

**DEPARTMENT OF  
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
STRATEGIC PLAN (SHORT-TERM)**

**February 2017**

The eight “Guiding Priorities for the University of Arkansas” are the structure for this short-term (1 to 3 years) plan for Special Collections, which is a starting point for blending with the overarching goals of University Libraries. We look forward to pursuing these goals in a flexible, collegial fashion as priorities are further defined and staff is allocated to these activities.

During the early discussions of a plan for Special Collections, we identified our particular strengths, which will serve well as we address campus, library, and departmental priorities. These strengths include:

1. **Public service / Accessibility:** Our users applaud the informed and efficient service they receive and commend how open and visible our collections are, both on-site and online. Working as a team, Special Collections employees are a mix of more senior, experienced staff with institutional memory and personal and professional campus and external networks, and of more junior staff with skills in current technologies and professional practices and in social media and approaches to contemporary outreach and inclusion.

2. **Collections:** Our collections range from folders of family letters, folklore, and folk music of regional interest – to Rare Books – to extensive collections of: Arkansas’s U.S. Senators; international education and cultural exchange programs (Fulbright; Council for International Exchange of Scholars; NAFSA: Association of International Educators); Arkansas environmental leaders (Dellinger, Compton, Bumpers); architects (Jones, Stone); religious figures (Hargis, Bales); women’s studies; etc.

3. **Donor Engagement:** Our work and our service philosophy contribute to developing positive relationships with researchers and the public who are or may become donors of collections and financial support.

In the Forefront

*Excellent processing and access to collections | Full research services  
Energetic teaching and outreach | Promotion of materials and services*

**Guiding Priority 1: Advancing Student Success**

1.1 Participate in on-campus recruitment efforts. Give talks and tours, provide exhibit tables, and attend events to promote Special Collections to demonstrate our relevance and our collections’ strengths to students’ educational needs.

1.2 Collaborate actively with instructors for classroom support and teaching graduate and undergraduate students how to conduct college-level research. Provide class tutorials on archival use, hold special topic lectures for advanced instruction on archival collections. Provide instruction and research consultations to every level of students across disciplines.

1.3 Identify partnerships with campus departments for expanded student exhibiting, digitization, and processing projects.

- 1.4 Create opportunities for Honors College and Service Learning projects in Special Collections, e.g., digital exhibits, published papers.
- 1.5 Offer not only employment but also research, critical thinking, and/or public service training to student staff, and mentor student employees interested in entering the library or archival professions.

**Guiding Priority 2: Building a Collaborative and Innovative Campus**

- 2.1 Collaborate with academic faculty on writing grant proposals and actively participating on grant projects.
- 2.2 Seek out opportunities to serve on thesis and dissertation committees.
- 2.3 Further develop partnerships with local campus units, and with universities, agencies, and organizations throughout the state, for example, Arkansas State Archives, Arkansas History Institute, Crystal Bridges, Delta Cultural Center, folklore centers (Batesville, Mountain View, Jonesboro, southern Missouri), film festivals (Hot Springs, Bentonville, Little Rock).
- 2.4 Pursue national and international collaborations, like the recently-released UMBRA project, to raise the profile of collections in Special Collections. Working with other library departments, seek partnerships to include additional collection resources in national databases, such as those in Reveal Digital (Independent Voices, civil rights, women's studies), civil rights projects, etc.
- 2.5 Build relationships with other archives, libraries, and museums, and participate on joint committees of the Society of American Archivists, American Alliance of Museums, and American Library Association.

**Guiding Priority 3: Enhancing Our Research and Discovery Mission**

- 3.1 Identify and expand opportunities for classes that use materials in Special Collections. Evaluate the use of space and equipment in the department and explore opportunities for expanding and/or revitalizing exhibit and teaching and learning spaces.
- 3.2 Define the scope and expand the size, promotion, and use of the Rare Books collection, collaborating with library and academic subject selectors to recommend titles to purchase, especially for classroom and research activities. Disciplines to emphasize might include history of science, agriculture, women's studies, religious studies, fashion, interior design, etc.
- 3.3 Work with building planning committees for the south campus storage facility to move materials and create service and research points. Work with building planning committees for the renovation and expansion of Mullins Library to improve the visibility and access to Special Collections and University Archives.
- 3.4 In conjunction with the move to the new storage facility, migrate from Archivists' Toolkit to a new collection management system (ArchivesSpace) to accurately track our collections.
- 3.5 Increase our efforts in field archives and donor relations in Arkansas, the region, and beyond, actively seeking to deepen and expand collections in international education and affairs, government, area studies, civil rights, family and organization papers, etc.
- 3.6 Monitor and improve our online research and discovery presence through social media, the website, etc., including the promotion of recently processed collections, for example, the James D. Bales and Florence Price Papers.

