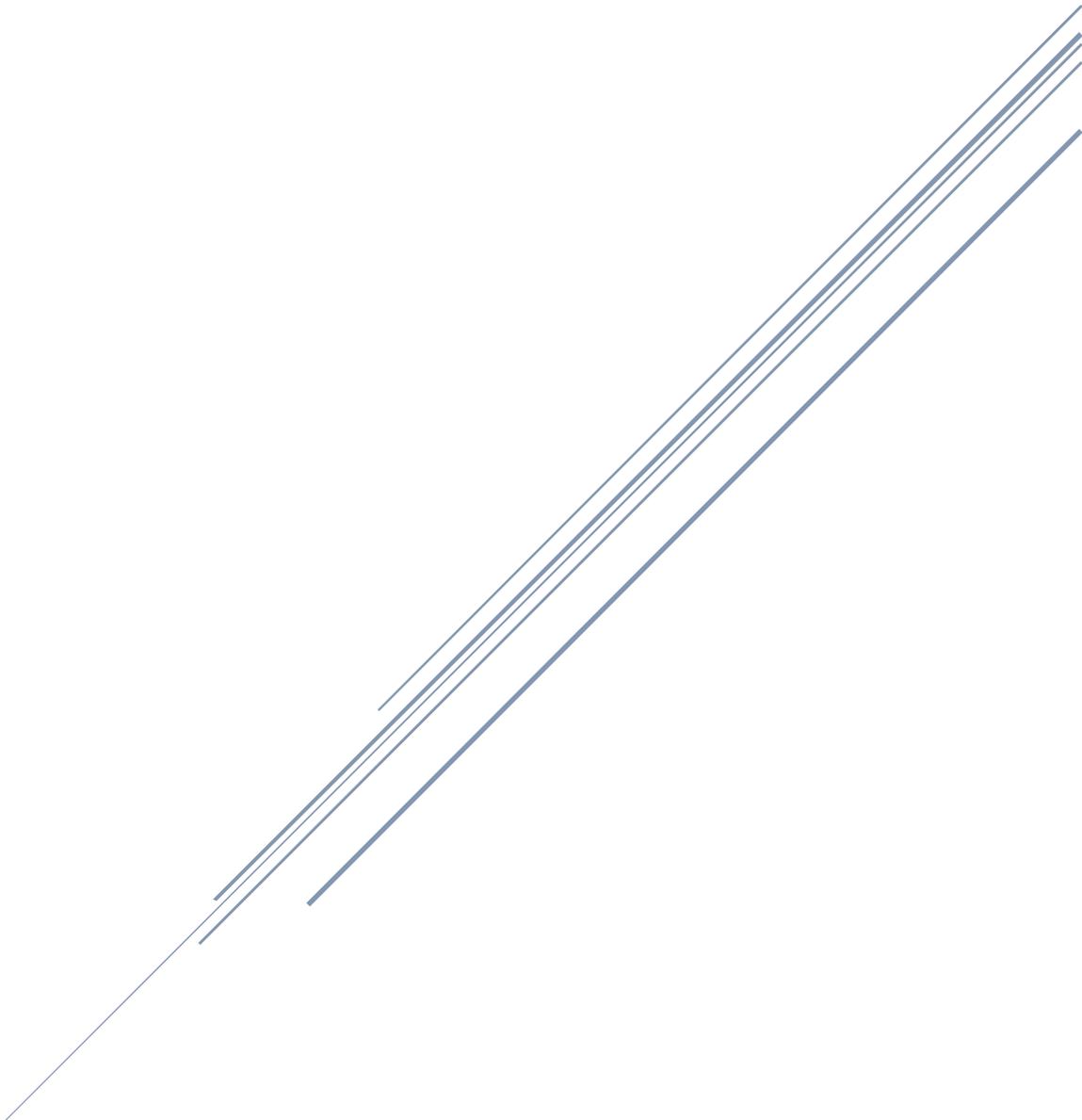


# A NEW ERA FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



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This report is based on meetings with UIUC administrators and the faculty and staff of the Special Collections Division, and on observations made during tours of the facilities on December 5 through December 7, 2018. I am grateful for the time spent with me during my visit and the openness of everyone involved. Clearly there is a lot at stake and all are committed to carrying out a successful project. What “success” looks like may depend on an individual’s perspective. My recommendations are based on the experience I’ve had with similar efforts at the University of Minnesota, my over 35 years of experience in special collections libraries, a recent renovation and service consolidation project at the Andersen Library, and national standards, guidelines, and best practices for archival and special collections, some of which will be cited in this report.

