The Role of Processing Priorities in Collections Management - 3 Years Later

Jessica Geiser & Andrew Lippert
Society of American Archivists, Collections
Management Section Meeting
July 29, 2021

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2016-2018 Environment

Plenty to process, limited resources to do so

- Curators, administration, donors, etc. all had their own priorities for processing

- Large backlog of collections, with little documentation

- Processing staff consisted of undergraduate student workers

Collections Assessment for Processing Priorities

Resources on collections assessment:

- PACSCL/CLIR Hidden Collections Processing Project, 2009-2011
  http://clir.pacscl.org/

- OCLC article – "The Practice, Power, and Promise of Archival Collections Assessment," 2012
  https://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2012/conway-proffitt-rbm.pdf

- Columbia University Libraries Survey of Special Collections Materials Project, 2004 https://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/activities/backlogtools/columbiaratings.pdf

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Collections Assessment Criteria

Extent
Size in linear ft.

Condition
Do items need rehousing? Are there preservation concerns?

Arrangement
Is there an existing arrangement? Are there identifiable categories or is it just a mess?

Level of Control
Can this be sufficiently described at the collection level or does it need folder level description?

Research Value
Is this collection valuable to researchers? Is this a unique, important collection?

Institutional Value
Is this collection valuable to our institution (important donor, valuable to faculty, etc.)?

Processing Priorities Grid

Collection Title	Collection Area	Extent	Location	Extent Score	Condition Score	Arrangement Score	Targeted Level of Control	Research Value	Institutional Value	Overall Processing Score	Notes
William L. Fahy collection on A.E. Housman	Literature	0.25	43A:2	5	3	4	1	2	1	16	Needs a box label; box inve folders and envelopes
Collection of Great Britain statutes	England	0.5	43B:12	5	3	4	1	2	1	16	Labeled folders; possible pr needed?; understuffed old titles too long, all end with
Edward C. Petko papers	Literature	0.5	43B:12; Map-case B1	5	4	4	1	1	1	16	Manuscript and papers; box
Collection of California Archives Month posters	Misc	0.625	Map-case B15	5	4	4	1	1	1	16	Should be housed properly

Did it work?

Benefits

- **Simplified choosing collections**

- **Provided a justification for choosing/not choosing a collection to process**

- **Helped manage expectations of stakeholders**

- **Helped me learn the collections**

Limitations

- **Some important collections weren't prioritized because of their condition**

- **Research and institutional values were difficult to quantify and gather**

- **Student workers can only do so much, and require a large amount of supervision and guidance**

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Student Worker Statistics

February 2017 - April 2018

4
Part-time student workers

80
Archival collections processed

155.42
Linear feet processed

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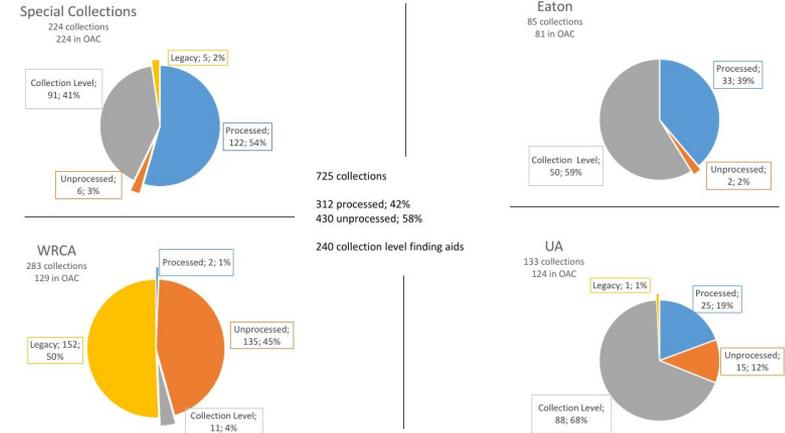Library

Building on the foundations

2018-Present Environment

<u>Still</u> plenty to process, <u>still</u> limited resources to do so

- Significant progress made on backlog of unprocessed collections; low hanging fruit was gone

- Processing staff: gained 1 professional archivist, but reduced number of undergraduate student workers

- The bigger picture for the collection and various stakeholder priorities continued to be somewhat nebulous

