Outreach team did extensive pre-planning for the Braceros and 4 Signature Areas exhibits.
* Establishing an exhibits technician position to help with exhibits planning and being the point person for exhibits installation should also be a major consideration.
* An expanded exhibits program would also require a modest increase in the SCARC services and supplies budget line or reliance on gift funds.

We would like to set up a **YouTube channel** to increase access to our digital video content.

* ISU Special Collections has a very successful YouTube channel that houses interviews and digitized films[[4]](#footnote-4). Over the past five years, that program has had considerable success and several of its videos having been viewed thousands of times. Their channel also allows them to “like” videos from other channels that would be of interest to their audience.
* The SCARC YouTube channel would complement our existing digital video content access and outreach efforts in the same manner that Flickr and Flickr Commons complement the Libraries’ ContentDM collections. OSU Media Service’s MediaSpace will remain the primary repository for our digital video content, serving the same role as CONTENTdm for our photo/image collections.

Investigate **evening and/or weekend hours**

* SCARC faculty and staff working public services are receiving more and more feedback and inquiries about using our collections after hours. Both the University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center and UCLA’s Young Research Library Special Collections have Saturday hours. Other archives and special collections surveyed and/or reviewed in Spring 2012 have extended hours, including the University of British Columbia (Saturdays) and Syracuse University (Tuesday/Thursday evenings).
* Over the next 4-6 months, the SCARC Reference Services and Facilities team will investigate the efficacy of evening and/or weekend hours. If expanded hours seem feasible, we will develop a pilot program for implementation in Fall Term 2013 that utilizes existing SCARC staff.

**Appendices**

*Appendix 1: University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center*

Larry visited UC SCRC on September 24 & 25. The day began with an overview/background discussion of the SCRC and an in-depth tour of its facilities, provided by Dan Meyer, the head of the SCRC and Julia Gardner, head of reader (public) services. The SCRC, located in the 1970 Regenstein Library, underwent a major reconfiguration two years ago. This happened concurrently with the construction of the adjacent Mansueto Library, which includes storage space for SCRC collections.

Public services area

The circulation and reference area was reconfigured in the recent renovation. It presently includes:

* Circulation/reception desk (some materials circulate)
* work station for reading room monitor (monitor views reading room through a glass window; staff are not actually in the reading room)
* Main foyer area –
	+ 3 workstations for researcher registration and reference consultations
	+ Old exhibit cases used to show variety of materials from different collections
	+ Two group study rooms, one of which was added during the renovation
	+ Browse-able archives reference collection, which includes various university publications
* Reading room (new paint and carpet as part of recent facilities upgrade) –
	+ seats 22 people (two per table), all facing monitor’s work station
	+ Copying with digital camera allowed; use Mylar strip to identify SCRC materials; users must sign permission form to copy materials
	+ Computer workstation available
	+ Saturday morning hours – more community users, casual users, long-time researchers, students at end of quarter
* Collections staging area for reading room – behind circulation desk
	+ Hold shelves (2 week hold period); staff hold shelf also (for copying, etc.)
	+ To be shelved book trucks
* 95 researcher lockers. All classes coming in must use for personal belongings; some handicap accessible
* Staff lockers in staff room

Instruction space

There are a variety of instruction spaces available for classes visiting the SCRC

* Two small group study rooms, one of which was added during the renovation
	+ Classes can use collections in these rooms, which are monitored by staff at the circulation desk
	+ Study rooms also double as staff meeting spaces
* Seminar room (SCRC use only); created in 2003
	+ can accommodate 15-18 people at tables and several more around perimeter
	+ extensive technology, including docs camera which is linked to one of the large screens at the front of the room
* Large (enhanced) classroom
	+ Technology added (projector and screen); acoustically adapted; blinds on windows
	+ Tables on wheels (from Barnhart) and very comfortable and functional chairs (from All-Steel)
	+ Can easily accommodate 50-60 people; up to 100 in classroom seating
	+ Also used for special events (this has caused pressure on the use of this space)
	+ Mostly used by classes needing access to large materials or lots of materials
	+ Includes some furniture artifacts
	+ For both classroom and seminar room use, classes take priority over special events
	+ Flexibility is the key to making this space work for various needs

An area adjacent to the new exhibition gallery is to be converted to a large multi-purpose space for the library. This will reduce the pressure to use SCRC spaces for special events.

