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Western Libraries Special Collections entryway redesign

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Western Libraries Special Collections Entryway Redesign
Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Graduate Studies
Southern University at New Orleans

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Master of Arts

In

Museum Studies

By

Emma Sieh

B.A. Western Washington University

June 2014

APPROVAL SHEET

FINAL PROJECT

For the

Master's Degree

Candidate: Emma Sieh

Candidate Program Title: Master of Arts in Museum Studies

Project Title: Western Libraries Special Collections Entryway Redesign

COMMITTEE:

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I would like to thank my supervisors Paul Piper and Elizabeth Joffrion for asking me to be a part of this project. They did not need to include me, but they saw that I have an eye for design and really helped me to realize my true passion in museum work. My boss, Kate Simmons, offered unending support and kind words to help me get through the stressful process of both my project and my work in the program as a whole. Nora Burmeister contributed her share of assistance through proof reading and editing my work, covering for me at the Circulation Desk when I needed to go to meetings specific to the project, and giving me unlimited hugs and smiles to keep me sane through the process. I would also like to thank my family for their unfailing love and support while I was working on the project as well as throughout my life.

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Introduction

The Special Collections Archive is not a museum, but rather an archival collection that is housed on the sixth floor of the Wilson Library building on the Western Washington University campus. It is the archival area of the library that collects, organizes, describes, preserves, and maintains unique intellectual and cultural heritage materials. Their collections and reading room are accessible to patrons both from the campus and the community. As part of their collection, they preserve the Heritage Resources Collection, which are materials that were created and collected by Western Washington University staff, students, and faculty. These items are preserved alongside of the Rare Book collection and the Fly Fishing Collection that are also stored and cared for in the vault. The librarians and staff that work on the sixth floor catalog and preserve these rare and archival items and work to cultivate the collections to provide better information and accessibility for all patrons.













The purpose of my long term project was to redesign the entryway space of the Special Collections to make it more of a display space for all of the unique and interesting items that they have stored in the archival vault. Prior to my work, the space was merely a walkway to get to the main reading room of the Special Collections area. I was tasked to think of ways to make the space more inviting and indicative of the Special Collections style, to find display cases and accessories that would meet the needs of the archival items that might be displayed in the area, and to budget out all of the upgrading work that would need to be done to create this space.

The entryway of Special Collections was mainly used as a hallway – a way to get from point A to point B. It was very clinical and empty, making it feel very disjointed from the antique glory of the Special Collections Reading Room area. The entryway didn't welcome people into the space, and didn't invite them to enjoy the interesting and rare archival materials offered to

them for research. As an effort to get more traffic up to the area, the Special Collections staff began trying to invite travelling gallery exhibits to hang on the walls of the hallway to generate interest. This did have some satisfactory results, but they were still looking for something to increase the patron recognition of the area. The hope is that if we can redesign this space in a more pleasing and cohesive manner, it will be a more highly desired place to hold events and host travelling exhibitions from other local museums and galleries as well as just generally gain more interest and attendance from local patrons.

Project Timeline

Task	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16
1st Project Meeting	<div><div></div><div>12/1</div></div>	<div><div></div></div>				
Internship						
Took Pictures				<div><div></div><div>3/15</div></div>		
Check-In Meetings			<div><div></div><div>2/9</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>3/3</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>4/14</div></div>	
Facility Manager Meeting					<div><div></div><div>4/19</div></div>	

Task	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16
Independent Study								
Facility Manager Meeting	 6/21							
Check-In Meetings	 9/2							
Interviews	 9/14  10/21							
Supervisor Meetings	 6/30							
Masters Project								
Furniture Donations								
Floor Cleaning	 8/24-8/25							
Light Fixture Cleaning	 9/27-9/28							
Painting	 11/8-11/9							
Display Case shipment	 9/29							

Project Budget

Prior to my involvement in this project, the Special Collections had gotten price estimates for their original redesign idea that included the removal of their double doors, sound baffling, adding carpeting, and other changes. These repairs would have cost the Special Collections unit \$70,000. The goal they were hoping to achieve with my involvement was that the work we could undertake would cost significantly less than that original estimate.

The basic budget we were trying to keep this project work around is: \$2,500-3,000

Proposed Purchases

Job/Item	Quantity	Estimated Cost	Total
Display Cases (Gaylord)			
Archival Quality Table Case	3	\$2,695/ea.	\$8,085
Archival Quality Tall Curio Case	3	\$1,845/ea.	\$5,535
Exhibit Case (Half size)	3	\$645/ea.	\$1,935
Display Case Accessories (Gaylord)			
Linen Wrapped Angled Riser	5	\$400/ea.	\$1,200
Acrylic Display Riser	5	\$59.50/ea.	\$2,987.50
Acrylic Gun Stand	2	\$19.50/ea.	\$39.00
Butterfly Book Mount	3	\$357.75/ea.	\$1,073.25
Book Cradle	5	\$90.40/ea.	\$452
Furniture			
Table	2	\$100/ea.	\$200
Sofa	1	\$300/ea.	\$300
Chairs	2	\$80/ea.	\$160
Lamp	2	\$30/ea.	\$60
Cleaning			
Light Fixtures	N/A	\$40/hr	\$80
Floor	N/A	\$60/hr	\$180
Design Updates			
Carpeting	N/A	\$30/yd.	\$16,020
Painting	N/A	\$100/hr	\$900
			Estimated Total: \$4,867

