

Indiana University Libraries: Institutional Profile

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Introduction

The Indiana University (IU) Libraries possess research resources of unusual depth and diversity. Among these resources are many unique and significant collections which have been developed over the years by purchase, by gift, and with federal funds. The Libraries hold strong humanities collections, with particular strengths in literature, history, folklore, fine arts, and music. Equally significant are the outstanding interdisciplinary research collections developed in the areas of African Studies, Russian and East European Studies, Uralic and Altaic Studies, East Asian Studies, and West European Studies.

The Indiana University Libraries ranked 14th among Association of Research Libraries (ARL) member libraries for collection size in 1990-91. The collections include more than 4,700,000 books and bound journals, 850,000 government publications, 6,252,000 manuscripts, 2,800,000 microforms, 500,000 maps and charts, 103,000 photographs, 300,000 slides, 300,000 music scores, and 38,700 current serial subscriptions. 1,288,000 items were circulated in 1990-91, and 156,000 new items were added to the collections.

The general collections are housed in the 500,000 square foot main library building, occupied in 1969. The remaining collections are distributed among 14 branch libraries, the Lilly Library, the Law Library, and the libraries at the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, and the Archives of Traditional Music.

Historical background

In 1983, the library administration appointed a Preservation Committee charged with assessing the preservation needs of the Libraries. The committee's report included a number of specific recommendations for action, including the appointment of a preservation officer to develop and implement a coordinated program for the preservation of the University's collections. The Library began recruiting a preservation officer in 1984, and appointed Carla J. Montori as Head of the Preservation Department, to begin in November of that year. Also in 1983, Debra McKern, a graduate student at IU's School of Library and Information Science and the former Collections Maintenance Supervisor at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale was hired to plan, equip, and staff a centralized repair unit as part of the Serials Department. Until that time, elementary repairs had been done by the stacks office of the Circulation Department, and by the branch libraries. In 1984, the repair unit acquired basic tools, equipment, and supplies.

In 1985, the Repair Section was moved into a much larger space than it had previously occupied (from approximately 500 sq. ft. to 3500 sq. ft.). This move allowed considerable expansion, both in terms of equipment and services available for the collection. James Canary, a binder in private practice, was appointed to head the new Collections Conservation Unit. Income from the Libraries' National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant for the acquisition and preservation of humanities materials was used to build new work benches and furnishings and provide additional equipment. There are now five equipped work stations, a box making area, materials supply stations and additional storage space.

In 1988, Ms. Montori left Indiana University, and Lorraine Olley, the current Department Head, was hired to fill the position.

Current conservation/preservation activities

Indiana University Libraries is firmly committed to preservation of materials in the collections. Over one-half million dollars is expended in preserving library materials annually. The Preservation Department comprises a full-time preservation administrator overseeing a staff of 12.14 FTE organized into four units: the special collections conservation unit at the Lilly Library; the circulating collections conservation unit; the bindery preparations unit (responsible for preparing Bloomington campus materials for treatment by the Heckman Bindery, Inc.); and the shelf preparations unit (responsible for affixing tattle tapes, call number labeling, and ownership stamping of library materials).

The circulating collections Conservation Unit currently employs a full-time conservation coordinator, one full-time, and two half-time conservation technicians. Student assistants work a total of 60 hours per week. The staff are non-union and work one shift. Practicum opportunities are also offered each semester for Library Science students. The unit is responsible for collection maintenance repairs for the Main Library and the 14 branch libraries on campus. Items in need of repair are received from a variety of sources: from the subject specialists and branch librarians who each have a quota of items that can be sent weekly (5-15), from the Circulation Department (150 items every three weeks), and from Shelf Prep., Bindery Prep., and cataloging. Approximately 90% of the work is use driven, with the other 10% being targeted by staff.

All incoming material is examined by the Conservation Coordinator, who determines the treatment it will receive and monitors work-flow within the unit. Average turn around time is 1-3 weeks. Priority is given to items from branch libraries and the reference and reserve departments. Conservation technicians can perform all types of repair treatments, but concentrate on spine repairs, recases, new cases, and drop spine boxes. Student assistants' primary responsibilities are pamphlet binding, photocopying, and phase box and wrapper construction. Tracking and documentation are done on computer using a combination of NOTIS, our on-line circulation system, and BenchMark, a software package for conservation management. The supply and equipment budget is shared with the Conservation Section at the Lilly Library.

The Conservation Section of the Lilly Library performs all treatments on special collections. The staff there consists of the Conservator and one half-time conservation technician. Additional hourly money is available for 18 hours of student help per week. The section is responsible for all exhibition preparation, environmental monitoring, examination of all new acquisitions, and treatment. The lab is currently 400 sq. ft. in size, but plans for an addition to the Lilly Library include a new 1200 sq. ft. conservation lab.

Conservation technicians are considered technical staff. The Conservation Coordinator position is in the process of review for an upgrade to professional status. The Conservator is a professional position. Staff development opportunities are limited. The cost of on-campus workshops offered by the University's Human Resources Department and Computing Services Department are covered by the library. There is no funding available, however, for conference attendance or conservation related workshops but professional staff are given \$350 per year for travel. The Preservation Department periodically sponsors conservation/binding workshops and encourages the staff to attend. The staff are also encouraged to participate in the broader library community through participation in library committees and staff or professional council activities.