

CONSERVATION UNIT
ANNUAL REPORT, JULY 1, 2001 – JUNE 30, 2002

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I. Narrative Summary of the Year's Activities

I.A. Core Processes

The Conservation Unit has undergone several significant changes during FY2001/2002. In September of 2001, concomitant with the hiring of a Conservation Librarian, both Pamphlet Binding/Book Repair and Conservation Treatments were merged to form the Conservation Unit. This unit was administratively separated from the Preservation Unit, and is managed by the Conservation Librarian.

Additionally, during the month of October, the Unit was relocated from room 12 to room 44 in the basement of the Library, and all conservation supplies were shifted from the 7/14 hallway to several locations in the Library basement. Ongoing plans for the construction of the new conservation lab in the Oak Street Facility were also begun this year.

I.A.1. Services and Access

Improvements in service quality, turn-around time, and communication are all ongoing goals of the Conservation Unit and great strides have been made in each of these areas.

Our service quality has been improved by centralizing the triaging of damaged monographs and previously bound journals. In the past, materials could be sent to Binding Preparations, Pamphlet Binding/Book Repair, or Conservation Treatments depending on the choice and knowledge of the sending unit. These materials were then exchanged between each of the sub-units as needed and as time and personnel permitted. With centralized triaging, all damaged materials are sent to one point, and the conservation staff makes uniform decisions about what materials are sent out for commercial binding and which can be repaired in-house. Quality has also been improved by the consistent marking and labeling of all completed treatments and protective enclosures, the disposal of many supplies that are no longer of archival quality, and the production of more consistent, higher quality repairs.

Turn-around time has been greatly increased in the area of book repair. Circulating materials are now typically returned in no longer than 5 months, with many of the simpler repairs being returned in under a month. The "conservation backlog" has been removed from room 31 in the stacks and returned to the Conservation Unit, and has been dramatically reduced in size (though no formal count was made of the initial number of volumes in the backlog, a good estimation would be reduction by over half). Pamphlet binding continues to have an excellent turn-around time of under one week. Additionally, special streamers for materials-in-process (from acquisitions and cataloging) were created so that

materials from these units can be easily identified and receive immediate treatment.

Communication has been improved both within the Conservation Unit and between Conservation and other Units in the Library. Under the direct supervision of the Conservation Librarian, both Pamphlet Binding/Book Repair and Conservation utilize the same terminology, supplies, treatment approaches, and facilities, greatly reducing previous confusion and redundancy.

I.A.2. Collection Development

N/A

I.A.3. Support/Ancillary Activities

The Conservation Unit has additionally undertaken the roll of occasionally acting as an exhibit preparations unit, creating window mats, hinging art into window mats, and reframing materials to be displayed for other Library units.

I.B. Training and Staff Development

All staff in the Conservation Unit have undertaken basic Voyager training courses. The staff has also continued to train individual staff in other library units to do simple repairs and make better-informed decisions when sending materials for repair.

I.C. Innovative Ideas, New Initiatives

An innovative element of the new technical services streamer is the ability for technical services staff to flag materials in poor repair before they are integrated into the Library's collections. Staff in both Acquisition and Cataloging may now use the bottom portion of the Technical Services streamer to flag problematic acquisitions (due to severe embrittlement, need for extensive conservation treatment, or previous mold or insect damage) for review by conservation and preservation staff and, if necessary, reconsideration by collection managers.

The Conservation Unit also submitted a proposal for plastic rain bags to the annual Friends' Preservation Competition, which was successfully funded. Bags should be ready for distribution in late October of 2002.

(See also centralization of triaging; consistent marking and labeling of all completed treatments and protective enclosures; and standardization of terminology, supplies, treatment approaches, and facilities, as mentioned above in section I.A.1).

II. Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment Activities

Similar to previous years, the Conservation Unit has kept detailed statistics pertaining to the number and types of treatments performed. These statistics are then compared to other ARL institutions as a determination of the productivity and skill of our unit. Under the oversight of the Conservation Librarian, these statistics have been simplified and now offer a better indication of the volumes repaired and processes undertaken by the Conservation Unit.

