Going Local
Creating Unique & Special Collections in an Academic Library

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INTRODUCTION
UNIQUE & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

- Common in some form among academic institutions
- Topical vs. local/regional vs. national

Goals:
- Interested in seeing how much investment should be made on the part of academic institutions.
- Are locally-focused collections more common than topical or national focused collections?
UBC OKANAGAN CASE STUDY
HISTORY/CONTEXT

- Okanagan University College division in 2005
- New second UBC campus in Kelowna, British Columbia
  - ~ 8,000 students in 2015 on Okanagan campus
- Split collection
- No policy:
  - No regional focus
  - Stagnant acquisition
# SPACE TRANSITION

<table>
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<th>2005</th>
<th>2012</th>
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| - Small publically accessible space  
- Study room space  
- Locked cabinets | - Renovations moved collections  
- Locked room  
- No public access  
- Limited access to view materials |
2012-2013 RENOVATION
PROJECT OVERVIEW
CHANGE

• Fall 2013 – ready for an upgrade
• Direction:
  • Goals and priorities of the library (i.e. local history)
  • Strategic directions of the university (i.e. community focused engagement)
  • Needs of the patrons (i.e. community members access to resources, or on-campus material in the classroom)
PROCESS

• Special collections around the province
• Isolated our target:
  • Materials published in and/or about the local region – Okanagan-Similkameen
  • Publications by campus faculty and students
• Partnered with Rare Books and Special Collections on the main campus
• Gaps in the holdings
  • Donations, local bookstores, authors
• Intention changed – archival donations
RESULTS/IMPACT
PARTNERSHIPS

External:
• Selkirk College
  • Accept donations related to Kootenay-Boundary region of the province

Internal:
• Rare Books and Special Collections – main campus
  • Shared description database
• UBC Digitization Centre
  • Shared digital object database and preservation software
OUTREACH

• Speaking engagements
  • Community members, societies, local historical committees, etc.

• Hosting specific events
  • Collection openings – large archival donations
  • Grand opening for the space
  • Library instruction classes
  • Donor luncheons – with campus development

• Donations
CAMPUS IMPACT

- Study space – silent
- Classroom incorporation
  - Impact on teaching and learning – another strategic direction of the Library
- Historical research
  - Primary vs. secondary local sources
  - Archival/preservation unit in courses
- Donor relationships for the campus
LITERATURE REVIEW
CASE STUDIES

• Limited overview descriptions recently
• Typically in relation to a goal (i.e. how to incorporate into teaching and learning), not the full process
• Waterford Institute of Technology (Darbey & Hayden, 2008)
  • Overview of the process they took to accept large topical collections
  • Emphasized the importance of accepting material that will be made available and in line with acquisitions policy, not adding to the backlog
  • Similarly we found this to be true – not wanting to repeat the type of special collection that had pre-dated our campus.
ALLIGNING STRATEGIC GOALS

• Set clear and attainable goals (Germano & Stretch-Stephenson, 2012)
  • Align goals for the Library and for a project with those overarching – such as campus or institution
• Nutefall & Chadwell (2012) and Franklin (2009) both explain the importance of reinventing and imagining in libraries alongside the institution.
• Outreach opportunities should be of particular interest to institutions with special collections as they are materials that can be used in unique ways when it comes to goals of an institution (i.e. community engagement, or donor relations).
TEACHING & LEARNING

- Special collections are unique and instruction for them should also be different than regular information literacy (Samuelson & Coker, 2014)
  - Not a burden but an opportunity
- Carter & Whittaker (2015) emphasize the necessity of these collections in educating our campus community. In addition, they touch on “destination collections” that foster visiting researchers to use the materials.
DISCUSSION
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do we need to be doing to ensure we are accurately meeting the needs of the regional community (i.e. ongoing consultation, surveys, focus groups, etc.)?

2. To what extent should we be collecting everything vs. creating more specialized and focused collections in academic libraries?

3. How best can we be promoting and utilizing these collections in the classroom?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS cont.

4. How can we breakdown barriers and misconceptions around special collections to better inform access for students?

5. Is there a wider place for academic libraries to be taking on local collections that otherwise might live in a community archives or museum?

6. In “academic towns” where community archives or museums may not exist, is there a greater need to facilitate creating special collections?
CONCLUSIONS

The literature, along with the case study project that took place at the UBC Okanagan Library, point to a significant impact that special collections can have on a community – both on and off campus.

While new special collections in academic libraries are becoming less apparent, and a stronger desire to focus on topical collections over locally-focused collections, there still appears to be a need.

Is it simply a matter of reimagining what we have been doing?
Heather Berringer, Chief Librarian & Arielle Lomness, Collections Librarian
Thank you!

References available upon request - printed or digital.

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