- 3.7 Use robust approaches for greater discoverability of archival collections, e.g., OCLC's ArchiveGrid, Collection of Collections, and/or Gateway.
- 3.8 Use Special Collections materials to continue to collaborate with the Digital Services Unit on digital exhibit projects to add to existing projects, which include "Fruit-full' Arkansas: Apples," and Fay Jones and Frank Lloyd Wright (both created in partnership with Crystal Bridges); and "40-50-100," celebrating the Buffalo National River (created along with a permanent, physical exhibit at Compton Gardens in Bentonville).
- 3.9 Identify priorities for processing collections and provide non-classified and classified staff for same.
- 3.10 Implement a digital preservation management system (e.g., Archives Direct, Preservica) for preservation of and access to born-digital archival materials.
- 3.11 Collaborate with UA institutional repository staff on adding or linking to materials from Special Collections and University Archives.
- 3.12 In planning for the University of Arkansas's sesquicentennial in 2021, identify essential materials to process and opportunities to enhance use, access, and visibility of the University Archives.
- 3.13 Pursue grants to process or preserve collections.
- 3.14 Celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Special Collections.
- 3.15 Transition to an archives patron use, request, workflow, and statistics management system, e.g., Aeon.

#### **Guiding Priority 4: Enriching Campus Diversity and Inclusion**

- 4.1 Focus on working with individuals and organizations to build collections and programming activities that reflect diversity of populations, cultures, and ideas. Collaborate with UA and other programs in forming strong links to all areas of Arkansas, especially eastern and southern Arkansas. Seek ways to support and encourage community-archiving initiatives, e.g., with African-American, Hispanic, Marshallese, and Vietnamese populations.
- 4.2 Establish diversity research fellowships that use Special Collections materials and that result in publications and presentations.
- 4.3 Work with Web Services and campus offices handling equal opportunity and educational access to ensure our website and finding aid display template follow the recommendations of the Web Accessibility Initiative.

#### **Guiding Priority 5: Investing in Faculty and Staff Excellence**

- 5.1 Review the departmental organizational structure and staffing needs for servicing as well as processing collections, incorporating employees' strengths and interests and taking into account emerging trends in archives.
- 5.2 Explore with subject selectors and Web Services additional methods of notifying campus faculty and others about newly processed collections.
- 5.3 Expand offerings for continuing education and certification for Special Collections personnel.
- 5.4 Participate in UA Libraries' focus on being a hub for continuing education for libraries and archives in the region.

### **Guiding Priority 6: Promoting Innovation in Teaching and Learning**

- 6.1 Use emerging technologies to enhance scholarly developments, such as programs in Digital Humanities.
- 6.2 Collaborate with campus units, for example, the Pryor Center for Oral and Visual History, and beyond to incorporate Special Collections materials in on-site and online classes.

### **Guiding Priority 7: Reaffirming Our Land-grant and Flagship Responsibilities**

- 7.1 Be an advocate for archives in the state. Lead and participate actively in statewide organizations, including Arkansas Historical Association, the Council of University of Arkansas College and Research Libraries (CUACRL), Arkansas Society of Archivists, and ARKLink. Seek opportunities for peer support and innovative collaboration in regional and national organizations, including the Society of Southwest Archivists and the Society of American Archivists.
- 7.2 Host the annual meeting of the Society of Southwest Archivists in May 2017 in Fayetteville.
- 7.3 Partner with other libraries, archives, and museums throughout the state to introduce Special Collections materials to the public, and to actively pursue the acquisition of collections that offer broader statewide focus and interest. Review our collections, both processed and unprocessed, to focus on topics for better outreach to specific communities.
- 7.4 Increase efforts to actively promote Special Collections and University Archives through traditional and contemporary outlets: press releases; Arkansas Newswire; University of Arkansas brochures, campaign news, stories in campus publications; *Arkansas Traveler*; public media (print, radio, and video); social media; events in Special Collections.
- 7.5 Prepare a proposal to establish a lecture series that showcases collections in Special Collections and experts in the field, using as a possible model a recent event that featured Dr. Lonnie Johnson, Executive Director of the Austrian-American Fulbright Commission.
- 7.6 Identify collections outside Arkansas that would be appropriate for us to acquire, in order to complement existing collections, support undergraduate curricula needs, and establish Special Collections as a nationally significant repository.
- 7.7 Promote digital access and continued development of the Arkansas Collection, and seek opportunities for digitization projects that promote and support Arkansas and regional interests, e.g., local history journals.

### **Guiding Priority 8: Strengthening Graduate Education**

- 8.1 Prepare a proposal to fund a fellowship program for graduate students to conduct research in Special Collections—research that uses unique collections and that results in publications, presentations, etc.
- 8.2 Offer Special Collections as a venue for internships for MLIS/MAS students from other universities.