There is a lot at stake combining several special collections units into a shared space. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, university libraries identify themselves through their rare and unique holdings. These materials truly make a university library distinctive, and they deserve distinctive spaces that provide appropriate preservation conditions, accommodate the work of the staff that serve as their keepers, and showcase the histories and unique qualities they represent. I believe that combining the UIUC special collections units into a cohesive group has many benefits—for the Library, the staff, and users. I see no downside to this project, unless the available space in the Undergraduate Library proves to be inadequate.

I am happy to continue to provide feedback and answer questions as the project moves forward, and to clarify anything that is unclear in this report. I wish you much luck and success with this endeavor!

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## Executive Summary

While there are special needs for each of the collecting areas at UIUC, there are many commonalities that argue for the combination of most of the Special Collections Division into a collaborative space. The commonalities include the mediated nature of the collections, environmental conditions for collection storage, security, instruction and outreach, and excellent user services. The Undergraduate Library is potentially a good base for this merger. The following recommendations will be explained in the body of this report:

- If the Undergraduate Library is renovated to accommodate the units of the Special Collections Division, the proposed grade-level addition should not be considered as an add-on, but needs to be an integral part of the plan.
- The Sousa Archives and Center for American Music should not be removed from the Harding Band Building.
- The Map Library should only be considered for relocation to the Undergraduate Library if the entire collection can be made non-circulating.
- There should be a single reading room that is separate from teaching spaces, and there should be several of the latter.
- Basic research services will be shared across the units.
- Adequate collections processing space is essential.
- Collection storage spaces must have environmental conditions that meet industry standards.
- There will need to be spaces for rotating and permanent exhibits.
- Public programming space should be flexible and welcoming.

## Terminology used in the report

Throughout this report, the individual collecting areas, e.g., the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the Sousa Archives, etc., will be referred to generically as “units,” unless there is a need to call out one or more specifically. “Special collections” will encompass all of the units and includes all material types. “Archives” includes all unpublished materials. When referring to the individuals who work in the units, unless necessary, no distinction will be made between individuals with faculty status and those without; the entire group will generally be referred to as “staff.”

## The Current Situation

The various units under consideration for consolidation into a Special Collections Library are located in three buildings: the Main Library (each in a separate location within the building), the Archives Research Center in the Horticultural Field Lab building (several units are located here), and the Harding Band Building. This configuration constrains collaboration and the shared functions that could be realized if all were in a single, or at least fewer, locations. Collection storage is similarly divided into numerous locations, some adjacent to or within the units' spaces, and more in the Oak Street storage facility. While it will continue to be necessary to have off-site storage for collections, given space constraints in the buildings on campus, off-site storage creates significant costs in terms of staff time and wear and tear on the materials.

### University Archives

The University Archives includes not only the records of the University of Illinois, but is the administrative home for the Student Life and Culture Archives, and the Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, and also has contracted with several external organizations to store and provide access to their records.

While the University Archives has had new user spaces and some collection storage space established in recent years, the primary storage space in the Main Library is appalling. Climate controls are almost nonexistent, causing wide fluctuations in temperature and humidity. Processing work space is situated with collection storage. Until the new space was established, users were also accommodated in an inadequately sized room that also held staff work spaces and a small amount of collection storage. With a mandate to preserve the University's history, which includes administrative records as well as faculty, alumni, and student papers, University Archives will grow at a rapid rate for at least the next 20-30 years, until most or all University and faculty records are created and maintained electronically.

The **Student Life and Culture Archives** is situated off-site in the Archives Research Center (Horticultural Field Lab building). This collection, in particular, will benefit from being located on campus. Use of the collection is high among undergraduate students, who have difficulty fitting visits to the ARC into their class schedules. While there are some benefits to being off campus for out-of-town visitors, there are no nearby amenities. The Stewart Howe Conference Room also serves as teaching space, and collections are stored in the same room, which is far from ideal. In addition to the records of University of Illinois student groups and alumni, the SLC administers twenty national fraternal organizations' records, including **Alpha Tau Omega**. On the positive side the ARC has excellent climate control in the collection storage rooms, and

has a significant amount of archives processing workspace. The SLC archivist position is endowed.

Also located in the Archives Research Center are collections for which contracts (some of very long standing) are in place: the American Library Association, the Advertising Council, the Association of American Law Schools, the Art Libraries Society of North America, and the Third Armored Division Association. Most of these organizations provide financial support for staff to maintain and provide access to their materials (mostly part time), and these staff also provide reference and other services for the University Archives. Staff have a sense that quick turn-around for research queries, which come primarily from the organizations themselves, is required. With the exception of the ALA archives, on the website it is difficult to learn that these collections are part of the University Archives, or even located at the University of Illinois, which probably limits research requests from the public.

