

Special Collections and OSU's Academic Plan:

Highlights from 2003

Special Collections collect, preserve, and promote the use of rare books, manuscripts and other primary research materials. Within the OSU Libraries, special collections are the Cartoon Research Library (CGA), the John Glenn Archives, the Hilandar Research Library (HIL), OSU Archives, the Polar Archival Program, Rare Books and Manuscripts/ Charvat Collection of American Fiction (RARE), and the Theatre Research Institute Library (TRI).¹

OSU's Academic Plan names six general strategies for the University to improving its academic excellence. In 2003, how did the special collections of The Ohio State University Libraries contribute to the University's goal of becoming "one of the world's great public research and teaching universities," as stated in the Academic Plan (October 2000)?

Even as the Academic Plan "is the initial roadmap for the journey to academic excellence" it is also the roadmap here. This report lists each of the strategies of the Academic Plan and states the accomplishments of the special collections in 2003 that pertain to the strategy.

Included are highlights only; a comprehensive list would lengthen this report considerably.

Strategy: Build a World Class Faculty

- *Recruiting.* Research materials that are rare or unique and of extraordinary quality have been used in the recruiting processes during the past year. In 2003:
 - Prospective graduate students and faculty in History of Art and Architecture, English, History, Slavic and East European Studies, and Theatre toured CGA, HIL, RARE and TRI ;
- *Exhibiting.* Loaning research materials for national and international exhibition serves to promote the University as a center of world-class scholarship. In 2003:
 - CGA's exhibit *Arnold Roth: Free Lance* toured London, England and Basel Switzerland;
 - Glenn Archives loaned artifacts concerning the Friendship 7 flight to a museum in Berlin, Germany;
 - HIL sent exhibit materials to the Heartland Orthodox Christian Museum in Topeka, Kansas;

¹ Rare Books and Manuscripts and the Charvat Collection of American Fiction are presented as RARE because they share the same staff at this time.

- Polar Archives hosted an exhibit for the American Polar Society meeting “Women’s Roles in the Polar Regions: Past, Present, and Future” and loaned materials to the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum.
- *Research use.* Special Collections are part of a global community of scholarship in that researchers from all parts of the United States and many different countries used special collections at The Ohio State University Libraries last year. Highlights from 2003:
 - TRI hosted several researchers from the United Kingdom including the BBC) and Denmark who used its theatrical and design collections
 - OSU Archives hosted researchers and provide documentation to researchers from Canada, Germany, and India and also the Center for Dewey Studies in Illinois, Yale University, and Brown University;
 - RARE was a destination place and resource for an NEH sponsored seminar focusing on Reformation History and provided materials for an exhibition in France even as its William S. Burroughs and Avant Writing Collections have continued to attract scholarly interest in many countries and the United States;
 - Polar Archives hosted and is working with a museum in Germany which will borrow materials for an exhibit in 2004, in addition to many international inquiries;
 - By definition and circumstance, HIL attracts many European scholars who visit, including from Bulgaria, and Cambridge University. This year HIL participated and hosted the Macedonian-American Scholarly Conference and the North American-Bulgarian Scholarly Studies Association, in addition to teaching the Medieval Slavic Summer Institute that drew attendees from as far away as Spain as well as nationally and locally.

Strategy: Develop Academic Programs that Define Ohio State as the Nation’s Leading Public Land-Grant University.

- *Collections.* OSU Libraries have extra-ordinary documentation, that include the papers of writer James Thurber, cartoonist Milton Caniff, choreographer Twyla Tharp, polar explorer Richard Byrd, the heroic Jesse Owens as well as microfilm from Hilandar monastery. In 2003 curators continued to acquire collections, some of which are:
 - RARE secured a deposit and donation agreement for papers and related materials documenting the career of Lillian Schwartz, a nationally prominent pioneer in computer and avant-garde art and received William T. Vollman Collection;

- TRI acquisitions included designs by costume designer Dennis Parker, set designer Russell Hastings; set designs by visual artist Peter Flinsch; purchases of designs including work by Gordon Micunis, Rouben Ter-Arutunian, Patricia Zipprodt, Wolfgang Roth, a collection of designs by Motley, Jaroslav Malina, and the Paul Denis papers that compliment TRI's Earl Wilson Collection;
 - Polar Archives continued to receive oral history interviews from pioneering scientists and military personnel in the Arctic and the Antarctic;
 - CGA received original cartoon collections estimated at nearly \$100,000 in value;
 - HIL received more manuscript collections (on microfiche) of Moscow State University that pertain to Old Believers and enhance an even larger collection of materials documenting this culture;
 - John Glenn donated another 29 cubic feet of materials.
- *Recognition from national agencies and foundations. In 2003:*
 - The Glenn Archivist was elected to the steering committee of Society of American Archivists' Congressional Papers Roundtable and is a member of a taskforce to develop standards for Congressional Research Center;
 - TRI curator is a board member of the national Dance Heritage Coalition;
 - Polar received \$5,010 from the National Film Preservation Foundation, \$7500 from the Frederick A. Cook society, \$10,000 from the Lincoln Ellsworth Foundation, and \$3500 from the Kane Lodge Foundation;
 - RARE curator served as a reviewer for NEH;
 - HIL was selected as the research site of choice by two successful applicants for Fulbright Scholarships.
 - *Participation with units that have received Selective Investment Awards because of their national prominence. In 2003:*
 - CGA curator serves on the Popular Culture Subcommittee of the College of Humanities Interdisciplinary Studies Committee;
 - RARE hosted classes in History, English and Dance that featured the use of collections in Rare.