(Please note: Estimated Total is based on the highlighted supervisor selections of my proposed items)

Actual Purchases

Job/Item	Quantity	Cost	Total
Display Cases			
Exhibit Case Half Size (Gaylord)	2	\$842.50/ea.	\$1,685
Donated Surplus Exhibit Case	1	Free	\$0
Display Accessories			
None needed - already owned	0	Free	\$0
Furniture			
Lamp	1	Free	\$0
Table	1	Free	\$0
Couch	1	Free	\$0
Cleaning			
Light Fixtures	N/A	Free	\$0
Floor Waxing	N/A	Free	\$0
Design Updates			
Painting	N/A	\$100/hr	\$900
			Total Spent: \$2,585

Many of the items we were going to need purchase were donated to us by other departments and offices around Western Washington University's campus. The cleaning work was completed by the Library custodial staff at no charge to us. These donations really helped to keep the work restricted to our basic budget projections.

Project Phase Proposal

Special Collections Redesign Project

(The meeting regarding these project phases occurred on 6/20/16 with Paul Piper, and all notes that came out of this meeting can be found underneath my original suggestions. I also met with our Facilities Manager on 6/25/16 to discuss the area prep, and those notes are included as well.)

Phase 1:

- Prep the area – Paint the entrance wall, look into the signage needs and post them, clean floors/light fixtures, etc. – Work with Frank, the Facilities Manager for the Western Washington University Libraries for this portion.
 - 6/20 Notes – Regarding painting: The goal would be to finish the painting before July, or during a time that would be reasonable to shut down the Special Collections through the duration of the painting, otherwise we cannot feasibly paint the wall that we had decided on.
 - 6/25 Notes: The best time to do this painting work would actually be after the summer. Most of the projects across campus that require painting done by the Carpenter shop have already been booked, but we can aim to get the work done during the winter intersession. All work requests will be sent through Frank to ensure that they are handled properly.
 - 6/20 Notes – Regarding the sign: Getting a mock-up of what the sign will look like can happen through Frank who can also give us a numbers estimate on how much the print job, the frame, and the installation will cost.

- 6/25 Notes: We can get the sign printed through the campus printing center, and we can order a standard plexiglass display for the sign (that matches the ones found throughout the rest of the library) online.
- 6/20 Notes – Regarding cleaning: This is a request that we can put through to the custodians at no extra cost to the Special Collections.
 - 6/25 Notes: We can definitely ask the custodians to do this work, and that should be pretty simple.
- Create a tentative budget – Add all of the costs of new items that are needed for the space, factor in the area prep, and figure out how much more money we will need to complete the project.
 - 6/20 Notes: Many of the numbers in the budget will not be known until we can actually get the work done. A lot of the work has to be done through the Carpenter’s shop managed here at Western, but we can keep a tally of the work and figure out what the maximum amount we would be willing to spend on a lot of this work and the accessories I laid out in previous meetings.
- Start writing an Exhibit Proposal – This document can be included in grant proposals, donor requests, etc.
 - 6/20 Notes: Although the Heritage Resources unit already has one that they stick to, it was written quite a while ago and could do with a comparison to more modernized policy and proposal writing practices, so I will be writing my own version to then compare to their current one.

Phase 2:

- Figure out fundraising/grant writing/donor needs – After finalizing the budget a bit further, decide on which route we should take to get the rest of the money we need. – Complete the fundraising necessary before moving on to Phase 3.
 - 6/20 Notes: Elizabeth is in charge of all of the fundraising needs for this unit, and is constantly writing grants in order to get money needed for projects like this. She has already received a sizable donation that will go to funding this project, but she would love to chat with me further about how she goes about funding the various projects for the Special Collections.

Phase 3:

- Make purchases – Purchase the furniture (seats, couches, new log book table, etc.) and display cases (through Gaylord if possible to get the best quality).
 - 6/20 Notes: Many of the furniture items have been donated from various other departments and part of the campus so they are free of charge. The rest of the furniture that we might feel is necessary can be purchased through the university surplus, thus also saving some money that can then go to spending on Gaylord Archival quality display cases.
- Installation – Install the furniture and display cases into the space (Possible DIY?)
 - 6/20 Notes: Much of the furniture and cases will be purchased already built so no need to do anything but set it up in the area. We will continue to adjust the placement of these things as they continue to be amassed for our collection.

Phase 4:

- Installation – Install exhibits using the Special Collections items, creating a log of the items that we use in order to keep track of cycling them out before damage is caused to them.
 - 6/20 Notes: We do have something like a log in place, and that is how we normally keep track of our display installations, and we appreciate that you are taking into consideration our specific archival needs.
- Spread the word – If possible, get Clarissa and the rest of the Communications team involved with helping us to get the word out that we now have a display space.
 - 6/20 Notes: This is an interesting idea, and one we would like to pursue. There is a member of the Special Collections unit on the Communications Team who can advocate our need, and we will be looking into that in the future.