I was prepared to advocate that the **Sousa Archives and Center for American Music** be included in the move to a new facility, but when visiting with Scott Schwartz and the bands directors, I realized that the physical proximity between the two is integral to the operation of each. Custody of the collections were transferred from the University bands to the Library in 1994. The Bands use the archives as a recruitment tool, and when bands are visiting there is a need for students to be able to move between rehearsals and the archives. State high school bands comes to campus for clinics. Even more important, the use of the Sousa Archives includes playing the instruments, an activity that is anathema to the quiet study and teaching spaces required for the other collecting units, at least without the inclusion of a costly sound-proof room. Even though the distance between the Harding Band Building and the Undergraduate Library is not great, it is difficult to see how the Undergraduate Library could accommodate these unique uses of the collections. That said, the Sousa Archives is seriously understaffed, and the reading room also serves as a teaching space, making it impossible for research and teaching to take place at the same time.

## **Rare Book and Manuscript Library**

Like the University Archives, the RBML is quite well staffed. New user spaces were created several years ago (2008 – 2010 unless otherwise noted), which include a reading room, seminar room, a named exhibition space (2017), and staff offices. Major improvements to collection storage were made in 2010 after a mold outbreak, so good climate control is now in place. The storage spaces are not contiguous, but are secure and adjacent to the user spaces. RBML has shared its event space for programming with other units. With a new unit head, strides are being made in collection development policies, collection assessments, and procedural changes.

While no security system is absolutely fool-proof, I believe the RBML is operating under a false sense of security. The need to “buzz” through the security door individuals who are not RBML staff does not preclude someone exiting the reading room, which is not closely enough observed by staff, removing a small item or slicing a map or illustration from a book and tucking it under a jacket or other article of clothing. It is essential to have a staff presence in the reading room, even if it is a student employee.

## **Illinois History and Lincoln Collections**

Though a very small collection when compared to the other units, the IHLC is an important holding that deserves significantly improved user spaces. The current offices are inadequate for the activities that take place there; e.g., the tiny reading room has space for only two researchers. IHLC events have recently been hosted in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library space, which is an example of how units are already collaborating with each other. Of particular concern for the IHLC is the need for staff to walk up and down stairs to retrieve materials for researchers carrying cartons of archives or books, a situation that is an accident waiting to happen. Reliance on part-time and temporary staff is a concern that could be addressed with shared staffing across units.

## **Map Library**

Some of the materials in the Map Library circulate and some don't, and there is a complex set of rules that govern circulation. Unless the entire collection can be made non-circulating, I recommend that it not be moved to the Undergraduate Library for the simple reason that it will be confusing to users if only a select category of items circulate from the Map Library, but nothing from the other collections circulates. This also represents a security concern—how will staff in a combined user services scenario know what can and can't circulate? Map Library staff told me that some circulating items have not come back to the collection. It is a highly mediated collection, i.e., it requires staff intervention for researchers to find materials (especially the maps). Regardless of whether the Map Library moves into shared space, suitable copies should be made instead of allowing items to circulate. The unit already has a small scanner, but provision of such a service will require the addition of large format scanning capability (36"x48" documents or larger) as well as sufficient personnel to support rapid-turnaround for scanning. A larger scanner and a large-format printer would make it possible for users to take needed materials with them, whether they need a map for a vacation or for research purposes. Modest fees could be charged for the copies. Some of these materials are irreplaceable, so due consideration should be made to making the entire collection non-

circulating. The Library might also consider digitizing the entire aerial photography collection, which is the most heavily used part of the Map Library, and making it available freely on the web.

Here again is a situation where the research space serves as teaching space. Staff offices are down the hall from these rooms, making it impossible for staff to monitor researchers. The curator's understandable desire to be able to work with researchers to identify relevant items while standing at the map cases is a complicating factor for moving the collection.

The Map Library could definitely benefit from new space and integration with the rest of the units. There are many opportunities—teaching, research, and outreach—where the Map Library staff would be a strong partner and bring a different dimension to a class, research project, or event.

## **Looking Forward**

The University Library wishes to consolidate the special collections units into a shared space, with shared functions where feasible, using the Undergraduate Library as the location for new collection storage, user services and public spaces, and curatorial offices. I support this effort, and, with the good will of all involved, believe it can become a reality that benefits all. This section of the report will hopefully provide guidance for making it a reality.