Additionally, an annual conservation and preservation supplies inventory was undertaken in FY2001/2002. This inventory was used not only to consolidate supplies and determine which of our supplies may be unnecessary or outdated, but also will be used with each following annual inventory to determine our supply usage to better plan for supply purchases in the future.

III. Public Relations and Promotional Activities

Members of the Conservation Unit have done the following:

- Been interviewed by the *News-Gazette* (January 28, 2002) about the Mellon grant and the beginning of a conservation program at UIUC.
- Consulted with members of the community (both on and off campus) about conservation treatments and the care and handling of book and paper materials.

IV. Involvement with Other Units in the Library and on Campus or Beyond

Due to the very nature of our services (pamphlet binding, book repair, and conservation), the day-to-day operations of the Conservation Unit involves constant interaction with other units in the Library. In addition to this, the Conservation Unit has been involved in educating graduate and assistants and staff in the Education and Social Sciences Library, and the Rare Book and Special Collections Library.

Additionally, the Conservation Librarian was invited to assist the campus' Public Goods Group to plan conservation and preservation projects for the collections on and off campus.

V. Additional Topics Deemed Unique to the Unit in Question

N/A

VI. Goals and Planning

VI.A. Last Year's Plans

Last year's goals for the Conservation Unit were left fairly general and were to be refined by the incoming conservation librarian. These broad goals included: re-working of the book repair and conservation work-flow; establishing bench work procedures; hiring a new conservation staff member; and setting up a new conservation and book repair lab in room 44 of the Library.

With the exception of hiring a new conservation staff member (in which the position was shifted to the Preservation Unit as the Brittle Books Coordinator), all of these goals were addressed and positive changes have been made in each area, as stated in sections I.A., I.A.1., and I.C..

VI.B Next Year's Plans and Goals

Book Repair

Many of the Conservation Unit's goals for book repair build upon the progress already begun in the past year. Our primary goal is to increase turn-around time for most repairs to under 2 months, with no minor repairs taking longer than 4

months. Additionally, we would like to reduce or eliminate conservation backlog, and eliminate all redundancy of operations in the Unit

Pamphlet Binding

In the coming year, the Conservation Unit will investigate the possibilities of beginning comprehensive pamphlet binding upon of new acquisitions, as allowed by the budget

Education and Training

The increase of available staff training on simple book repair methods and the education of staff about book repair and conservation availability and limitations are also areas in need of concentration in the upcoming year, and will be focussed on by the Unit.

Additionally, the Conservation Unit aspires to launch a website for both the Preservation and Conservation Units to aid in our education efforts.

Planning and Administration

In the coming year, there is a great need for the Unit to begin long-range conservation planning, through consultation and assessments. These projects will aid in the much needed prioritization of conservation and preservation projects in the upcoming years.

Other administrative and planning goals include the completion of a new disaster plan and emergency response booklet and the finalization of plans for the Oak Street Facility. In anticipation of the opening of the Oak Street Facility, the Unit also anticipates the purchase of new equipment to help modernize the existing lab before being transferred to the new lab in the Oak Street Facility.

VI.C Five Year Plans and Goals

Narrative

The Conservation Unit will require many changes in order to consider themselves comparable to other conservation facilities in similar institutions. Although a lab and staff of this size and caliber may not be obtainable in five years, our goals all focus on this end result. Necessary changes include the remodeling of the lab, the purchase of many new pieces of equipment, the establishment of conservation and preservation priorities within the Library, the re-evaluation of workflow both within the Unit and between Conservation and other Units on campus, and the continued and expanded education of conservation staff and the Library staff on conservation-related topics.

Assessment

Assessing collections for the purposes of conservation planning is viewed as an important aspect of the program. At present, these activities will likely be supported through additional funding that may be secured on a case-by-case basis as well as by existing staff as available staff time is found. In the future, it is

desired that a regular position or regular budgeted funds will be made available to complete such projects on a regular schedule.

