

## **Special Collections and OSU's Academic Plan:**

### **Highlights from 2008**

OSU's Academic Plan names six general strategies for the University to improving its academic excellence. In 2008, how did the special collections of The Ohio State University Libraries contribute to the University's goal of becoming "one of the world's great public research and teaching universities," as stated in the Academic Plan (October 2000)?

Special Collections collect, preserve, and promote the use of rare books, manuscripts and other primary research materials. Research libraries pride themselves in the breadth of their holdings of rare and unique documentation of culture because it is what makes them distinctive among their peers. Within the OSU Libraries, special collections are the Cartoon Research Library (CGA), the John Glenn Archives, the Hilandar Research Library (HIL), OSU Archives, the Polar Archival Program, Rare Books and Manuscripts/ Charvat Collection of American Fiction (RAR), and the Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute Library (TRI).<sup>1</sup> In addition the Medical Heritage Center (MHC), which is part of OSU's Prior Health Sciences Library and the Historic Costume and Textile Museum ( HCTC and in the College of Education and Human Ecology) are special collections and partner with the OSU Libraries.

Even as the Academic Plan "is the initial roadmap for the journey to academic excellence" it is also the roadmap here. This report lists each of the strategies of the Academic Plan and states the accomplishments of the special collections in 2007 that pertain to the strategy. Included are highlights only; a comprehensive list would lengthen this report considerably.

In reviewing the activities of the curators and their staffs, credit should also go to Special Collections Cataloging and to Office of Preservation. Many materials in the OSU Libraries, Special Collections present special challenges of access and preservation. Scholars and students cannot learn about Special Collections without catalog records in Oscar and the World Wide Web. Many of the collections require original cataloging because as unique items, there are usually no catalog records elsewhere that can be copied. Fortunately, the Special Collections Cataloging Department has worked to provide the records needed for access.

No one should use items that will suffer from use. Because Special Collections contain materials for which duplicates are hard to find or do not exist, Special Collections have extra-ordinary needs for preservation. Again and again, OSU's Book and Paper conservator, has provided invaluable assistance in the work of Special Collections.

---

<sup>1</sup> Rare Books and Manuscripts and the Charvat Collection of American Fiction are presented as RARE because they share the same staff at this time.

***Strategy: Build a World Class Faculty***

*Recruiting.* Research materials that are rare or unique and of extraordinary quality have been used in the recruiting processes during the past year. In 2008:

- TRI's curator represented TRI at the International Association of Libraries and Museums for the Performing Arts in Scotland.
  - Prospective graduate students and faculty in History of Art and Architecture, English, History, Slavic and East European Studies and Theatre toured CGA, HIL, RARE and TRI ;
  - HIL hosts visits by prospective faculty and graduate students in the Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures.
  - OSU's colleges and departments continued to use photographs and historical material from the University Archives for promotional and displays, brochures, and websites.
- *Exhibiting.* Loaning research materials for national and international exhibition serves to promote the University as a center of world-class scholarship. In 2008:
- All of the special collections provided items for *Objects of Wonder* at the Columbus Museum of Art.
  - Rare has provided items from its Lillian Schwartz Collection of computer animated art to museums in Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Israel.
  - CGA loaned cartoons to the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and the Norman Rockwell Museum.
  - HCTC loaned to the Nassau County Museum of Art, as well as to galleries in Columbus.
  - Glenn Archives loaned artifacts to the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library for a temporary exhibit concerning space programs of the 1960s.
  - Polar Archives loaned original art from the Byrd collection to the Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts as part of a larger exhibit, *To the Ends of the Earth*.
  - OSU Archives provided images of Jesse Owens to the Sports Museum of America, the Holocaust Museum, and the College Football Hall of Fame.
  - TRI materials appeared in London at the *Midnight Robbers: The Artists of Notting Hill Carnival*.
- *Research use.* Special Collections are part of a global community of scholarship in which researchers from all parts of the United States and many different countries used special collections at The Ohio State University Libraries last year. Highlights from 2007:

- HIL provided research materials and answered questions from scholars in countries such as Belgium, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain as well as the United States.
- Approximately 20% of reference requests answered by the Byrd Polar Archives came from researchers in countries outside the U.S.A
- Rare hosted eminent scholars from such prominent universities as New York University, and Northwestern.
- The John Glenn archives hosted researchers who were attending the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations that took place in Columbus.
- OSU Archives provided documents to researchers in Australia, Philippines, Great Britain and France.
- HCTC hosted a scholar from Michigan State who studied 19<sup>th</sup> century women's dresses.