## **Preserving Identities**

Staff expressed concern that there would be a loss of the individual collecting units' identities with a move into a new, combined space. The experience of the Archives and Special Collections department at the University of Minnesota, where twelve collecting units were brought together into the Elmer L. Andersen Library in 2000, should alleviate that concern. Each collecting unit at both Minnesota and UIUC is already well known for the materials it holds. Collection finding aids and catalog records, which are, for the most part, how researchers find the collections, will continue to bear each unit's name. Programming and exhibits can and will continue to be associated with individual units, and gift funds that are dedicated to an individual collecting area will not change. Individual units will continue to maintain their own websites. Sharing a physical space and services will not diminish the identity of any of the units. And, in reality, many researchers, especially students, do not know or care from whence the materials come. They just want "the stuff." The Special Collections Division or Library (or whatever it is to be called going forward) at UIUC will be primarily an administrative rubric.

## **Leadership**

Ideally there would be a head or director for the Special Collections Library. Such a position could continue to bring the units together, harmonizing practices and creating new synergies along the way. This scenario seems unlikely, however, given that the University Archivist is mandated to report to the Dean of Libraries. In lieu of a director position, I recommend that the heads of each unit and the individuals to whom they report comprise a permanent council that meets regularly to address issues that arise, coordinate staffing, and carry out strategic planning. If possible, bringing the reporting lines for individual units together under one or two AULs and the Dean would be ideal. All special collections staff need a voice in planning the direction of the group, so recommendations made by the council should be provided to all

special collections staff for comment and discussion before being finalized. Staff from the Special Collections Division have already been meeting to discuss the potential for shared space, which is a positive step.

Even if they are left out of the mix in the physical space of the Undergraduate Library, the Sousa Archive and Map Library should not be isolated from the rest of the group administratively. Policy and procedural issues that face the group in the Undergraduate Library can apply to them as well, and they should be part of the planning for the Special Collections Library.

## **The Undergraduate Library**

For the Undergraduate Library to be a successful home for special collections, there will need to be adequate room for all of the essential functions for all of the units. For example, at any given time, there are many different archival processing projects taking place. This is not work that can be picked up and put away on a daily basis, and it requires a lot of table space and adjacent shelving as well as network connections and computers. Therefore, the processing space in the Undergrad Library will need to be carefully planned so these needs can be accommodated.

I strongly recommend that the grade level addition for the Undergraduate Library, as proposed by the 2009 Master Plan (but not including all of the proposed functions), be included as part of this renovation project. If the entire lower level will be dedicated to collection storage, there will not be enough space on the upper level for all of the units to move in and function properly, even with shared services. There are a number of reasons for this recommendation:

- A grade-level, mostly glass pavilion will be a campus landmark. Without it, the Special Collections Library will simply be a hole in the ground that will easily be overlooked by students, faculty, and visitors alike. A striking grade-level addition will be an easily-identifiable campus destination.
- This new campus landmark is much more likely to attract donors interested in naming opportunities than an entirely underground building.
- The pavilion would be a spectacular public space that could include permanent and rotating exhibits, space for exhibit openings and public programming, and seminar rooms.
- The presence of a gift shop and coffee shop/café/lounge that are incorporated into the 2009 Master Plan on the grade level are not needed; in fact, I strongly recommend against the latter, as it would attract pests.

- If the grade level addition is not included in the current project, it is extremely unlikely that funding will be secured in the future, making this a wasted opportunity.

## Reading Room

Acknowledging that the rules and regulations employed by special collections libraries can be daunting, particularly to students, a welcoming atmosphere is needed. This dictates that the units need to come together, harmonizing forms, policies and practices, and services as much as possible.

A single reading room for all of the units in the Undergraduate Library is recommended. This will be an enormous benefit for users who may need to use materials from more than one collecting area. How large the reading room needs to be is to be determined, which is why I mentioned during my visit that each unit needs to start counting heads on a daily basis. Take into account current needs and plan for growth. There are no guidelines on how a reading room should be configured, but there should be some large tables (or several tables pushed together) to accommodate maps and other large-format materials. It may be desirable to have patrons using very rare materials sit close to the reading room monitor's desk. The reading room monitor should have as clear a view as possible of the entire room. The [ACRL/RBMS Guidelines Regarding Security and Theft in Special Collections](#) specifies that "staff should observe researchers at all times," and in my opinion that means staff need to be in the same room. This not only provides security for the collections, but also means a staff person is available to answer basic questions when needed. The reading room monitor does not need to be a paraprofessional or faculty member—well trained students should be able to perform this function, and can call on senior staff when necessary.