Phase 5: (optional for the future)

- Reaching out – Contact local organizations and cultural institutions to see if they are interested in installing travelling exhibitions in our space, bringing more attention to the space that could in turn get more money for future needs.
- Invitation – Allow the gallery space to be used by the Art Committee of the Western Libraries, other campus artists, as well as local artists.
 - 6/20 Notes: We are not quite sure how we are going to do this in the future, but we would like to look into our possibilities of further connections that can benefit our space.

Annotated Bibliography

Introduction

At the start of this project in January of 2016, I realized I had a lack in my knowledge concerning the specific design needs that an archival or library space has as compared to the needs of a museum exhibition space. This prompted me to research different ways to redesign this Special Collections space based on suggestions by people that have already done similar work. Their work helped to influence some of my goals and designs made throughout the course of this project. The following is an annotated bibliography of the sources that most influenced my work with the Special Collections of the Western Washington University Library.

Acker, E., & O'Connell, P. (2010, May 25). *Archives and Record Storage Building*.

Retrieved from Whole Building Design Guide:

https://www.wbdg.org/design/archives_records.php

This website entry overviews the architectural and design needs for archival and record storage buildings. These buildings are responsible for storing materials that require permanent protection and preservation to ensure a long lifetime for the items and continued access for the public. Due to their specific environmental condition, storage space, and security needs, these buildings must adhere to a general guideline for whole building design. That design is outlined on this website and can be used as a reference for any redesigns or future designs that an archives building might require. It discusses the specific attributes for each of the building spaces, such as the offices, visitor support spaces, and storage spaces and what they provide for the building. The

entry also discusses other important design considerations that deviate from the typical elements that a designer might think of in terms of this space.

Acker and O'Connell's entry was helpful in that it spoke of the specific challenges an archival space can run into when a designer is undertaking a redesign project. As the Special Collections of the library is an archival and records storage space, some of these thoughts were necessary to keep in mind. The particularly prevalent portion of the whole building design outline referred to the aesthetics of the archival building. It described how important it is to recognize the extent of public exposure and visitation as this helps to drive any changes to create a positive organization image in a public space. The other aesthetic element to consider is that the space might be open and can be designated as a display area, but it must still meet the lighting and environmental condition requirements to ensure the protection and preservation of the archival materials.

Moldovansky, R., Meehan, D., & Nelson, J. (2014, November). *Approaches and Ideas for Refreshing Your Library Design*. Retrieved from Ideas and Inspiration from Demco: <http://ideas.demco.com/blog/library-design/>

Demco is one of the foremost library accessory companies, and they provide access to a blog that can help library staff get inspired about how to change and update their library spaces. This particular blog references the approaches that can be considered when a library finds themselves in need of refreshing their space on a very limited budget. It stresses the importance of redefining your space to make it more inviting and enticing for the public to visit and spend time in. By identifying a need in one specific area, the staff can handle even the most minimal

revitalization costs rather than being weighed down by the need to redesign the whole library. Less is more, and even the smallest changes can be made to help make a large difference on the effect your space has on the library.

One of the first things the blog entry prescribes is an analysis of the balance in the space. By looking at how the various areas interact and what your future goals are, you can figure out how best to proceed with a project. The need for a redesign in the Special Collections grew from the recognition that there was a large disconnect between the Reading Room design and the entryway. While the Reading Room was highly decorated, warm, and full of useful furniture, the entryway was stark, empty, and sometimes misleading. Often, patrons didn't know they were in the right place and thought that this floor of the library was only used as office space. The need for an updated entry experience, as described by the blog was going to do wonders for the Special Collections space in terms of recognition by patrons and increased usage. The blog entry described the idea that flexible display pieces can allow the space to change and grow, keeping it fresh and inviting for patrons as the collections grow and change. When purchasing display furniture, it was important to keep the flexibility and mobility aspect in mind.

Pichman, B. (2014, November). *Designing Interactive Library Spaces on Limited Budgets- ISLMA*. Retrieved from SlideShare: <http://www.slideshare.net/bpichman/designing-interactive-library-spaces-on-limited-budgets-islma>

The slides found on this website are from a presentation given at the ISLMA Conference in 2014 on constructive and innovative ways to design and refresh library spaces on limited budgets. The author recognizes that the library world is changing, and a library's success is

based on its ability to create stories and opportunities for patron experiences. Pichman stresses that the library can be important to a user, but we must foster that engagement and allow it to grow even more meaningfully. After describing why it is important to foster new design ideas for library spaces, the author offers some helpful tips on how to create those engaging environments on a tight budget.

The author explains that a library must be engaging in order to encourage creativity, allow for discovery, increase collaboration, generate interaction, and foster innovation. All of these characteristics are things that a museum also strives for to enhance experiences for their visitors, so they would also be useful when trying to design a display entryway for the Special Collections. This entry would entice visitors by allowing them more free and discoverable access to the incredible collections that are housed in the vault and foster discussion about the items among visitors to the space. Visitors could see that they are in an interesting place with interesting items that can be explored at no expense. This would be the main goal while looking into the most cost effective ways to redesign the space for this project.