New exhibition gallery

This was added during the recent renovation. It is a large space (nearly 2400 square feet) with eight different moveable exhibit cases, floor to ceiling cases against the back wall, programmable lighting, new environmental controls, and technology for audio and video media. Three of the walls include built-in picture rail for hanging items on the wall, eliminating the need to pound hangers into the wall. It is accessible via a door from the main corridor outside of the SCRC area, and via a door from the SCRC main foyer area. The corridor wall is mostly glass, giving visitors a view into the exhibit gallery. Design of the space included input from the Field Museum’s exhibits curator. New space also includes an adjacent gallery storage area. The gallery has the same public hours as the SCRC, though they do have the capability to keep the gallery open after hours for special events.

Staff offices/work spaces

The main area includes staff offices for the director, associate director, and two other high level staff, including the head of reader services. Circulation staff and reading room staff are also located here.

Most staff are located the floor below the public services area, with most of the stacks open from the staff work area. This staff space used to be general stacks for the Regenstein Library, but was repurposed about ten years ago. Most staff have carrels/cubicles with partitions; lack of privacy is something of a concern. The area also includes several collections processing spaces, including 5 computer workstations for graduate students who do most of the accessioning work; a digitization area that includes 2 large flatbed scanners and at least four computer workstations; a rare books processing area; and a preservation/exhibits prep lab.

An old periodicals stacks area on the main floor, adjacent to the public services area, is being converted to space for collections processing and books processing and cataloging.

Collections storage and retrieval

Most of the collections storage is in stacks that had been converted from general library use to SCRC use about ten years ago. There are two main stacks areas, both accessible from the staff work space described above. Both are a combination of compact (manual) and fixed shelving. The compact shelving includes some that can accommodate oversize materials.

One of the stacks areas is close to the library’s loading dock, making this space convenient for storage of brand new collections that have just arrived.

The rare books are stored in one section of the stacks; there is one primary collection, plus several small named collections. Like OSU, UC has centralized cataloging, though UC has set up work stations in the stacks for catalogers to work on rare books, reducing the need to transport them around the library.

Some collections are being transferred to storage in the adjacent Mansueto Library; all of the storage is underground and retrieval is completely automated.

Other features of the collections storage area:

* The SCRC also has a vault room for storage of extra rare materials, similar to our “safe” room.
* Collection admin files are stored in the stacks
* Photos are stored in cabinets (transferred to boxes as they are digitized and then moved to the Mansueto Library)
* One stacks area includes considerable flat storage on one end

Collections are requested using Aeon (Atlas Systems)

* UC SCRC was an early adapter of Aeon
* They are generally pleased with the system, though the info it provides is not as granular as they would like, and the reporting function not as robust as they need (Atlas is working on that)
* Provides good grasp of users

Security

The SCRC has its own centralized security system, separate from the rest of the library. Andover is their security vendor.

The remainder of the visit to the UC SCRC consisted of in-depth discussions with Dan Meyer and Julia Gardner about facilities and facilities planning, programmatic activities, services, etc.

• What makes a research center?

UC’s Special Collections dept. was created in 1953, the result of consolidating several small “special” collections. The dept. has always understood its role in research & teaching.

During the recent reconfiguration, they began to question how the word “special” was perceived by their users, given the integrated nature of the dept. to the rest of the library. Library director at the time suggested Special Collections Research Center – emphasizing the department’s research role. They have been at the vanguard of many SCs adding the research center component to the dept. name. It conveys the notion that it is a place that specialized materials can be accessed for research and teaching. The Research Center is an interconnected web of facilities, services, materials, users.