The reading room requires good lighting (preferably low or no-UV), and needs to be spacious enough to accommodate carts of materials moving between tables. Computer workstations are necessary for internet and catalog access, and possibly down-view workstations with headphones for viewing materials for which privacy is a concern. Shelving for reference materials and book props is desirable. Security cameras should be used to provide backup for the reading room monitor. It may be possible to have the camera feed go to a central campus security system. Opinions about security cameras differ, and some staff may object to using cameras as a privacy issue. However, while it is important that the collections be accessible, it is equally important that they be protected so they can be made available for future users. Security cameras help identify suspicious activity, they do not have the ability to peer over a researcher's shoulder to see what they are using. Other reading room amenities can include

power and USB outlets in the reading room tables, a light table for viewing transparencies and slides, etc.

A reception desk external to the reading room, where researchers register or check in before entering the reading room is a good idea. That way policies and procedures can be explained without disturbing researchers in the reading room. Requiring researchers to watch a video that explains reading room policies and how to handle materials will save staff time and eliminate the common occurrence of researchers signing a piece of paper outlining rules for using the collections without having read it.

Clearly a combined reading room will require all units to compromise some current practices. A single registration form for use of any of the collections should be created. The RBML uses Aeon for user registration and tracking collection use. It may be necessary, even highly desirable, for the other units to use the same system. That way a user can register once, and use any of the collections, a huge benefit for researchers. It must be recognized that users of different types of materials have different needs. It is often the case that one researcher will need to go through numerous boxes of archival materials in a day, while the person at the next table may be studying a single leaf of a medieval manuscript or a rare book. Striking a balance between how much material a researcher is allowed to have at their table and the need for security will vary depending on the type of material. This can be explained to researchers who may question why they can only have a folder at a time while someone else has an entire box of material.

A secure space for storage of carts of collection materials needed by researchers who are returning for several days should be adjacent to the reading room.

All special collections libraries limit what researchers can take into the reading room. Backpacks, briefcases, purses, coats, pens, etc., are not allowed, but often laptops, cameras, and phones (in silent mode) are. Lockers should be provided for materials that cannot be taken into the reading room. Some institutions even limit the type of paper a researcher can use for note taking. One way the library can monitor what is being taken into the reading room and compare it to what is coming out is to have the registration desk issue a slip of paper that indicates what the researcher is taking in. Check boxes make this an easy task. This slip is kept by the reading room monitor while the researcher is in the reading room, and is given back when the researcher leaves. The registration desk staff then check the slip against what the researcher is carrying out. This is not fool-proof, of course, but it does put the researcher on alert that staff are paying attention. The appearance of vigilance can often be a deterrent.

The reading room should only be used as a teaching space after hours. There should never be a conflict between hosting a class and researcher needs.

## Research Services

A centralized registration point and single reading room creates an opportunity for some centralized research services. Many institutions have adopted a “just in time” reference model, where researchers are sometimes referred to a subject expert for in-depth consultation, rather than the “just in case” model, where subject experts are on hand all the time. This should not be seen as a diminution of service to researchers. Obviously the curatorial staff cannot be present at all times no matter which model is used, so “just in time” is a better picture of reality. In a centralized service point it will be necessary for front-line staff to have some knowledge of the holdings of all the units. This can only be seen as a positive situation, as more knowledge of holdings will lead to increased synergies between the units. Already there are situations where collections are shared between units, such as the Civil War materials in the IHLC from an entomologist whose papers are in University Archives. Some institutions have an individual who is responsible for coordinating research services. Such a person could be trained to provide basic reference for all the units.

An enormous step toward unified research services would be the ability to search across the individual units’ **Archon** instances. Being able to search across all the collections in the Special Collections Division would be an enormous benefit to researchers, and will be equally important to staff going forward. I understand that this effort is in progress, but the work should be completed as soon as possible. Sooner, if possible. There will likely be a need for data remediation, as encoding practices may have strayed from the norm over time. The Library should also consider what will happen to Archon when Chris Prom and Scott Schwartz are no longer with the Library.

With so much material stored at the Archives Research Center, it seems unlikely that it can be completely closed as a research space. Limiting (and therefore isolating) staff in this location doesn’t seem like a good solution, so perhaps accessing ARC materials at the ARC by appointment only, or bringing materials from the ARC to the Special Collections Library for use would be feasible.

## **Collection Storage**

The 2009 Master Plan shelving plan does not incorporate the different types of shelving needed to accommodate different types of materials, and will have to be substantially redrawn. Boxes holding archival materials will not fit on a standard 9” shelf. The Master Plan indicates that 148,512 linear feet (174,678 with the center section) could be available, but those numbers will be reduced after a refit. The Library needs to determine what materials will be stored on the lower level of the Undergraduate Library and plan accordingly. Will materials be moved from

the ARC and Oak Street? Will all the materials currently in the Main Library move to the Undergraduate Library? Documenting how much of each type of shelving is needed before moving forward is critically important. The following sizes of materials need to be accommodated:

- Octavo, quarto, and folio volumes
- Oversize volumes that need to be shelved flat
- Manuscript (Hollinger) boxes (5" x 11" x 12 or 15")
- Paige boxes (12" x 11" x 15")
- Oversize flat boxes
- Map cases
- Other?