Rendina, D. (2015, January 28). *6 Ways to Rethink Your Library Space and Make it*

***Amazing*. Retrieved from Renovated Learning:**

<http://renovatedlearning.com/2015/01/28/rethinking-our-library-space/>

Using their experience in redesigning a library space at a school library, the author uses anecdotes of the changes that they made to choose the most important steps they took to make a big difference on a small budget. Many of the steps that the author took resulted in no cost to the library, but changed up the space and how the patrons used it dramatically. The changes

emphasized a lesson of “less is more” and describes that often using less furniture, money, weight can help free up the space for more user interaction.

The Special Collections had a big issue with balance between the Reading Room and the entryway. In this particular instance, the problem wasn’t that there was too much furniture, but too little. The entryway space was uninviting and stark, in complete contrast to the warm and inviting area of the Reading Room. By keeping in mind some of the steps in this article regarding adding color and movable and usable furniture, the redesign of this space will make a big difference in the way visitors can interact with the space and the wonderful collections it protects.

Schoeneck, A. (2013, February 15). *5 Steps to Redefining Your Library*. Retrieved from Ideas and Inspiration from Demco: <http://ideas.demco.com/blog/5-steps-redefining-library/>

Another blog entry provided by the minds at Demco, a library supply company, this particular blog discusses a few definable steps to redefine what your library means to the visitors that it gets. This particular entry points to the idea that although the aesthetic changes are important and can do wonders to improve visitor attendance and experiences, there should be a large importance placed upon how your library space can be defined by the visitor. What does the space mean to them? If they do not feel a connection with it, they are less likely to want to share about their visit or return in the future. By following the outlined steps, a library can rebrand itself as something that is much more accessible and useful for the clientele it wishes to cultivate.

Locked away on the sixth floor of the campus library with restricted parking access for the public, the Special Collections needed a way to gain more visitors from both university patrons and the community. This blog provides some considerations that might have been overlooked when thinking about ways to improve our accessibility to all types of patrons. One important way is to reach out and stay connected with the community. By asking them what we can do to connect them with our collections and identifying themes that we can actually address on a limited budget we can redefine our Special Collections area as a community space and thus gain more recognition and use all around. These considerations go a long way to building donor and visitor relationships and cultivating lifelong library users.

Independent Research Paper

(Completed for MUSE 695 June-August 2016)

Archival Display Space Design

Developing an archival display project or exhibition is not a simple task. There are three steps that have to be considered in depth if you hope to be successful: finding funding, creating a design, and preserving the collection. Considering where you get your funding can change how you can design, display, and preserve the items in your collections. An exhibit designer can find money from a wide array of sources in order to get the best amount possible to complete the work that they need. Once they have the funding, the designing process can begin. While trying to work out how to create an engaging exhibition, an exhibit designer should keep in mind things like spatial awareness, group engagement, and exhibition re-evaluation. All of these elements work together to make something that a visitor will really enjoy. After the exhibition has been created, a designer can consider how they can keep their collections, the ones that made it into the display as well as the ones that didn't, preserved and cared for. These are cultural history items that need to be preserved and have their life extended to the fullest. If completed thoroughly. All of these steps come together to form one pleasing exhibition and experience that a visitor will never forget.

Museums were not immune from the wicked blow of the economic downturn that accompanied the recession, and some of the smaller museums are still struggling to right their ship today. These nonprofit institutions rely on funding from the government to cover the deficits in the budget that the private sector and grants cannot cover, and the reduction of the allocation of money has really damaged the financial stability of museums throughout the nation. Museums

can raise money through hundreds of different donors or sources of financial support and use that money to cover capital purposes or operational budget needs, and do not need to be solely reliant on governmental money. If they do not take steps in that direction, the museum will surely be headed towards bankruptcy and closure. Ford W. Bell, the president of the American Association of Museums, explains why it is important for museums to not only rely on governmental funds, but must “stitch together sustainable revenue streams from a range of sources” to make their budgets less precarious (Bell, 2012). He then breaks down the four main categories of museum funding with data that the American Association of Museums has collected over the years. The four categories are government grants, private donations, earned revenue, and investment income. The inclusion of the percentage of the budget that each category is responsible for helped to drive home what is most important for museums to focus on when trying to restructure their financial situation (Bell, 2012). To add their input, a Huffington Post article reports that although all museums have taken a hit by the Great Recession, the smaller museums are suffering a lot more than larger museums (Grant, 2012). They are struggling with the budget cuts and avoiding closure any way that they can by being as creative and effective in finding new funding revenues to help them stay afloat. Other than looking for new sources, these smaller museums are taking effective steps to reduce their operating costs by doing things like “offering admission-free days to encourage more visitors, focusing more on their permanent collections and less on major traveling exhibitions... and using social media and networking to reach a potential new and younger audience” (Grant, 2012). The fight to stay afloat, and these smaller museums are taking that fight seriously. In Woodward’s “Funding Museum Agendas: Challenges and Opportunities” article, he stressed that there are operational changes that the museum needs to be aware of in order to secure the most funding from a variety of sources. He offers potential

options for increasing income generation by asking museums to acknowledge the barriers to fundraising such as the lack of staff time and ability, shortage of tourists and low visitor rates, and the constraints of local authority guidelines. These are all problems that museums face across the board, and ignoring them will not help the issue of the lack of funding. By focusing on them, the museum has a better chance of succeeding in getting more financial support.