* Did the name change drive an increase in usage?

No; it has been driven by online access, classroom space and technology, and outreach.

Younger faculty are bringing in classes more regularly. Classroom visits now exceed reading room visits (number of people contacts).

• Outreach to new faculty?

SCRC participates in a faculty orientation fair; subject librarians are often key in making connections to new faculty. Prospective faculty are sometimes shown SCRC during the interview process.

• Accommodating researchers

The reading room seats 22; they occasionally reach limit at peak times during quarter. Their scholars program brings in researchers who are there for a week or more.

Researcher spaces are fairly flexible. Flexibility was a key component of recent reconfiguration.

Minor changes in technology in reading room; allow photos, more laptop users. Most technology changes have occurred in the classroom spaces.

ADA accessibility – accessible lockers; reading room tables can be moved to accommodate wheelchairs; university office has some capability for reformatting materials for patrons with vision issues.

Extended hours are currently 9am-12:45pm Saturday. Weekday evening hours would require additional staff or shifting of daytime hours.

• Space planning

Funds for recent reconfiguration came from university capital project funds, library funds, including endowment funds from Regenstein family. The planning process included interviewing architectural firms that had responded to their RFP. A Chicago firm, Booth Hansen, was selected – it had done projects for several cultural institutions. A Library planning group met with the architects and outlined their program/vision for the reconfigured space. The firm prepared presented flexible designs, and often came up with multiple potential solutions. The University facilities planner also participated in process. No student or faculty input was sought on the recent reconfiguration.

Planning for the future is difficult; flexibility is the operative word.

The gallery space was designed as an empty box that could be configured however necessary. The

Mansueto Library construction happened simultaneously with the SCRC reconfiguration – though that project used a different architectural firm. Booth Hansen worked well with the other firm, and did a great job of integrating the old and new.

• Outreach

Activities include an annual open house for students, usually winter quarter; workshops; and a history colloquia for students preparing for senior thesis.

Social media – the SCRC recently launched a Facebook page and blog.

The Library communications director works with mainstream media and university media and manages library’s news site. SCRC also works with the library’s development officer. University special events that have potential connection to SCRC are promoted and participated in. Tracking new interdisciplinary centers being created is important in the SCRC’s outreach efforts, as the centers are potential users of its collections.

• Exhibits

Ideas for exhibits come from SCRC faculty and staff, library staff, university faculty. They try to tie exhibits to particular events. Curatorial responsibilities for exhibits vary; many staff have developed exhibits. An Exhibits tech does the actual fabrication and installation. The exhibits and programs group in SCRC plans exhibits 2 years out. The SCRC does receive solicitations for hosting traveling exhibits.

• Student assistants and interns

Grad students are used for accessioning and processing and digitization? Undergraduates page materials and help prepare for classes that use SCRC facilities. They occasionally host interns from library programs such as UM for archives processing, but have no regular internship program.

*Appendix 2: Iowa State University Special Collections*

Larry visited this repository on September 26. ISU Special Collections has had a number of facilities changes in the past eight years, including a substantial upgrade to its reading room, new exhibit spaces/cases, and most recently the addition of a dedicated classroom.

Like the University of Chicago, the ISU site visit began with a tour of Special Collections’ facilities and of the Parks Library as a whole, provided by Tanya Zanish-Belcher, the head of Special Collections. Larry then met with each of the staff members.

Reading Room

Presently it can accommodate 24 researchers; extra chairs can be brought in for larger classes of up to 50 students. They come close to filling to capacity at times. A 2004 upgrade, funded in part by a grant from a private foundation, included new electrical outlets, new flooring and a new reference desk. The latter is made of green glass and is considered one of the Parks Library’s pieces of art. The upgrade made the reading room much more functional. They sought little input from outside users when planning for the reading room upgrade.