Strategy: Enhance the Quality of the Teaching and Learning Environment

- *Classroom instruction by curators in 2003:*
 - CGA hosted tours and presentations for classes in Journalism and Communication, Art History, History, Drawing, and Japanese and the curator taught the History of Newspaper Comic Strips (JCOM 648.01) and an independent study student.
 - HIL curator taught Slavic 870 and taught two other classes (International Studies and East European Studies);
 - TRI curator taught in Theatre 801 (Research Methods);
 - RARE, as in previous years, hosted classes from the Departments of English, History, Fine Arts, German Language and Literature, Spanish and Portuguese, Greek and Latin, French and Italian, Dance, and Industrial Design and participated as a guest lecture.;
 - OSU Archivist was a member of a team that organized and taught “OSU Its History and its World”(ASC 494) and students in architecture, art, art history, journalism, and history used the OSU Archives.

- *Non-classroom activities.* Exhibits and special events also help to enrich the quality of the teaching and learning environment. In 2003:
 - CGA held three exhibits (*Happy Birthday Atom; Ohio Cartoonists: A Bicentennial Celebration-Part 2; Ho Boy! Morrie Brickman’s The Small Society*);
 - RARE continued its leadership role in the Aldus Society, a community bibliographic society which includes numerous OSU faculty and developed an exhibit concerning early books printed in Ohio as part of the centennial celebration;
 - OSU Archives added to the website concerning the OSU vs. Michigan rivalry in football, and gave presentations regarding the history of OSU to clubs of the OSU Alumni Association;
 - HIL curator lectured four times at events open to the OSU community and off-campus; HIL co-sponsored a Byzantine-Slavic lecture series, and hosted a lecture by a prominent historian from Cambridge University;
 - TRI curator taught an independent study student and serve as period movement coach for the Department of Theatre production *Oxygen*.

Strategy: Enhance and Better Serve the Student Body

- *In 2003, special collections found numerous ways of connecting to students as individuals and as members of student organizations:*
 - OSU Archives has helped numerous student organizations better understand the history of OSU and themselves -- *The Lantern*, Ohio Staters, and its University Museum, AOSCH (student honoraries group) Bucket and Dipper, Welcome Week, and the Marching Band and Mortar Board, to name a few;
 - HIL, RARE and TRI have been destination places for prospective graduate students in Slavic, Theatre, History, and English departments. Three students in Theatre credited their TRI visits as the deciding factor in choosing graduate programs;
 - As stated above, curators have been responsible for individual students in independent study arrangements.

Strategy: Create a Diverse University Community

- *By means of public programs, by acquiring collections, and by making available documentation of diversity, the special collections feature the diversity that is our university and our culture. In 2003:*
 - RARE, CGA, and TRI curators won approval of an honors course in 2005 that would use primary sources in their collections to illustrate and evidence themes of race and ethnicity.
 - RARE continued to consult with prospective donors of nationally important Civil Rights collections who are in New York City;
 - Many students have used the OSU Archives in the past year to study the demonstrations of the 1960's and the issues of diversity and minority concerns that helped to fuel them.
 - CGA partnered with the Department of east Asian Languages and Literature, the Institute for Japanese Studies /East Asian Studies Center, the Office of International Affairs, and OSU Japanese Student Organization and others in events surrounding the exhibit *Happy Birthday, Atom!* This exhibit featured Astro Boy, Japan's best-loved manga character.

Strategy: Help Build Ohio's Future

- *Service to the state of Ohio and contributions to its future occurred in different ways. In 2003:*
 - TRI, RARE, and OSU Archives continued to contribute digital images to the Ohio Memory Project, a Web site that serves to document the history of Ohio and will be used by teachers and K-12 students as well as other researchers;
 - Glenn Archives loaned documents, photographs, and artifacts pertaining to John Glenn and aviation for a temporary exhibit for K-12 students at the Ohio Statehouse;
 - OSU Archivist continued as one of the governor-appointed members of the Ohio Historic Records Advisory Board and is a member of the Ohio Electronic Records Committee;
 - OSU Archives assisted school children engaged in History Day projects;
 - RARE worked closely with the Thurber House and the Aldus Society, a bibliographic society, and the curator is a board member of the Ohio Center for the Book
 - CGA with Columbus College of Art and Design held a conference on graphic narrative;
 - Special Collections curators developed exhibitions for the Sills Exhibit Hall (Main Library) for the Ohio Bicentennial throughout 2003.