Alternatively, Lundqvist's article, "Museum Finances: Challenges Beyond Economic Crises," suggests that one of the most important things that a museum can do is to strengthen the museum's role in the community in order to remain relevant to both old and new donors. If donors can see the legitimacy and usefulness of a museum in their community, they will be more willing to donate their money in support of it. By continuing to be creative and steadfast in their efforts, museums are slowly heading in the right direction to pull themselves out of suffering severe financial stress. The best thing a museum can do in times of financial hardship is to take the situation into their own hands and become more self-reliant by trying to find funding everywhere and anywhere.

So you have found the funding... now what? To avoid the possibility of a passive visit, an exhibit designer and curator must keep in mind many different elements. Things like spatial syntax and an awareness of the other visitors that are experiencing the space together can greatly affect how users use the space. Designers can place display cases in specific places, paint certain walls, and unclutter the space to make the exhibit area the most effective for the visitors. Even museums that created their displays years ago can benefit from these tips to make their layouts and spaces better without having to start from scratch. It is vitally important for curators and exhibit designers to keep these things in mind, or the whole museum will suffer from the lack of visitor experience that it creates. By thinking of the space as a "set of formal potentials" the

curators can use the spatial considerations in new ways to make the exhibit a valuable experience for the visitor (Tzortzi, 2007). It is important not to look at the space as merely a room to fill with interesting objects, but as an opportunity to create an intricate pathway that will allow the users to engage with the space and get more out of their experience. Using a technique called “space syntax analysis,” designers can characterize spatial systems on the basis of the ways they are related to other spaces in a larger system (Wineman & Peponis, 2010). Put simply, an exhibition room is not one separate entity from the larger layout of the museum. If designers more actively focus on how the exhibit areas integrate and interact with each other, they might be able to more clearly create a hierarchy of exhibition elements and better develop the primary messages that they want the audience to receive. By creating a more engaging pathway through the exhibition, visitors can get a deeper and more meaningful experience. Another thing to keep in mind is that the opinions and the engagement level of those that are walking through the museum with them can greatly influence their own experience of the space. It can help them choose what they see and engage with in the exhibition if their companions are having a positive experience and vice versa. For this reason, it is important not to look purely at an individual’s interest as an indication of a successful exhibit; there are plenty of instances where a person’s interest and engagement is only caused by those around them and not the content of the display (Lehn, Heath, & Hindmarsh, 2001). Each relationship created by the museum goers can give the visitor a new perspective and interest in the information that was being displayed, and those perceptions shed new light on the importance of how the exhibitions were spatially designed. It’s not just the space that matters, but the people that occupy it that make the difference in how a visitor is experiencing the museum exhibition. We are constantly aware of others and how they are experiencing things with the intent to use that knowledge to better our own experiences. To

continue, no matter how long an exhibition has been installed into the space, a designer and curator should always examine an exhibition in terms of how it fits into the mission of the institution and the constituents that support it. (Diaz, n.d.). Just like they would deaccession collections in storage that didn't fit the collecting goals of the museum, the exhibition must always be looked at as the physical representation of the mission that the museum is trying to achieve. If it doesn't fit, it must be updated and redesigned. If it achieves the goals of the curator, the exhibition space must then be analyzed for the "balance between display areas and walking areas" (Meehan, 2014). There is no need to clutter the space just for the sake of having more display cases. A designer must resist the urge to add a bunch of furniture, information panels, or cases to the space or the visitor will be drowned in a sea of excessiveness. They will not be able to glean the raw message that was the original intent of the exhibition; a redesign can refocus the exhibit after it is realized that the visitors aren't getting the best experience in the space due to over-cluttering. By unifying the styles of furniture, colors, and themes throughout the exhibition space, a visitor can feel more welcomed and enveloped in the ideas portrayed in the displays (Lesneski, 2011). Exhibition designers must constantly be looking for new possibilities of how to make the space more cohesive and atmospheric by using spatial awareness. They cannot simply place items in a case and move the case into an empty room. They must create a flow that will make the information easier to understand. It is not just about what they think is attractive, but how well it serves the visitors and disseminates information to them. All of these details and considerations must be used tactfully if a designer intends to create a successful exhibit.

So far we have discussed exhibitions in general terms, so let's take a look at a specific type of exhibition and deliberate on what special considerations it might need. Archival display and preservation is key to the existence of archival institutions everywhere. Their role is to