New tables and chairs are a more recent addition – they were purchased with flexibility in mind. They are considering the purchase of a Bookeye scanner for use in the reading room; presently self-serve photocopying is available. There are no weekend or evening hours; the current hours are 9-4, M-F.

The tables and the doorknobs to the reading room are ADA compliant. ADA issues generally are on ISU SC’s radar; they will be the repository for Senator Tom Harkin’s papers, and Harkin was one of the authors of the 1990 ADA legislation.

Exhibit space and planning

Exhibit space consists of two exhibit cases outside of the reading room door and three cases just inside the reading room. All are locking and completely glass. These were purchased within the past 2-3 years using donor funds, and replaced cases that had been made by ISU’s carpentry shop. The older cases required multiple people to maneuver them during the exhibit installation phase. ISU SC also has moveable, temporary panels for displays in the library’s foyer area. Staff have been very pleased with the exhibit cases.

Exhibit planning is an effort of the entire staff, and are driven largely by events within the university community. They are typically up for 3 to 7 months. A staff person typically serves as the curatorial lead for each exhibit, though much of the fabrication for all exhibits is done by one staff person. Their exhibits usually include an online component.

Classroom

The new classroom was completed in 2011, with grant funds from a local private foundation. Prior to this facility, SC used classroom space elsewhere in the Parks Library. It is next to and has a door into the SC offices space, making transport of collection materials very easy. The classroom, a little larger than one of the Valley Library’s Willamette seminar rooms, is rich with technology and outfitted with very flexible furniture.

Collections Storage

The current stacks, which can accommodate apx. 19,000 linear feet, were installed as part of the 1983 construction of the Parks Library. This space has proved sufficient up until recently. Senator Harkin’s papers will create a significant space crunch. Other space on the 4th floor is being considered for conversion to archival storage. Shelving includes both electronic and manual compact, as well as fixed shelving. Also included is a vault, similar to our “safe room.”

Staff offices/workspace

These are just inside the door from the reading room. In addition to offices for each professional staff member, there are several collections work areas and some student workstations. The area is “cozy” but functional. ISU SC would be hard pressed to accommodate additional staff in their current staff offices/workroom space.

Interviews with individual staff

Michele Christian, Collections Archivist/Records Analyst – she is the second in charge after Tanya. She works with films and artifacts, electronic records, and social media, and manages the student assistants and interns.

Michele does considerable coordination with student organizations, especially student government. She has encouraged student organizations to develop procedures in their bylaws that address historical materials, including transfer to Special Collections.

ISU SC makes extensive use of Social Media. They established a Facebook page in 2007, use Flickr and maintain a blog. They use ScribD, which is a publishing site that is good for highlighting stand alone documents in digital form. They have been big users of YouTube for video content since 2008. Much of their posted video content focuses on ISU related anniversaries and special events.

ISU SC’ student assistants help with exhibits research, image selection, some blog writing, scanning and assigning metadata, assisting with Flickr, and collections processing (refoldering, some basic collections decisions, finding aid creation). Most students are history, anthropology and English majors. Most internships are for class credit. Their current intern is a grad student in history. They have worked with anthropology interns, who have focused on the material culture aspects of artifacts.

Brad Kuennen, Library Assistant (classified staff) – He is responsible for accessioning new materials, does collections processing, and oversees students doing processing. He also does much of the departmental website maintenance, including uploading of finding aids. Access database is used to track accessions. ISU SC maintains a separate donor database.

Brad felt that the most significant changes they have seen over the past nine years is the increase in use of laptops and digital cameras for doing on-site research. ISU SC is seeing more student researchers, perhaps due to more student directed outreach.

Becky Jordan, Reference Specialist – She is responsible for handling many of the reference requests, works several shifts on the reference desk, and does much of the exhibit fabrication work.