Measure the materials to be moved into the new collection storage space. Then measure again. And again, if necessary. It is essential to know how many shelves need to accommodate folios, how many will contain archives boxes, etc. Plan to not stack books shelved flat on top of each other. Shelving materials by size is highly recommended to maximize the space, i.e., all quartos are shelved together, all folios, etc. If possible, raise the ceiling to accommodate taller shelving, taking into account space for lighting and fire suppression equipment. It may be necessary to continue to shelve some or all of each unit's materials discretely, but if not, all the better for efficient use of space. "Reserving" contiguous sections of the stacks for an individual unit, which may go unfilled for a long period of time, is not a viable approach.

If there will be room for expansion space, a few inches on each book shelf is fine (following the recommended standard of 85%--it delays the need to shift), but for shelving for archives, one large, contiguous expansion space is advisable. This makes it possible accommodate very large new acquisitions. In most cases, archival materials that are oversized are shelved separately anyway, so having parts of a collection in various stack locations is normal. It is also important that all units recognize the needs of their colleagues. For the most part, collection storage space should not "belong" to an individual unit. It is shared, mutable space. That said, it may be necessary to have one or more vaults on the lower level for extremely rare materials that has additional security and to which access is limited. With careful planning, every inch of available space can be used well.

Unless UIUC does not permit research access to unprocessed archival collections, I don't see a need to segregate unprocessed materials from those that have been arranged and described, once they have been through the triage process. Trying to keep these collections separate leads to a lot of moving boxes around and having to track shelving locations.

## **Fire suppression**

The University will undoubtedly have standards for fire suppression. The University's risk management office and insurance company will have opinions and possibly requirements for appropriate fire suppression. Standards for libraries typically dictate dry-pipe pre-action systems, but a clean agent chemical system may also be advisable. Another safeguard is a very early warning aspirating smoke detection system, such as VESDA, placed strategically around the stack area. It is possible the Library will not have many options in this regard. The National Fire Protection Association has codes and standards that govern libraries and museums ([NFPA 909 Code for the Protection of Cultural Resource Properties](#)—you must sign in to access this resource).

## **Environment**

Needless to say, a new collection storage space should be state-of-the-art in terms of environmental controls. Standards for long-term preservation of paper and books are 50-60 degrees F and 30-50% RH,<sup>1</sup> with as little variation as possible. It should be possible to achieve these standards in the lower level of the Undergraduate Library. Staff mentioned the need for extra cold storage, which could be used for film-based materials. A walk-in freezer would be ideal for arresting mold growth and eliminating pests in incoming materials.

Consider zonal lighting on adjustable timers (i.e., one light switch does not control the entire storage area). The University may have standards for motion sensors for lighting. Lighting should run perpendicular to the stack ranges for best visibility and should be non-UV. When staff are not in the stack area, it should be as dark as possible, with emergency exit lighting, of course.

## **Water detection**

Special collections and preservation staff expressed concern about having rare and unique collections stored underground. It is possible to install a water detection system on the floor that can alert library and facilities staff to the presence of water. The Undergraduate Library is equipped with a primary and fail-safe water mitigation system that is designed to evacuate any rising ground water. In the history of that building, there are no recorded instances of water penetrations from the rising water table causing flooding in the facility. As the project moves forward, the University should be attuned to the need of sufficient water detection systems, to the replacement of the pumps in the existing water mitigation systems, and to ensuring that said pumps are integrated into the back-up generator system. With respect to water penetrations from the plaza level above, planning should give due attention to ensuring that any concerns about this are addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> Pacifico, Michele F. and Thomas P. Wilsted, *Archival and Special Collections Facilities: Guidelines for Archivists, Librarians, Architects, and Engineers*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009, pp. 32-34.

## **Security**

Only special collections, preservation, and administrative staff and necessary facilities personnel should be allowed into the collection storage area. There are many options for locking mechanisms, including proximity card readers, swipe card readers, and plain old keys. The advantage of proximity and swipe cards is that entry and exit can be recorded, so the Library can know who has been in and out of the secure stacks. Cards can be coded with hours of permitted entry, so student staff can be allowed more limited hours of access than regular staff. Security punch codes (each individual selects their own code) can be combined with proximity and swipe card readers as well, for an additional layer of security. Well-placed security cameras in the stacks will be important for monitoring access. If the Map Library joins the other units in the Undergraduate Library, it may be necessary to section off a portion of the storage area for the map cases so staff can take researchers into the space to review materials.