preserve and give public access to the printed materials of old. Archives are memory institutions and the archivists are gate keepers to the information that they hold. Archival preservation is a cultural necessity and the central management of this process is an archivist's job. Preservation is "not an emergency surgery but rather preventive medicine" (Conway, *Archival Preservation Practice in a Nationwide Context*, 1990). The idea of preservation and conservation presents a challenge when designers choose to include archival materials in an exhibition, but it is definitely an option worth considering. When archival elements are introduced to a non-archival exhibition, a curator will have to think very carefully about how that choice is going to affect the user's interpretation. It can be an effective tool to enhance the experience, but can also change how they engage with the non-archival materials (Crookham, 2015). By working together, institutions can figure out the best way to make the user happy and give them a level of understanding that was previously unachieved without the cohabitation of materials of different kinds. But displaying the physical materials isn't always an option. The development of global communications and internet systems has created a large demand for instant access to information and resources. By providing copies and digital replicas of archival materials, an archive can reduce security and conservation needs and give the user access to things that would have otherwise been too fragile to view (Lester, 2006). With clear explanations accompanying the digital versions, any audience should still be able to understand the content without seeing the "real thing". Now archivists have one more challenge to hurdle: the preservation of electronic records. Conway recognizes that times are changing in terms of the digitization of materials, and divulges his input on how, despite the online accessibility, an archivist is still central to the work. They are agents in the construction of history and societal knowledge; archivists take the raw information and put it into a more stomach-able framework for the visitor (Conway, *Modes of*

Seeing: Digitized Photographic Archives and the Experienced User, 2010). It is their responsibility to ensure that the best and most truthful representation of the artifact is available for the public to access. Users can only know what archivists tell them, so even in this new digital age, an archivist is still vital to the process. So the new questions become: what do the users really want from archives and how do they use and experience the materials? The archives have to be able to communicate with the public on a multitude of levels; they should “raise awareness about what records they have available, encourage people to use them for research, demonstrate their value, and ensure their continual existence” (Lester, 2006). Access is central to the job of an archival institution and without that communication, there would be no way to complete that job. Their access is not only a window onto the past, but it allows them to piece together the stories themselves and truly experience the material (Conway, *Modes of Seeing: Digitized Photographic Archives and the Experienced User*, 2010). Although digitization is a necessary part of life, there is a lack of concern for what has been created (Forde, 2002). Forde brings to light the idea that digital records are not as permanent as one might think, and there is still work to be done to maintain them after the digitization has occurred. There are a lot of ways that technology can fail, so it should not be the only preferred method of preservation for archival materials. Thomas Teper explains that things like “media decay, technological obsolescence, and human fallibility” can all be issues for the preservation of records, and if conservators are not constantly aware of them, digitization can become benign (Teper, 2005). Historical and social knowledge is a precious thing, and archivists are the gate keepers to that knowledge. It is their solemn duty and responsibility to care for archival materials, preserve them to ensure their continued existence, and allow the public access to it. There will continue to be

discussions on how best to do this job, whether it be turning to digitization or not, but the job will always remain an essential one to the community.

So you've created an exhibition. You've gotten the budget. You've designed the space, or in the case of a digital project, the website. You've considered the preservation needs. If you have completed all of these tasks correctly, your exhibition will hold up to the devastating test of time. As long as you take each of these hurdles in stride, nothing can stand in your way.

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Loan Policy Proposal

Loan Policy – Special Collections, Heritage Resources Unit

E. Sieh 11/4/16

General Criteria

All loans require Director approval. The Director has the right to accept or deny any loan proposal as they so choose based on the possible benefit to the organization and risk to the objects requested. Any changes to the loan details, loan period, or exhibition designs must be approved by the Director. If any of these changes threaten the integrity of the loaned objects, the Director also has the right to cancel the loan at any time.

Each loan shall be for a pre-specified period of time and shall be documented and monitored.

A written loan agreement must be completed prior to the shipment of the object.

A written condition report shall be completed for each item before leaving the collection on loan.

The loan must be returned in the exact same condition that it was loaned in.

The borrowing institution will be held responsible for any damage that might occur while it is on loan. They must cover the costs of insurance, packing, and shipment, all of which are subject to the Director's approval.

All borrowers must be able to appropriately handle and display archival materials by adhering to lighting and environmental condition needs meeting archival preservation standards.

All exhibit labels on borrowed materials must respectfully include provenance information that recognizes Special Collections as the rightful owner.

Incoming Loans

Incoming loans shall be accepted only for objects needed for exhibitions or research. These loans should only be used to benefit or supplement the current holdings of the Special Collections vault.

Special Collections will not provide free storage, conservation treatment, or insurance to lenders beyond the agreed upon loan period.

No loan of indefinite duration may be made to Special Collections.

Outgoing Loans

Borrowers must be approved by the Director – items will only go to institutions that can care for the item and exhibit it in a respectful and appropriate manner.

All objects must remain in the condition in which they are received by the borrower. They shall not be cleaned, repaired, or marked by anyone except the original owner.

When returning materials, they shall be packed in the same manner as received and in the same packaging to avoid any damage to the item upon return.

All loans will be loaned for a specific duration and must be returned before that time limit expires. The maximum time limit will not exceed 120 days without the Director's approval.

Exhibition Policy Proposal

Exhibition Policy – Special Collections, Heritage Resources Unit

E. Sieh 11/4/16

General Criteria

As a way to draw attention to the various archival materials and items that are in our collections, Special Collections will often prepare and present physical exhibitions in our new display entryway. These exhibitions will reflect the holdings of the Special Collections and its collections mission and goals.

The Director must approve all exhibition proposals and agree to allow the display of the selected items. They will take into consideration the condition of the item and the ability to properly and safely display the items in regards to proper condition standards.

Only authorized staff can handle collection materials and install a display in the display entryway.