She felt that the design of the reading room allows for accommodating many researchers during periods of heavy use. Researchers expectations are changing – more content online or access to scanners. Reference scheduling is done by using a template that staff fill in. No one typically needs to coordinate this. External reference requests go to Tanya and one other staff person; Tanya then directs them to other SC staff.

Laura Sullivan, Assistant Archivist – The focus of her position is university archives collections, though she has been working on manuscript collections most recently. She is the primary blog writer and does some work with donors.

ISU SC’s holdings include the records of several national scientific organizations. These organizations have very high expectations, which can create difficulties at times.

Laura creates two blog posts per month. They often highlight new collections, which in turn are tied to university anniversaries and events. She works closely with ISU’s University Relations.

Like Brad, Laura has noticed the increase in student users of Special Collections.

David Gregory, Associate Dean (Tanya’s supervisor) – David’s role is to facilitate communication between the dean and SC. He occasionally meets with donors or potential donors.

The key points that he stressed regarding Special Collections were that Tanya and her staff have a high degree of autonomy, they have more access to donor funds than the other library departments, and Special Collections’ instruction program is very active. He has recognized SC’s growing need for digital storage.

David also manages the space in the Parks Library, which requires a close working relationship with SC. He did much of the work in creating the proposal for the new classroom space, as well as working with IT and media services on the optimal technology setup for the classroom.

*Appendix 3: UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections*

Tiah visited with UCLA Special Collections staff on October 8th and 9th. Interviews and tours were conducted with Heather Briston (Head of Public Services), Charlotte Brown (University Archivist and faculty contact for Bruin Archives project), Jillian Cuellar (Head of Center for Primary Research and Training), Kelley Bachli (Former head of CFPRT, currently Collections Management division head), Megan Fraser (Processing Projects Librarian), and several graduate and undergraduate student workers. She also visited with UCLA Library School professor Anne Gilliland about their Bruin Archives Project (BAP) and [Community Engagement](http://gseis.ucla.edu/research/community-engagement) research focus.

The UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections (YRL SC) has undergone major organizational changes in the past few years. The Director is new, head of public services is new, head of CFPRT is new, and the former head of CFPRT is now in a new position as head of collections management. However, while the organizational structure is new and there is new staff in key managerial positions, most curators have been at UCLA for a very long time. They are also going through a major shift in public service operations. They used to have 4 public service points; however, two years ago they brought Performing Arts Archive into their main basement service point and there are plans to bring all University Archives public service to this service point at the end of WIN 2013. Administratively, the Louise M. Darling Biomedical Library History and Special Collections for the Sciences is also part of YRL, but their facility is on the opposite end of campus (@ ¾ mi away) and there are no plans to integrate the BioMedical public service point at this time (but that may change in the future).

In addition to the UCLA Library, there are other archives and collections that are independently managed by individual UCLA departments and centers (<http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/other-campus-collections>); there is little coordination between these departments and the staff at YRL.

In answering the question “How are your public services managed?” Briston responded

“I have an operations manager that oversees the four other people in the public services department and their work, along with the reference services provided by all others at YRL SC. For the other service points there are 2 people at each service point that provide reference, but no one is cross trained as of yet to work at other service points. In any case, the same procedures, policies, and workflows should be used, but I don’t think that this is always the case currently.”

It became clear in my conversations with Briston, as well as other staff at YRL SC, that the roles in reference / instruction are well-defined and well-articulated by the director. There is a

* Head of public services
* Overall responsibility for programming, workflow, management
* Does instruction and reference
* Operations manager
* Jack-of-all-trades: collective memory
* Reference schedule and ref room operations
* Working to integrate some instruction into position
* Email reference staff person
* Maintains and monitors 2 accounts: reference, paging
* Back-up for duplication account
* Duplication services staff person
* Licensing
* Duplication requests