Conservation & Collections Maintenance

The Conservation Unit currently has one professional conservator. In the future, it is envisioned that the unit will possess two conservators and three and one-half support staff. The conservation unit will treat rare and damaged materials; the collections maintenance unit will treat materials damaged through reader use, pamphlet bind materials, and produce protective enclosures.

An important step in the improvement of facilities for these activities is the proposed move from the basement of the Main Library to the conservation lab currently being planned at the Oak Street Facility. Currently, many of the more complicated treatments that are often associated with the conservation of rare and unique items require a more fully out-fitted conservation lab than that currently available in the Main Library. Many of these treatments will continue to be obtained from outside vendors until facilities and staff allow for in-house treatments.

Education for Staff and Users

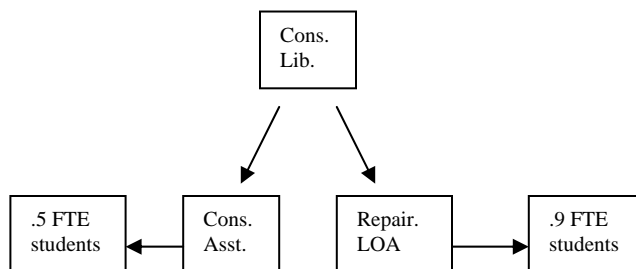
The Conservation Unit will become increasingly involved in training on campus in the coming years. In the future, it is envisioned that one staff member will have educational activities as a primary responsibility.

In terms of larger educational initiatives, it is hoped that the Departments of Preservation and Conservation can team up with the Digital Imaging and Media Technology Initiative (DIMTI) to collaboratively produce educational sessions combining their work on digital imaging with preservation and conservation concerns.

Space

In the next five years, it is anticipated that the conservation and collections maintenance units will relocate to the Oak Street Facility. The possibility exists that the microfilm unit will relocate to the same facility. Although plans are not solidified, it is desired that the space vacated by the Conservation and Collections Maintenance units will become available for Commercial Binding, Brittle Books, and the triaging of circulating materials.

Personnel – Present Conservation Organization



Conservation Librarian

Duties and % Time:

Departmental Administration & Development	45%
Benchwork	20%
Professional Development	20%
Triage, Routing, and Supplies	15%

Conservation Assistant

Duties and % Time:

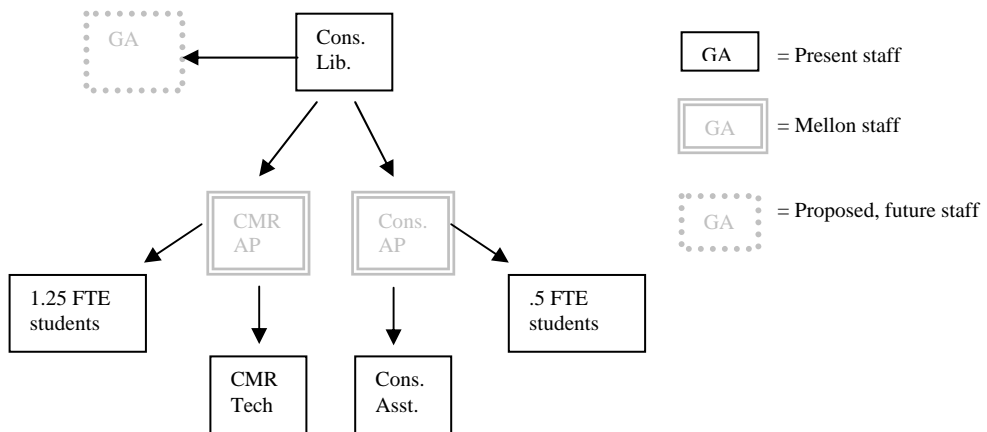
Conservation Benchwork	<25%
Collection Maintenance Repair & Student Supervision	>75%

Repair LOA.