All exhibitions must adhere to proper archival display needs, such as environmental conditions and lighting requirements.

Interviews

Interview with Elizabeth Joffrion (Director, Heritage Resources Unit) 9/14/16

-Elizabeth was my main supervisor throughout this project-

What exactly is your title here for the Library at Western Washington University?

I am the Director of Heritage Resources which includes three units: the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, the University Archives, and the Special Collections. I had worked for a long time with the state archives that are in the Goltz-Murray building near campus, and I was recommended to receive the new position title that would consolidate all of the archival collections that Western Washington University is affiliated with.

What is your background prior to your work with Western Washington University?

Well, I have been a part of many institutions prior to my work here. Most of my work is with museums, but I'm comfortable with my work here in the archival arena. I was asked by the mayor to become a board member for the Whatcom County Museum here in town, so I have been able to create a good relationship with them through which we can loan objects and collections to each other. I had just come from my work with the Smithsonian doing grant writing and fundraising, so they thought I would be a beneficial addition to the team.

Does each collection adhere to the same acquisition guidelines and rules?

Each of the areas have their own collection scope that they must adhere to while collecting and maintaining the objects in their physical locations. They each specialize in their own style of information (University records, archival materials concerning the Pacific Northwest, and rare books), and push to develop their collections to be as well-rounded and all-inclusive as possible. Although they are separate in focus, these units do often collaborate to get new items and develop intricate relationships with donors that can assist more than one unit at once.

What is special about the Special Collections and how you build its collection?

We are a bit more proactive at building this collection, since it is less in the public eye than the other two units under my direction. The archives building is more easily accessible to the public, while we are a bit shut away on campus. To that end, we want to get as much interest (both from donors and visitors) in our collection as possible so we try to create influential and longstanding relationships with those that become involved with the Special Collections here at Western. These relationships are what help get us more donations in the form of money or in new archival acquisitions.

How do you hope to see the Special Collections develop within the next five years?

In five years, I really hope to get even more recognition for the Special Collections here on campus and the Heritage Resources unit in general. One way to do this is to build up our relationships with the faculty here on campus through classes that are taught by librarians (both from Special Collections and the general library) or by offering workshops or classes in the reading room of the space. I feel like getting more people to recognize what we do here and how

important it is, it can lead us to have a more reasonable and stronger collection up here in the vaults. It might help us be more included in the group as a library entity, and help us have a stronger voice in other organizations and meetings throughout the university and community.

Interview with Paul Piper (Special Collection Librarian) 10/21/16

-Paul was one of my supervisors for this project. I met with him regularly-

How did you find your way to Western Washington University and the Bellingham area?

Well, I've been working in libraries for what seems like my entire life. I worked in 4 libraries before I got here and I've been working here for 20 years. I started as a reference librarian and did that for 16 years and before becoming head of reference. I was asked to create the Northwest Collection for our library – the collection pulled items that were related to the Pacific Northwest in some way, either by author provenance or subject matter. I worked with two other librarians to build this collection from scratch and you can find it in the 4 Central location of our library. After all of that responsibility and work, I was a little burnt out so I was offered this position to work in the Special Collections. It was like my chance to come back to books, where I got to handle them a bit more and use them and my interests to design a class about fly fishing that is really popular on our campus. I kept my liaison responsibilities with the departments across campus as well, but I've enjoyed this three year opportunity that I've had up here and am looking forward to retirement in June.

I know that there are specific collections up in the Special Collections that you handle and cultivate, can you describe the difference between them?

So there are two collections up in our vaults that I spend most of my time on – Fishtown and Fly Fishing Collection. The Fly Fishing Collection is the culmination of donations from Paul and Mary Ann Ford including archival items, books, and other fly fishing related objects (reels, rod, bait, etc.). It is my job to maintain their collections, process and catalog the new donations, and

use them in my class to get public access to these wonderful items. The Fishtown collection is a wonderful project that I was offered by the Head of this unit. I was able to dive into an interest of mine and gather items based on and made by the artists that lived in the “fishtown” of the Pacific Northwest. We collect oral histories, poetry, art, etc. and I got to build the collection from the ground up through help of various donors in the community.

Do you have any regrets in your time here before you leave in June?

There is nothing I really regret about my work here. I got a lot of really wonderful opportunities here – they put a lot of faith in my abilities and really allowed me to change and grow. Not many people can say that they created three different collections in their time at an institution like this, but I can. I can also say I got to work with a wide variety of museum and archival items that I never would have had access to without working with the Special Collections here at Western. I guess the only thing I would regret is not continuing the class about research for creative writing. It was a really fun class to teach, but I didn’t want to be chained down to teaching it every quarter.

Was this your first opportunity to handle archival materials?

Actually yes. Although I had plenty of librarian experience, I had only ever had to deal with standard books in a university library collection. It was a huge learning experience for me. I had to learn about the specific archival preservation techniques that we needed to employ here as well as understanding the different cataloging needs for items that belong up here. I also got the new opportunity to work with donors to build the collections, unlike allowing an acquisition

department to handle that aspect of the work. But honestly, it was a shock to learn how much you have to keep in mind when working with materials like this.

So I know that the library collections are specifically curriculum based, is it the same for the collections up here?

