

Friday, March 13, 2015

11:15AM-12:15PM

Success Beyond Access: Maximizing Faculty Buy-In, Student Assistance, and Public Use

Panelists:

- Harlan Green, Head of Special Collections, College of Charleston (Moderator)
- Dale Rosengarten, Curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection, College of Charleston
- Amy Lazarus, Processing Archivist, College of Charleston
- Christopher Harter, Director of Library and Reference Services, Amistad Research Center
- Elisabeth McMahon, Associate Professor, History Department, Tulane University

Abstract:

The Jewish Heritage Collection (JHC) at the College of Charleston and the Amistad Research Center (ARC) in New Orleans have both received multiple CLIR grants to not only process and catalog hidden collections, but actively recruit new users and advocates for their respective collections. At both institutions, access to previously underutilized collections has gone beyond mere organization and description to embrace collaborations with faculty, students, and scholars who have served as partners in promoting collections and maximizing access to them. While working independently, the efforts at the JHC and Amistad share some similar outcomes. This panel will discuss their successes and pitfalls and propose means by which other libraries/archives can successfully leverage faculty buy-in and student participation in opening up hidden collections.

The Jewish Heritage Collection (JHC) was awarded grants in 2009 and in 2012 to process and catalog two collections; the first focused on southern Jewish material, and the second on the William A. Rosenthal Judaica Collection. Both collections

were indispensable to the College's Jewish Studies Program and South Carolina's Jewish Historical Society, which in turn provide a formidable cadre of patrons and users whose material contributions and insights enhance the collections. These grants have demonstrated the powerful influence JHC has had on various constituencies, including people who may have been previously unaware of the collections.

Similarly, the ARC received grants in 2008 and 2013 to organize multiple collections of personal papers and organizational records pertaining to the Civil Rights Movement and liberation/anti-colonial activities in Africa. Amistad's adoption of a hidden collections agenda coincided with its development of a formal student mentoring program, as well as increased focus on integrating its collections into courses at area universities, particularly in service-learning courses taught at the Center's host institution, Tulane University. Efforts on the part of Amistad's staff have resulted in the establishment of partnerships that have provided benefits to faculty, students, and the Center.

This panel will present hard data and a wealth of anecdotal evidence from both institutions in the form of a roundtable discussion of archival/library staff, as well as historians in relevant fields who have partnered with the institutions to promote access to the collections. Topics will include: networking with scholars and students, promoting outreach and collaborations in novel ways, effective planning between faculty and institutional staff, and the appeal of hidden collections for scholars, as well as their use in coaxing students into the reading room.

Papers:

A Perfect Storm: Maximizing Faculty Buy-in, Service Learning, and Hidden Collections, by Christopher Harter and Elisabeth McMahon

Success Beyond Access: CLIR-ing the Way, by Harlan Greene, Amy Lazarus, and Dale Rosengarten