Duties and % Time:

Pam Binding & Student Supervision	>50%
Collection Maintenance Repair & Student Supervision	<25%
Education	<25%

Personnel – Proposed Conservation Organization



Conservation Librarian

Duties and % Time:

Administration & Program Development	45%
Benchwork	20%
Professional Development	20%
Triage, Routing, and Supplies	15%

Conservation Graduate Assistant (0.5 FTE)

Duties and % Time:

Conservation Projects as needed	50%
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Conservation AP

Duties and % Time:

Benchwork	85%
Professional Development	5%

Manage Student Conservation Repair 10%

Conservation Assistant

Duties and % Time: Conservation Benchwork 100%

Coll. Maint. & Repair (CMR) AP

Duties and % Time: Manage Student Pamphlet Binding/Repair 30%
 Professional Development 5%
 Circulating Repair Benchwork and Triage 25%
 Education & Training 40%

CMR Technician

Duties and % Time: Circulating Repair Benchwork 100%

Conservation Students

Duties and Time: *Perform minor conservation repairs and construct protective enclosures.* .5FTE

CMR Students

Duties and Time: *Perform pamphlet binding, circulating collection repair, complete marking and labeling.* 1.25FTE

V.I.D Budgetary Impacts

Planning for the impact of budgetary increases and decreases over the next several years requires that the Preservation and Conservation Departments' cooperatively plan. Not only are processes intricately tied, the actual budgets are, in many cases, shared. The following information applies to both units. It is based upon the budgeted operating and collection funds for 2001-02 with two exceptions – the authorized increase in the binding budget is included and funds for the Brittle Books Coordinator's position are not included.

Budgetary Impact - Preservation and Conservation

Current Budget	Current Budget	Cuts/Additions	Total Difference
Less 4%	\$610,786.10	\$586,354.66	-\$24,431.44
Less 6%	\$610,786.10	\$574,138.93	-\$36,647.17
Plus 4%	\$610,786.10	\$635,217.54	\$24,431.44

If measured as percentages against the three budgets composing the Departments of Preservation and Conservation's budget, the figures would appear as follows:

Budgetary Impact - Straight Percentages

Current Budget	Budget	Less 4%	Less 6%	Plus 4%
Pres/Cons (Operating) - Other	\$34,297.45	\$32,925.55	\$32,239.60	\$35,669.35
Pres/Cons (Operating) - Wages	\$259,988.65	\$249,589.10	\$239,605.54	\$270,388.20
Binding (Collections)	\$304,324.00	\$292,151.04	\$286,064.56	\$316,496.96
Preservation (Collections)	\$12,176.00	\$11,688.96	\$11,445.44	\$12,663.04
Totals	\$610,786.10	\$586,354.66	\$569,355.14	\$635,217.54

After careful consultation, the likely result of a four percent cut would be the following:

- Complete cessation of all funding for preservation and conservation services funded from the Collections Budget. This would result in no out-sourced conservation activity funded directly by the Library.
- Return of the FY2002-03 increase to the Binding Budget. This would likely result in two things: (1) continuation of some peg-binding, or (2) a complete cessation of mylar binding of new acquisitions – a practice that will likely cost the Library twice as much in coming years in terms of more expensive binding or replacement.
- Cutting \$731.44 from the Preservation/Conservation Operating budget’s supplies allocation.

The results of a six percent cut would be far more significant. The most obvious means of making the difference without undue impact on the departments’ immediate operation as a whole would be cutting a staff line and supplementing the difference with funds from the Preservation and Conservation Operating Budget’s supply allocation. The difficulty in adopting this means of cost cutting is that the departments’ anticipate that this line will, if not in exactly its present form, be a valuable component of the overall Preservation and Conservation program in coming years.

In terms of a four percent increase, the Departments of Preservation and Conservation anticipate using the funds to either:

- Fund most of the Enclosure Technician line that is proposed to be funded by the Mellon money, thereby freeing Mellon funds to partially fund another staff line.
- Fund an additional Book Repair Technician (unplanned in current staffing projections) in anticipation of the difficulties of hiring student workers once the Conservation Department relocates to the Oak Street Facility.

VII. Other

N/A