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Expanding on Established Processing Priorities

- Learn the state of collections
  - no more low hanging fruit

- Familiarize myself with rubric and student processors

- Figure out how to get a handle on Research and Institutional values

- Four distinct collecting areas
  - Water - *Water Librarian*
  - Eaton SF & F - *Jay Kay & Doris Klein Librarian*
  - University Archives - *University Archivist*
  - Special Collections - *Director*

- Librarian position turnover

Special Collections
224 collections
224 in OAC

Legacy; 5; 2%
Collection Level; 91; 41%
Processed; 122; 54%
Unprocessed; 6; 3%

Eaton
85 collections
81 in OAC

Processed; 33; 39%
Collection Level; 50; 59%
Unprocessed; 2; 2%

725 collections

312 processed; 42%
430 unprocessed; 58%

240 collection level finding aids

WRCA
283 collections
129 in OAC

Processed; 2; 1%
Legacy; 152; 50%
Unprocessed; 135; 45%
Collection Level; 11; 4%

UA
133 collections
124 in OAC

Legacy; 1; 1%
Processed; 25; 19%
Unprocessed; 15; 12%
Collection Level; 88; 68%

Visualization of the state of collections as of summer 2018. Useful for communicating with internal stakeholders.

Spreadsheets and Intellectual Control

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	
1	Collection ID	Collection Title	Collection Area	Extent	Location	Extent Score	Condition Score	Arrangement Score	Targeted Level of Control	BPP Processing Score	Research Value	Institutional Value	Overall Score	Notes
2	MS 320	K/S Star Trek fan fiction collection	Eaton	28.75	40A:10-11	3	5	4	1	13	5	5	23	Foldered in acid free and labeled (wit
3	MS 054	Collection on Hour 25	Eaton	0.5	42B:10	5	4	4	1	14	4	4	22	7 reels, audio cds. They all are labeled
4	MS 408	Jody Scott papers	Eaton	9	58B:5-6	4	3	2	1	10	4	4	18	early feminist sf author; Rehoused int
5	MS 399	Marc Laidlaw papers	Eaton	18.09	59B:8-9	3	3	4	1	11	3	3	17	Old envelopes, loose items, but alrea
6	MS 211	F.M. Busby papers	Eaton	19.75	42B:10-11; 58A:3	3	4	3	1	11	4	2	17	Box inventory; labeled and foldered b labels
7	MS 214	Fred Patten papers	Eaton	45.5	43A:10-12	3	3	2	2	10	4	3	17	Foldered, unlabeled; boxes seem to h scrapbooks; binder of pins
8	MS 381	Jay Kay Klein papers	Eaton	66	39B:5-8; 41A:1; Map-case box C2	2	3	2	1	8	4	5	17	27 binders - all in order already and m slides in metal boxes (replace) - labeled (unsorted), convention things, publica
9	MS 189	Paul K. Alkon papers	Eaton	0.25	42B:1	5	4	5	1	15	1	1	17	One loose manuscript (rubber banded

Color coded legend
- missing information
- collections identified by Andrew as possibly high priority
- collections inquired about
- large collections

- Inst/Res value 5
- Inst/Res value 4
- Inst/Res value 3
- 4+ in both Inst & Res value

- Time = knowledge

- Curator? What Curator?

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Observations and Conclusions

When we started

- **Students**
  This was deployed with the specific goal of helping determine collections that students could work on.

- **A good starting point**
  It's good for if you just need to get things done and/or communicate with internal stakeholders. Not one size fits all.

- **Baseline collection assessment**
  Super useful for finding forgotten or hidden collections, getting basic documentation for the status of all of the collections.

Where we are now

- **Very Contextual**
  The application of a rubric like this is very dependent on your individual institution and its collections

- **It Will Change Over Time**
  Priorities are never set, they are always in flux. Similarly, the way a rubric is used will change and evolve.

- **Uncertain on long-term use**
  A good record of what was done. Could loose usefulness if we are ultimately unable to fill in Research and Institutional values (more qualitative decision than quantitative ones).

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Thank You!

Jessica Geiser
Collections Management
Librarian
jessica.geiser@ucr.edu

Andrew Lippert
Special Collections Processing
Archivist
andrew.lippert@ucr.edu