## **Staff Offices**

Curatorial and administrative/supervisory staff require offices that will accommodate their workspace needs (computer, file cabinets, shelves, etc.) as well as space for one-on-one meetings, meetings with donors, etc. Each curator needs his/her own office. Each office must have a door that closes and walls that go the ceiling, as the need for privacy can arise at any time (e.g., a conversation with a donor or a supervisee). No cubicles. The University may have recommended standards for square feet for office spaces, but curatorial needs may exceed those standards. Clustering curators' offices in one location in the Undergraduate Library will enable more efficient use of space, and can lead to increased collaboration.

## **Instructional Services**

Special collections staff typically do a lot of teaching, not only for University courses, but for high school students, and the community as well. Rare and unique materials have a lot of “wow factor” when used for instruction. Students at the University of Minnesota frequently comment in course evaluations that the trip to special collections was the highlight of the course, and they are often amazed that they are allowed to handle these materials. Undergraduates who discover special collections return to use them for course projects and papers, and later, theses and dissertations. Instruction includes class sessions devoted to topical themes and how to do research in archives, but can also cover how to distinguish good information from bad and bias represented in the materials—essential skills for every undergraduate to learn. So instruction is a very important function.

Special Collections staff at UIUC have done some collaborative teaching and programming, but much more could and should be done. Each unit has expertise that will be valuable to other units, and there are undoubtedly undiscovered synergies between collections in terms of topics and material types. In addition, it's much more fun to teach with a colleague than it is to do a class on one's own, and it's more engaging for the students (at whatever age).

Several instruction spaces of varying sizes (perhaps a range of 8 to 40 seats) should be planned for the new Special Collections Library. A large room can be divided into two or more smaller spaces using air walls to provide maximum flexibility. Each of these rooms should have tables that can be configured in multiple ways, and sound and projection systems. Chairs that can stack add to the flexibility of the rooms. Not all of the teaching spaces need to be outfitted in the same way—some may be more high-tech than others. Special collections staff should determine their specific needs and planning should proceed from there. Having enough instruction spaces will mean that classes that use special collections materials can be held in the Special Collections Library, and the materials will not have to travel to other classrooms. These rooms should be reserved for class sessions that use special collections materials only, and should not be made available for scheduling of other classes. However, it may be necessary for one or two of these rooms to be available for staff/Library meetings. Each room can have a Google calendar for scheduling.

## **Exhibit Space**

Regardless of where they are in the new building, exhibit spaces will need to be shared by all units. Depending on donor wishes, it may be important to re-establish the newly named exhibit space in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, which, if it must be dedicated to RBML, means that additional exhibit space is needed for the other units. The grade level pavilion would be able to accommodate more than one gallery. It is difficult to envision how the Undergraduate Library could accommodate adequate exhibit space without the grade level pavilion.

An Exhibits Committee, made up of representatives from several units and perhaps one person from outside special collections, can be established to review and select from exhibit proposals submitted by the units for temporary displays. An exhibits coordinator, who would work with all units, could chair this committee. In addition, some permanent display cases are needed for such iconic items as the Lincoln yoke. A cautionary note, however, is that exhibits are very time intensive, so careful planning is advised before establishing numerous galleries that will need exhibits rotated on a regular basis. A space for exhibit preparation, both for fabrication of props and signage as well as an area for curators to review, lay out, and select materials is advisable.

Exhibit spaces should be carefully planned, with cases of varying sizes and shapes appropriate for books, paper documents, and oversize materials. Lighting should be non-UV and movable to accommodate different arrangements of the cases. The Northeast Document Conservation Center's [Protecting Paper and Book Collections During Exhibition](#) is helpful, but note that it is nearly two decades old, and great strides in lighting have been made in the interim. Another useful standard is NISO's [Environmental Conditions for Exhibiting Library and Archival Materials](#), which, in addition to lighting, covers security, heat and humidity, and case design.

## **Additional Opportunities for Collaboration**

In addition to the aforementioned recommendations for consolidated research services, a single reading room, and exhibitions, another area where functions can be brought together is archival processing. This would include paper as well as electronic records, multi-media items, artifacts. With the acknowledgement that processing for University Archives collections may be very different than processing for a literary manuscript collection, certain standards still apply. These include [Describing Archives: A Content Standard](#), [Encoded Archival Description](#), and "[More Product, Less Process](#)," and format-specific descriptive standards. A potential new hire (or repurposing an existing position) will oversee all archival processing, implement standards across the units that reflect varying levels of processing and description (from very detailed to series-level), supervise processing staff (regardless of unit), and prioritize projects. Whenever possible, incoming collections should get at least an accession record in Archon and basic rehousing as soon as they arrive. Then, as research demand dictates, collections can be prioritized for more extensive processing.