The public services area at YRL SC is in the basement of the research library. It is open 10-5 Monday through Saturday and staffing changes on the hour; for Saturday there are 2 staff and 2 students. The space was designed in the 1960s/1970s and there is very little flexibility. There is a lobby area with glassed in shelves for housing and displaying books, a single exhibit case, and two “single item” display cases, as well as a place for people to sit (lobby furniture, not study space). This space also has a card catalog, public access terminal, and reference books. As the room wraps around, the reference desk is on the right in between this public area and the reading room. It is a large desk with lockers and cupboard behind it. This desk is always staffed by Special Collections staff (though not the Curators) who greet and register the patrons; in addition to reference consultations, this desk also tracks paging from off-site storage. The only “unique” feature of the desk is the buzzer: staff let patrons in and out of the locked reference room (the other buzzer is inside the reading room on a platform style observation desk).

The reading room is small and can accommodate 12 researchers max (they were over capacity 26 times in the 2011/2012 AY). The room contains a long table with 5-6 chairs on either side of it and lamps mounted in the center; bookshelves line the walls. A student is always present in the reading room and their desk is elevated 18 – 24 inches to give them a good view of the reading room. There is a door on the opposite end of the room from the entry door where collections are brought in for patron use. 80-85% of their collections are off-site (those on-site are mostly rare books); because all their storage is off-site in a regional facility, they were in the process of rearranging the storage space behind the reference desk to accommodate more boxes. There is also a very small reading room at the BioMed Library that can accommodate 1 - 2 researchers and, at the time of my visit, a table in the 2nd floor University Archives space that could accommodate 1 - 2 researchers.

One thing Briston noted is that over the past 5 years the demand and use of A/V equipment has been higher. There is only one public computer, and it is in the lobby, so they anticipate needing more computers as they begin to collect more electronic records.

One person oversees the email reference requests; this person also managed the paging requests for SLRF (regional storage facility). Student staff does not do reference or research, they mark books instead. The person in charge of email reference sends requests to specific curators, but also to staff with specific knowledge (e.g. literary mss or visual materials).

There is some exhibit space on the main floor in the YRL lobby, as well as in the Powell Library; however, the exhibit space in Special Collections is limited to a large case at one end of the lobby area and 2 “flash exhibit” cases (single item, easy to switch out, short term). While overseeing public service, Briston has nothing to do with exhibits since the curators are in charge of exhibit development as a group; she says that “ideally they would have a lead curator to organize” because she sees that the lack of an exhibits manager leads to more work, less of a comprehensive vision, and more frustration in the longer term.

While the exhibits are primarily developed by curators, but there *is* a staff member with extensive expertise in exhibit preparation that does the work for the YRL SC exhibits. Typically, students are not involved in the exhibits; however, occasionally there are flash exhibits based on CFPRT talks. In answering the questions “Do you have a means to display student work that is based, at least in part, on use of your collections?” and “Do you have other means of capturing student work based on your collections?” Briston said that this is under development with the Teaching and Learning Services Department in the Library.

The staff offices and work spaces are on the same floor as the reading rooms; they are similar to those on the 4th floor of our Library and aren’t really unique.

They have two very small rooms for instruction that are off the main lobby room. These are just seminar classrooms with an overhead projector. Briston says that there isn’t a formalized instruction program or means to do outreach for faculty and students; instead, at this point, she just reacts to requests. She does a lot of the teaching herself, but there are others who might teach if they have a specific subject expertise. One unique instruction component of the YRL SC is the [Center for Primary Research and Training](http://www.library.ucla.edu/specialcollections/researchlibrary/9613.cfm) (CFPRT), which “integrates special collections materials more fully into UCLA's teaching and research mission and provides a substantive educational experience for graduate students by training them in archival methods, matching them with unprocessed special collections, and thus making accessible lesser-known collections[[5]](#footnote-5).” Jillian Cueller, the Head of CFPRT, is quite new and is in the process of making some changes to policy and project presentations, but the program has been in existence since 2004.

