

**CONSERVATION UNIT**  
**ANNUAL REPORT, JULY 1, 2005 – JUNE 30, 2006**

*Prepared by: Jennifer Hain Teper*

**I. Narrative Summary of the Year's Activities**

**I.A. Core Processes**

The Conservation Unit serves the entire Library system by providing book repair, pamphlet binding, and conservation services for new and existing collection materials, as well as guidance and tools for proper handling, storage and care of their collections. The main service functions in the unit are: Book Repair; Conservation; Pamphlet Binding; and Oak Street Stabilization.

**I.A.1. Services and Access**

The Conservation Unit has four main sub-units that perform services and promote continued access to library materials:

- *Book Repair* provides basic through complex repairs on non-special collections materials, as well as constructs protective enclosures. These tasks are completed by faculty, staff, students and volunteers in the unit. In the past fiscal year 2,915 books and flat paper artifacts were repaired, 299 custom enclosures and 83 commercially produced enclosures were utilized or completed in house.
- *Conservation* provides complex, reversible repairs for special collections materials. Typically these repairs require between 3 and 10 hours of bench work per item, and are completed by faculty and staff only. In the past year, 71 items were conserved in house.
- *Pamphlet Binding* supplies thin, unbound library materials with a protective, economical cover. Pamphlet binding is completed by staff, students and volunteers. 4,495 items were pamphlet bound in the last fiscal year.
- *Oak Street Stabilization* performs minor repairs, stabilizes damaged or fragile materials and constructs custom protective enclosures for exceedingly damaged materials from the departmental libraries and some materials from the main bookstacks. In the past fiscal year 17,179 volumes have been repaired or stabilized by Conservation staff. In addition to stabilization, the Conservation Unit also oversaw the assessment, record updates and packing of over 7,167 pre-1830s books from the main stacks.

**I.A.3. Support/Ancillary Activities**

The unit fulfills many roles outside of the core processes listed above. These services include disaster recovery, exhibit preparations, determining which books should be sent out for commercial binding, marking, and ordering preservation related supplies.

- In the past year, the unit has managed the drying, cleaning and stabilization of 147 volumes.
- The Conservation Unit acts as an exhibit preparations unit, creating window mats, encapsulating posters and other fragile materials, hinging art into window mats, and creating customized Plexiglas book cradles to be displayed for other Library units.

- As part of our daily routine, the unit has triaged all damaged bound materials and determines what can be treated in-house, what should be treated as a brittle book, and what should be sent out for commercial binding (8,933 books and pamphlets were triaged in FY0506).
- Conservation orders, sometimes distributes, and consults on all preservation supplies and enclosures purchased by the Library System.

### **I.B. Training and Staff Development**

The Conservation Unit has offered a number of training and staff development opportunities to the Library.

- Simple Repairs (November 30, 2005 - 18 attendees)
- Iron Gall Ink Conservation Brown Bag (December 2, 2005 – 11 attendees)
- Booksnake Workshop (April 7, 2006 - 35 attendees)
- Disaster Response Training for Preservation Committee and Conservation Unit (June 6, 2006 - 6 attendees)
- Preservation and Conservation Training for Circulation Staff (May 9 & 12, 2006 – 21 attendees)
- Volunteer and Practica opportunities: The conservation unit oversaw nine volunteers and practicum students over the past year, totaling 500 hours of labor.

Members of the Conservation Unit have also attended staff training and professional development opportunities offered both on and off campus. Members of the conservation staff attended the following during the 2005-2006 fiscal year:

- *Examining and Treating Iron-Gall Ink on Paper* (1 staff attendee)
- *The Changing Book: Transitions in Design, Production and Preservation* (4 staff attendees)
- Web Survey/Form Builder upgrades workshop (1 staff attendee)
- Library training on Access (2 ea.), Excel (2 ea.), and Powerpoint (2 ea.) (1 staff attendee each)
- Campus fire extinguisher training (3 staff attendees)
- *Invasion of the Giant Mold Spore* (3 staff attendees)
- *Beating the Critter Jitters* (2 staff attendees)
- *Leather Laced Board Bindings* (1 staff attendee)

### **I.C. Innovative Ideas, New Initiatives**

This year the Conservation Unit undertook several new initiatives in the last year,

