

Survey Report - Sample Executive Summary

The Special Collections and Archives of the Mayflower College Library was the subject of a preservation planning survey, which evaluated the building and environment as they relate to the preservation needs of the collections; examined current policies, storage methods, and handling procedures; and assessed the general condition of the collections.

The library has made considerable progress toward insuring the long-term survival of the Special Collections and Archives, but there are important preservation needs still to be addressed. If some of the tasks recommended in this report seem overwhelming, it is important to remember that this is a long-term planning tool. Tasks can be broken down into manageable projects. Some actions can be implemented immediately, while others may require diplomacy, education, and funding efforts over several years. As a first step, draw up a list of high priority actions that are achievable at this time and a timetable for carrying them out. Modify the list and timetable over time as circumstances change and preservation goals are accomplished.

Recommendations for short, medium, and long-term priorities are as follows:

Short-term Priorities (problems requiring immediate action and/or projects that can be undertaken with existing resources)

- Install UV-filtering sleeves on all fluorescent lights in the Special Collections and Archives reading room and storage rooms, and install UV-filtering film on the windows in the reading room.
- Purchase two or more digital thermohygrometers to be used for monitoring climate conditions in the Special Collections and Archives storage room and the library exhibit case.
- Institute the use of researcher registration forms and call slips in Special Collections and Archives.
- Improve security in the building by requiring that all staff members enter through the front door. The rear door should never be propped open for convenience.
- Devise formal instructions for handling collections and distribute them to researchers when they register.
- Devise a separate written mission statement and collection development policy for the Special Collections and Archives.
- Continue development of an overall disaster plan for the library.

Medium-term Priorities (projects that will require planning and organization or additional resources and staff time)

- Identify potential preservation grant projects, and seek grant funding for priority projects. Potential projects detailed in the body of this report include preservation microfilming, purchasing environmental monitoring equipment, rehousing collections, and collection condition surveys. Possible sources of funding are listed in the body of this report.
- Arrange for a photograph conservator to conduct a collection condition survey of the photograph collection. This will identify specific preservation needs for the individual items. This is a project that might be grant funded.
- Acquire new storage furniture as follows:
 - Acquire a map case to house the maps and architectural drawings that are currently stored rolled.
 - Replace the wooden shelving unit that houses the rare book collection with a metal unit.
- Over time, rehouse collections into archival enclosures as needed and as recommended in the body of this report. Some of these projects might be grant funded. Potential projects include: rehousing documents and bound items currently stored in non-archival boxes; providing individual enclosures for fragile books and pamphlets; rehousing the map/architectural drawing collection into folders; and boxing fragile scrapbooks and photo albums.

- Evaluate existing preservation microfilm to ensure that all microfilm has a master negative that is stored off-site in a secure location.
- Arrange for preservation microfilming of the Board of Trustees record books, to provide a preservation and security copy. After filming, the master negative should be stored off site.
- In conjunction with rehousing of collections, expand on existing collection listings to create summary catalog records and more detailed archival finding aids that meet general standards for archival arrangement and description.
- Take actions to improve overall emergency preparedness in the library as recommended in the body of this report. This would include installing water alarms in basement storage, increasing the number of fire drills, and ensuring that the library's book drop is protected against incendiary devices.
- Improve exhibition practices as follows:
 - Do not exhibit paper-based collections permanently. Rotate materials every few weeks, or make copies for exhibition and store the originals in archival enclosures.
 - Purchase a min/max thermohygrometer for use in the exhibition case. Keep track of climate readings in the case by writing them down every day.

Long-term Priorities (steps to be taken once short- and medium-term goals have been accomplished, and/or larger general goals that will require major funding and/or significant reorganization of resources)

- Begin planning for a full-time librarian/archivist for Special Collections and Archives, as recommended in the body of this report.
- Purchase at least two data loggers (one for the storage room and one for the reading room) for the Special Collections and Archives. Ongoing independent monitoring is the only reliable way to determine whether desirable temperature and humidity conditions are being maintained.
- As the renovation of the library building is planned over the next several years, advocate for the installation of a sprinkler system in the building as part of the renovation.
- Acquire a microfilm reader/printer for the Special Collections and Archives reading room.