The impetus for creating a **Center for Primary Research and Training** was to give graduate students a chance to work closely with collections that they had either a research interest in or strong subject knowledge of. Initially grad students contacted the CFPRT with projects, but the program has evolved and now the CFPRT posts collections that a) need to be processed or b) have money for processing. The theory behind the CFPRT work is that students balance learning about professional practice combined with their own interest level; the goal is to show them that there are standards and reasons why archivists do what we do.

Program publicity is through direct contact by curators to faculty, listservs to departments, and word-of-mouth. They collect applications (they had 10 interns fall quarter, 30+ applicants). Traditionally, about half the interns are from library school, but the rest are from a variety of departments. Interns have always been graduate students; however, they are exploring an option for undergraduates. They are paid above regular student employee rate.

There been an increase in use of collections attributed to the creation of CFPRT and the work the interns have done (the finding aids are online and therefore more people find/use the collections), but there has also been an impact on the general processing workflow. For instance, in thinking about standard processing projects it is likely that they would be processed by a grad student or staff member; however, because the CFPRT students make more money and are there to use more specific expertise, they are given special projects. In answering the question “do undergraduates to processing?” Cuellar responded “Undergrads could (and do) process, but she isn’t sure how much full ‘processing’ they actually do.”

When asked about the future of CFPRT Cuellar said she’d like to have a senior student position to allow for a longer term position to help manage other students or with administrative tasks. She’d also like to explore ways to connect outreach and programming with students in classes. In conversations with students they said that the tools and research methods they are learning aren’t taught in their classes – but they should be. She is currently investigating a workshop series to students in departments with previous CFPRT interns. Finally, Cuellar said she is exploring new ways for interns to present their research. Currently the presentations are great, but Cuellar wants to explore other options (e.g. have them share the ways this internship might impact their future work as a researcher rather than just focused on the process of processing).

When I asked Cuellar about fundraising strategies, specifically what grant or university funding she pursued and what are donors interested in funding she said the bulk of the funding is directed at intern salaries and supplies. CFPRT is funded through soft money, but there are several funds that can be used (e.g. specific money for processing lit collections). Some money comes from donors, they have an NEH grant that they apply towards processing, and Ahmanson Foundation money can be used if others can’t cover.

**CFPRT Training structure**

\*\* Cuellar sent me their processing plan and training materials. She stressed that it is really important to have good documentation: processing manual, plan template, other archival practice manuals.

Intro in first 2 shifts

* + Tour
	+ Intro to library & archives
	+ Processing manual with theory
	+ Finding aid examples
	+ Had CFPRT manual when she started but she edited it to include DACS and AT

Collection survey

* + JC checks in as they are surveying
	+ Fills out processing plan with them -- can be changed or adjusted at any point in the term
	+ Discuss processing plan together and answer any questions

Processing

* + Rest of the quarter is a big long training session
	+ Varying levels of processing. Balance of MPLP/project deadlines with their own need or desire to engage with the material.
	+ Weekly update: this is what I did, this is what I'll do, these are the problems/questions I have
	+ Happens throughout the department, interns may work with different curators

Final product

* + Processed collection
	+ Finding aid
	+ Student presentations
	+ About the collection, from the research angle, format is open-ended and up to them.
	+ Opportunity to invite donors, university librarian
1. See [https://wiki.library.oregonstate.edu/confluence/display/SCARC/Facilities+research](https://wiki.library.oregonstate.edu/confluence/display/SCARC/Facilities%2Bresearch). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Full site visit reports can be found in Appendices 1-3, starting on page 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Appendix 3 for more details on the CFPRT program. The CFPRT program site can be found at <http://www.library.ucla.edu/specialcollections/researchlibrary/center-primary-research-training> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.youtube.com/user/isuspecialcollection> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.library.ucla.edu/specialcollections/researchlibrary/center-primary-research-training> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)