***Strategy: Develop Academic Programs that Define Ohio State as the Nation's Leading Public Land-Grant University.***

- *Collections.* OSU Libraries have extra-ordinary documentation, that include the papers of writer James Thurber, cartoonist Milton Caniff, the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art Collection, choreographer Twyla Tharp as well as theatrical designers and critics, polar explorer Richard Byrd, the heroic Jesse Owens, microfilm from Hilandar monastery, and clothing from prominent designers. In 2008 curators continued to acquire collections, some of which are :
  - CGA added the collections of the International Museum of Cartoon Art Collection, which contains numerous works of art and has a value of at least 4 million dollars.
  - TRI added materials by theatre designer extraordinaire Jo Mielziner, including his plans for the 1945 convocation of nations in San Francisco. In addition, TRI acquired the Jeff Corey Collection, a well-known Hollywood actor, teacher and director, and the Sandra L. Hughes Collection pertaining to mime, movement, and masks.
  - Glenn Archives received the papers of Congressman Ralph Regular and Congresswoman Deborah Pryce, both prominent and veteran members of the House of Representatives.
  - Rare acquired a significant archive of the Wyandot Indians. In addition, it received the David Rogers Collection of early computer graphic arts, complimenting the Lillian Schwartz collection that is requested frequently. Meanwhile, it has continued to add to its prominent Avant Writing Collection.

- MHC received the John Harris Dental Museum collection that pertains to the history of dental education in the U.S..
  - HCTC added reference books from the librarian of the National Button Society and original fashion illustrations by internationally renowned illustrators.
  - HIL acquired the Pimen M. Sofronov Collection, a leading iconographer of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, that included hundreds of unique or rare publications as well as works of art.
  - Byrd Polar Archives received Admiral Byrd's bur parka and mukluks, along with furs used by Byrd's dog Igloo, of whom a biography had been written.
- *Recognition from national agencies and foundations. In 2008:*
    - Glenn Archivist, became a member of the National Advisory Committee for the Records of Congress.
    - TRI curator serves as vice chair of the national Dance Heritage Coalition, which is supported by the Mellon and other foundations and is a member of the International Theatre Exchange, a committee of the USA Committee for UNESCO.
    - Byrd Polar Archives received grants of \$4,000 from the Kane Lodge Foundation and \$10,000 from the Lincoln Ellsworth Foundation, both in New York City.
    - HIL curator reviewed a grant proposal for the Israeli Science Foundation.
    - Curator of the Historic Costume and Textile Collection served as chair of the Costume Society of America's Grants to Small Museums Committee.
    - The Delmas Foundation awarded HCTC a grant for digitizing costume and fashion artifacts.
  - *Participation with units that have received Selective Investment Awards because of their national prominence. In 2008:*
    - CGA has partnered again with the Department of History's Harvey Goldberg Program for Excellence in Teaching in developing a curriculum source for K-12 school teachers. Additionally, CGA partnered with the Department of English in co-sponsoring *Writing Memoir: A Workshop Led by Nicole Hollander*.
    - Rare and TRI partnered with the Public History Program from the Department of History in engaging undergraduates with special collections.
    - Rare worked closely with Professor Lewis Ulman, Department of English, in his NEH grant concerning digital editing as part of a digital Humanities initiative.

- MHC co-hosted with the Department of History the annual Burnham lecture in the history of the health sciences.

***Strategy: Enhance the Quality of the Teaching and Learning Environment***

- *Classroom instruction by curators in 2008:*
  - MHC continued to host a mini-module in the history of medicine, while the curator provided guest lectures about medical history to health science classes.
  - HIL curator lectured in Slavic 792, taught a new course (“Orthodoxy and the Slavs”), organized and taught the Medieval Slavic Summer Institute, and served on graduate committees for three students..
  - CGA curators gave lectures in course of the History of Art, Art, and Comparative Study taught “History of Newspaper Editorial Cartoons”
  - Curators of the John Glenn Archives, the Byrd Polar Archives and the University Archives hosted and made presentations to students in historical research methods classes.
  - TRI curators taught Theatre 801 (“Research Methods), a freshman seminar, and taught students in individual studies and as thesis advisers. In addition, the curators have provided guest lectures for other classes.
  - Rare and Charvat have participated in five teaching enhancement grants with professors from the Department of English and provides resources for much graduate research, including a graduate student from history who digitized a 17<sup>th</sup> century manuscript. Finally, Rare held workshops in classrooms for graduate students concerning special collections materials, including medieval manuscripts
  - OSU Archivist was one of a team of faculty who taught ASC 500 (“OSU: Its History and Its World”) and had sole responsibility for teaching a Freshman Seminar “Turning Points in OSU History”. The Associate Archivist presented “Buckeye Navigator”, a review of OSU History through its historic buildings and sites, as a Freshman Success lecture.
  - HCTC provided 358 artifacts to courses in OSU’s Department of Consumer Sciences, French literature and Art Education and its curator provided eleven undergraduates opportunities for internships and volunteer positions.
- *Non-classroom activities.* Exhibits and special events also help to enrich the quality of the teaching and learning environment. In 2008:

- Hilandar curator taught two high school classes and offered a workshop to students from the University of Pittsburgh.
- Rare participated in workshops for graduate students that focused on special collections and medieval manuscripts at OSU.
- CGA curators provided tours for visiting artists, a US Agency for International Development sponsored tour of Arab cartoonists..
- MHC held student events as it hosted *Opening Doors: Contemporary African American Academic Surgeons*. curator has visited with students in medicine, pharmacy, nursing and dentistry and given lectures about the history of health sciences.
- HCTC curator engaged students in individual study and internships and assisted an undergraduate honors research project.
- OSU Archives has provided great numbers of photographs of OSU for the new Ohio Union that will open in 2010.

***Strategy: Enhance and Better Serve the Student Body***

- *In 2008, special collections found numerous ways of connecting to students as individuals and as members of student organizations:*
  - OSU Archives continues to receive the records of student organizations and make presentations to them about OSU history. Sigma Delta, Lantern, and Sphinx in historical research.
  - MHC curator is advisor to a history of medicine group.
  - Rare sponsored the Poets Against War symposium that featured Sam Hamill, Eleanor Wilner, and Breten Breytenbach, a vocal opponent to apartheid who served a prison term for his views and activities.
  - HCTC provided talks and tours for a recruiting event for undergraduate admissions.
  - CGA sponsored a lecture about Sam Milai and his work by Professor Rebecca Wanzo with Women’s Studies and African and African American Studies. In addition it cosponsored a lecture by Nicole Hollander with Women’s Studies, the Office of Geriatrics and the Wexner Center.
  - All prospective graduate students in Theatre visit TRI as part of the recruitment process.

***Strategy: Create a Diverse University Community***

- *By means of public programs, by acquiring collections, and by making available documentation of diversity, the special collections feature the diversity that is our university and our culture. In 2008:*
  - TRI commissioned a sculpture for *Midnight Robbers*, an exhibition about Carnival that opened in London and came to Columbus. The

theme of the exhibition is the Notting Hill Carnival in London which brings together people of many races and ethnicities.

- HCTC sponsored a Black History Month program that brought author Rosemary Reed Miller to talk about her book *Threads Thru History: African American Dressmakers and Designers from 1860-Present*.
- Medical Heritage Center hosted *Opening Doors: Contemporary African American Academic Surgeons*, a national travelling exhibit of the National Library of Medicine.
- Rare added to Haitian Photograph Collection, the Joanne Grant and William Bradford Huie Civil Rights Collections and the John W. Bennett Anthropology Collection.

***Strategy: Help Build Ohio's Future***

- *Service to the state of Ohio and contributions to its future occurred in different ways. In 2008:*
  - The electronic records archivist/ manager of the OSU Archives became a member of the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board and was elected chair of the Ohio Electronic Records Committee.
  - The OSU Archives accomplished a complete revision of *Records Retention for Public Colleges and Universities in Ohio*, published by Inter-University Council of Ohio. This work serves as the foundation for retention and disposition of public records for institutions of higher education in the state. Now that it is available on a website, it will have national influence.
  - Polar Curator hosted, with the OSU History Department, a one week teacher workshop to develop lesson plans for high school students that draw upon original documents of the collections as illustrations and evidence of historical themes.
  - In addition to the lectures that were open to the public and the work with school teachers, CGA gave twelve presentations to organizations in central Ohio that included the Clintonville Arts Club, Columbus State Community College Lifelong Living Institute, the Columbus Historical Society, and the Lancaster Ohio Rotary Club.
  - HCTC offered three programs, such as "Quilts of the Midwest," to the community, provided tours for Columbus College of Art & Design as well as public schools, while the Curator served as treasurer for Fashion Group International-Columbus Chapter.
  - Rare continued a monthly program for a local bibliophilic society and the Head of Rare is on the Board of Ohioana Library. In addition, RBMS partnered with Thurber House in its public programs.

- MHC arranges four lectures a year concerning medical humanities that are open to the public.
- The Glenn Archivist continued as an advisor to the John and Annie Glenn Museum in New Concord, Ohio.
- TRI curators made presentations to high school students from central Ohio in the Central Ohio Thespians.