Units should collaborate in counting research visits, reference queries, instruction, tours and outreach, and holdings in a single, meaningful way. Two joint Society of American Archivists/Association of College and Research Libraries Rare Book and Manuscript Section committees have recently released standards for these counts. They are the [Standardized Statistical Measures and Metrics for Public Services in Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries](#) and the [Guidelines for Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries](#). The latter has not yet been approved by the parent bodies, but should be this year. For research and instruction, whatever tool is being used by the Library might be adapted for use in Special Collections. The units will have to come to agreement on how various efforts are recorded. UIUC uses DeskTracker, and, while not perfect, we have had some success at Minnesota adapting this tool.

There are likely many opportunities for sharing staff across units. Functional tasks, such as researcher registration, paging and reshelving collection materials, basic research services,

archives accessioning and processing, book and map cataloging, exhibition loan negotiations, use agreements, etc., are ripe for coordination and collaboration. The Special Collections Library is a wonderful laboratory for I School students. It could and should be a training ground for future special collections librarians. This “laboratory” would be made stronger if students were not isolated by working in a single unit, but could have experiences across special collections units and observe how the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Special collections librarians are expected to know more than just the rare book field or the archival field—learning something about all aspects of a special collections library makes a student much better prepared for the job market.

Programming and outreach will continue to be associated with individual units, but can also be a shared opportunity. As an example, at Minnesota we have hosted several “Taste of the Treasures” events, where each unit displayed a small amount of material and talked about it with the invited members of the Friends of the Libraries. A speed dating scenario was used, with 10 minute rotation intervals. It was tremendously successful, with many overheard “I never knew this was here” comments. It was very tiring for the staff, however, who had to repeat their comments numerous times. The point is, Special Collections staff should look for ways to collaborate on events and programming. At our wrap-up meeting I asked them to list some things they had done, and there was a good list—the Bond exhibit, United Steelworkers workshops, etc. Being together in a single space will lead to increased collaboration.

## **Other Functional Needs**

Staff, particularly in University Archives, articulated a need for a loading dock and triage space, or “dirty room” in the Undergraduate Library. A loading dock is essential for bringing in large quantities of materials, and a space for inspection of incoming materials should be adjacent to the loading dock for ease of access. It is important to prevent the introduction of mold and pests into the collection storage space. A walk-in freezer placed in this area would be ideal.

Storage for supplies (archival boxes and folders, as well as office supplies) should be centralized, as should purchasing of supplies.

Preservation and conservation services staff feel a strong connection to Special Collections. If possible, co-locating at least some of these functions with special collections materials is an ideal situation.

## **Conclusion**

Creating a Special Collections Library from this group of very excellent collecting units is not only a good idea, it will have many benefits for the Library, staff, and researchers. I hope the Undergraduate Library will be an accommodating home, with adequate spaces for the necessary functions that need to be performed there, a welcoming space for researchers and visitors, and a source of pride for the University, and that these recommendations will be useful for planning purposes.

## Summary of standards referred to in the report (and others that may be useful)

This is by no means a complete list of relevant standards.

*[ACRL/RBMS Guidelines Regarding Security and Theft in Special Collections](#)*, 2009.

*[ACRL/SAA Joint Statement on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections Libraries](#)*, 2009.

[Describing Archives: A Content Standard](#), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2013.

[Encoded Archival Description](#) (EAD3). Society of American Archivists, 2018.

Greene, Mark A. and Dennis Meissner. "[More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing](#)," *The American Archivist*, vol. 68, Fall/Winter, 2005.

Lacher-Feldman, Jessica. *Exhibits in Archives and Special Collections Libraries*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2013.

[National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\) 909: Code for the Protection of Cultural Resource Properties](#), 2017. Nick Artim, president of the Heritage Protection Group of the Fire Safety Network, is also a terrific resource.

Northeast Document Conservation Center. [Protecting Paper and Book Collections During Exhibition](#), 1999.

Pacifico, Michele F. and Thomas P. Wilsted, *Archival and Special Collections Facilities: Guidelines for Archivists, Librarians, Architects, and Engineers*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009.

Society of American Archivists. [Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics](#), 2011.

Society of American Archivists/Association of College and Research Libraries Rare Books and Manuscripts Section. [Guidelines for Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries](#), 2018.

Society of American Archivists/Association of College and Research Libraries Rare Books and Manuscripts Section. [Standardized Statistical Measures and Metrics for Public Services in Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries](#), 2017.

Wilsted, Thomas P. *Planning New and Remodeled Archival Facilities*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2007.