Collaboration in Curation

Martha O’Hara Conway and Nerea A. Llamas
Presentation Outline

- The University of Michigan Library
- The Research Division & International Studies
- The Collections Division & Special Collections
- The “Cross-Listed” Curator
- Mutual Benefits & Mutual Challenges
- What’s Next?
A Few Words About the U-M Library

Budget & Planning

Collections

Publishing

Dean

Learning & Teaching

Health Sciences

Library Information Technology

Operations

Research
The Research Division

https://www.flickr.com/photos/dff-jisc/4135521829
The Collections Division

- Special Collections
- Conservation and Preservation
- Document Delivery & InterLibrary Loan
- Technical Services (Acquisitions & Cataloging)
A Few Words About International Studies

A Glimpse into the World of International Studies

https://umichinternationalstudies.wordpress.com/
A Few Words About Special Collections
Meet the Curators

- Elliot H. Gertel
  - Irving M. Hermelin Curator of Judaica
  - Curator, Jewish Heritage Collection
Meet the Curators

- Fe Susan Go
  - Librarian for Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands
  - Curator, Philippine History Collection
Meet the Curators

- Philip A. Hallman
  - Film Studies Librarian
  - Curator, Screen Arts Mavericks & Makers Collection
Meet the Curators

- Evyn Kropf
  - Librarian for Near Eastern and Religious Studies
  - Curator, Islamic Manuscripts Collection
Building the Model

- Collection Needs
- Vision for Growth
- Individual Expertise and Capacity
The Job Description

Core Responsibilities

- Developing, interpreting, and promoting the collection
- Helping students, faculty, researchers, and others make effective use of the collection
- Identifying and setting priorities for cataloging, processing, conservation, and digitization of collection material
Working In and With Special Collections

- Rights
  - What you can do
  - What you can ask us to do for you

- Responsibilities
  - What you must do
  - What we ask you to do for us
Mutual Benefits

- Vision for the Collections
- Subject & Linguistic Expertise
- Cross-Unit Collaboration
Mutual Challenges

- AUL Expectations and Goals
- Performance Management
- Prioritizing Work
Next Steps

- Expanding the Collaboration
- Succession Planning
Another Approach?

- Our current approach
  - All responsibilities associated with a particular collection are **consolidated** in the hands of a single individual (the curator).

- Another possibility
  - Responsibilities associated with a particular collection (or collecting area) are **distributed** across multiple individuals.
From Consolidated to Distributed

- Break down the job description
  - Categorize (into activity domains) and get very granular with the responsibilities.
- Consider the demand
  - Understand the scope (how much) and the nature (how important) of the actual work to be done.
- Assign responsibilities accordingly
  - Assess available resources/expertise and determine who can or could or should have the responsibility/do the work.
Questions and Discussion

Martha O’Hara Conway and Nerea A. Llamas