Luckily no, the items up here are not restricted based on the curriculum that is taught on campus. We can accept anything we choose to – as long as we keep in mind things like storage space, preservation abilities, and donation rules. We work heavily with donors, most of whom are connected to the university in some way, and can develop our collections separately from the rules of the rest of the library. Kind of like a museum.

Do you guys have any concerns about the collections up here as they stand now?

Something we have been much more aware of in the past years is the worry that we are going to outgrow our storage vault area. We do not have an infinite amount of space, but we have donors who have thousands of items that they would like us to preserve. We are now beginning to turn away some donations that do not fit our collection scope, but we are also looking into other ways that we can expand out space here on the sixth floor of the library.

Photographs

Before any redesign efforts began:



Figure 1. View after a patron gets off of the elevator – Nothing really denoting the space they are entering.



Figure 2. View of the main hallway that leads to the Special Collections Reading Room.



Figure 3. Hallway leading to the Special Collections Reading Room.



Figure 4. View from the double doors into the Lounge area of the Special Collections. You can see a guest photographic exhibition on the wall.



Figure 5. A view of the other side of the Lounge area for the Special Collections.

New Elements that have been added:



Figure 6. A few new signs and a view of the freshly painted wall.



Figure 7. Two new purchased display cases.



Figure 8. Donated display case.



Figure 9. New couch and information desk.



Figure 10. Another new couch and check-in table.

Final Product (thus far):



Figure 11. Right side of hallway



Figure 12. Left side of hallway

Appendix

Appendix

Current Exhibition/Loan Policy – Found in the Heritage Resources Collections Management Policy written by Elizabeth Joffrion 2014

Exhibitions

On an occasional basis, Heritage Resources will prepare and present physical or virtual exhibitions singly or jointly with other campus units and/or outside institutions. These exhibitions will be of the highest quality and will be based on the holdings of Heritage Resources.

The Director must approve all proposals for exhibitions as well as all items selected for exhibition or display.

Only Heritage Resources staff or designated “guest curators” are allowed to plan and mount exhibitions.

Exhibitions must be installed under appropriate environmental conditions (see Appendix A: “Conditions Governing Loans and Exhibitions”).

Conditions Governing Loans and Exhibitions

General

All requests for loans must be made in writing at least two months in advance. All requests should be addressed to the Director, Western Libraries Heritage Resources, Western Washington

University, Bellingham, WA 98225-9103. The request should include exhibition title, dates, loan period, venue(s) and complete citation for objects requested.

Borrowing institutions must provide a facilities report for all exhibition locations. If the exhibition travels, the borrowing institution is responsible for all travel arrangements.

Borrowers are not permitted to reproduce or photograph loaned items without express permission. All photo requests should be submitted separately to the Director. Any rights to reproductions remain property of Heritage Resources.

Any extension of the loan period must be approved by the Director.

All costs and expenses incidental to the loan must be borne by the borrowing institution including conservation, packing, crating, transportation and insurance.

Heritage Resources reserves the right to cancel a loan or to recall an item at any time if, in its judgment, good cause for this action exists.

In the event of a conflict between the Heritage Resources loan agreement and the form of the borrower, the terms of the Libraries' loan agreement shall be controlling.

Care of Documents

Borrowers are not permitted to mat, un-mat, mount or frame the documents except with express permission.

Display cabinets with interior lights must have ultraviolet filters on the lights, and they must be vented to prevent condensation, improper temperature, and high humidity. Documents laid in cases should rest on acid-free backings.

Documents must not be exposed to direct or indirect natural sunlight. If there are windows in the display area, they should be shaded or draped.

Light intensity in the display area must not exceed 15 foot candles. Fluorescent lights should have active ultraviolet filters on them.

Display areas should be air-conditioned. Static air cleaner should be checked for ozone leakage.

Humidity must remain within a range of 45% to 55% relative humidity. The air temperature must not exceed 75 degrees.

Freshly painted walls in display area must be allowed to dry two weeks before installation.

No smoking is allowed in the display area.

Exhibition areas should have appropriate security and an adequate fire protection plan.

Return packing and transportation methods must be approved by Heritage Resources staff.

In case of damage or loss, Heritage Resources is to be immediately notified, followed by a full written report.

Insurance

Items are to be insured prior to shipment, during the period of this loan, and during the return shipment of this loan, for the value stated on the face of this agreement under an all-risk, wall-to-wall policy subject to the standard exclusions.

Upon request, Heritage Resources must be furnished with a certificate of insurance stating the full value of the loan prior to shipment of the loaned material.

Appraisals for insurance purposes will be conducted by Heritage Resources staff.

Credit

Citations and captions must include the following information:

Collection Title

Department Name

Western Libraries Heritage Resources

Western Washington University

Biography

Emma Sieh is a library staff member at Western Washington University Library in Bellingham, Washington and an independent contractor for Freeman Ryan Design, an exhibition design company. She has worked as collections manager at a flight museum, and her career aspirations focus on exhibition and display design in terms of museums and other public history organizations. Her work with Special Collections at the Western Washington University Library was her first foray into full exhibition space design and she thoroughly enjoyed getting to work with an archival collection.

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