- The construction of custom bent Plexiglas book cradles for exhibit purposes, which has increased the visual appeal of our exhibits and also better support rare and fragile materials while they are exhibited.
- The stabilization and creation of custom enclosures for the galley proofs, not previously identified as part of the Carl Sandburg Save America's Treasures Grant.
- Oversight and training for a conservation assessment of the scrapbook collection in the Student Life and Culture Archive to help plan for future, prioritized conservation treatments of unique historical artifacts

## II. Progress on Last Year's Goals & Goals for the Coming Year

### II.A Progress on Last Year's Goals (FY0506)

<b>Area</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Status</b>
<u>Book Repair</u>	Add new repair types (tissue hinge repairs, internal hinge repairs, etc) into procedures manual	Not started
	Increase turn-around time for general repairs	Increased in some repairs, particularly sewing and guarding
<u>Conservation</u>	Continue to reduce backlog of conservation repairs	Some progress (17 items treated)
	Continue learning leather repairs and begin finishing and tooling work	Some progress
	Continue to increase number and level of conservation repairs, especially from Rare Books and Manuscript Library	Some progress – mostly with Sandburg Grant (277 items from RBML repaired and 232 enclosures constructed)
<u>Pamphlet Binding</u>	Prepare formal documentation for procedures manual.	Completed
<u>Oak Street Preparations and Packing</u>	Keep up with flow of materials from STX through December 2005	Completed
	Modify management of stabilization after December to reflect the lower, continual workflow and the eventual move of Conservation to the Oak Street building.	Completed
<u>Education and Training</u>	Evaluate success rate of previous repair workshops to better serve library staff. Ideally offer at least one repair workshop following this evaluation.	Workshop held, review not started
	Continue to increase staff training in areas of computer literacy for specific programs (specifically MS Access and Voyager)	Progress for some staff, but not all
	Continue to hone bench skills of all staff	Progress for some staff, but not all
	Continue to increase interaction with GSLIS through workshops, lectures, volunteers, and practica.	Successful - 3 workshops, 3 practica and 6 volunteers
<u>Administrative</u>	Complete exhibit guidelines and learn to make custom Plexiglas cradles	Completed
	Assess success of Conservation Unit's	Some progress

	services throughout the library	
	Complete planning of Conservation Lab and <u>hopefully</u> move into new lab within FY0506.	Construction completed (!), move currently underway.

## II.B Goals for the Coming Year (FY0607)

Area	Goal
<u>Book Repair</u>	Add new repair types (tissue hinge repairs, internal hinge repairs, etc) into procedures manual
	Continue to increase turn-around time for general repairs. Goal – 3 months for all but sewing/guarding
	Hire general collections care technician
<u>Conservation</u>	Continue to reduce backlog of conservation repairs (currently 60 items remaining)
	Continue learning leather repairs and begin finishing and tooling work
	Continue to increase number and level of conservation repairs, especially from Rare Books and Special Collections, and scrapbooks in Student Life and Culture Archive (as result of completed assessment)
	Hire Special Collections Conservator
	Integrate new repair options available with new lab into regular treatments
	Create formal procedures for transfer of RBML and other special collections materials to and from lab
<u>Oak Street Stabilization</u>	No goals – continue as is
<u>Education and Training</u>	Evaluate success rate of previous repair workshops to better serve library staff.
	Continue to increase staff training in areas of computer literacy for specific programs (specifically MS Access and Voyager) for ALL staff
	Continue to hone bench skills of ALL staff
	Continue to increase interaction with GSLIS through workshops, lectures,

	volunteers, and practica.
	Participate in campus-wide programs to raise awareness of conservation on campus.
<i>Administrative</i>	Assess success of Conservation Unit's services throughout the library
	Complete move and set up of new lab, including any final charges to the Mellon Gift.
	Change all students and most staff to electronic time reporting.

### III. SWOT Exercise with Regard to the Past Year

#### III.A. Strengths:

- ❖ Dedicated staff, students and volunteer base
- ❖ New facility with increased treatment capabilities and space

#### III.B. Weaknesses:

- ❖ Limited long-term staff
- ❖ Heavy reliance on students and graduate assistants with frequent turn-over
- ❖ Inadequate supply budget to support Library's needs

#### III.C. Opportunities:

- ❖ New facility with increased treatment capabilities and space
- ❖ Two new staff lines for increased labor and new perspectives

#### III.D. Threats:

- ❖ No longer in main building – harder to communicate with Libraries/staff and more difficult to be “available” for questions.