

# Special Collections and Archives Department

**Overview:** The Special Collections and Archives (Spec) department supports stakeholder access to unique and rare materials that are crucial to studying the history of the university, the state, and the region. A significant portion of Spec’s holdings are not duplicated anywhere else in the world, and the archives are curated to serve the needs of students, faculty, and the community. Users of Spec holdings apply their findings to scholarly research projects, industry-driven inquiries, university story telling efforts, personal or family studies, and more.

## Library KPIs:

Primary Responsibility

- Special Collections and Archives

	FALL	SPRING
# of extant finding aids	1,274	
Newly created finding aids	70	
Modified finding aids	14	
# of visits to Archives West	10,243	
# of patron interactions	105	
University/non-university	32/73	
# of linear feet added through new accessions	94.5	
# of linear feet currently in use	Not yet avail*	
# of linear feet vacant for future use	Not yet avail*	

*\*We are working to get better starting measurements of our space so we can more thoroughly report on this in the future*

Relevant

- Digital Collections
- Exhibits
- Fellowships
- Instruction
- Research and Reference Assistance
- Workshops and Presentations

## Objectives (includes timebound goals and projects):

1. Curate collections that are unique and useful to patrons

- **Why:** Patrons to Spec are best served by collections that are thoughtfully arranged, are related to the department's collecting priorities, and are comprised of materials that are not redundant to other repositories
- **How:** Bring intentionality to each step of the curatorial process – from donation acceptance to weeding to arrangement; cultivate donations of materials that are unique and compliment other holdings in the archives; use patron feedback and collection usage data to make informed choices about what to collect in the future
- **Success looks like:** Developing a more detailed scope of collections that empowers members of Spec to make decisions during processing that support departmental, Library, and university priorities; the ability to connect patron inquiries to relevant collection resources in Spec
- **Fall Update:** Over the fall semester, Spec acquired several notable collections as well as a broad variety of materials that add to the strengths of our archive. The Kolln book collection, that consisted of more than 1,000 volumes, is a remarkable assemblage of books written by and about American women. For scholars of women's history, it will be a significant asset once fully catalogued. We partnered with the National Forest Service to save nearly 10,000 historic images from the Kooskia Ranger Station from destruction. Several extension offices have asked us to take possession of important records related to 4-H and other programs organized through the University of Idaho. We added almost 100 linear feet in new accessions between Aug. 15 and the end of December.

## 2. Make collections easy to find and use

- **Why:** Our work is only meaningful when patrons can engage with it. Barriers to accessing archival information should be dismantled where possible.
- **How:** Invest time and energy into processing collections with robust finding aids, then sharing those via ArchivesWest; commitment to good customer service and helping patrons to the best of our abilities; collaborate with colleagues across the Library to think creatively about expanding digital access to archival materials
- **Success looks like:** Processing all new accessions measuring less than 3 cubic feet before shelving; devote student staff and regular staff time to processing backlog accessions; publishing new finding aids and making updates to existing finding aids; working closely with the Digital Collections Team to make Spec materials available online
- **Fall Update:** We continue to make significant progress on processing our backlogged material. The majority of recent donations have been processed quickly, and at least one large legacy donation was finally cataloged in the fall. A major benefit of processing older accessions the reduction in size of their footprint. The Lauren Fins donation, which was originally acquired in 2008 and totaled more than 40 boxes was reduced by nearly 50%.

Over the course of the semester 70 new finding aids were added, representing newly accessible material, and another 14 were updated for increased usability. A major effort this fall involved creating finding aids for book collections that were otherwise absent from Archives West, the platform we are most often referring patrons to.

3. Demonstrate the importance of archiving and the relevance of our collections

- **Why:** Potential users of the archive are more likely to engage with materials if they understand their importance and the basic principles of archiving (a.k.a. *archival intelligence*)
- **How:** Offer instruction for students and community members; participate in workshops both on and off campus; create displays using archival materials; publish writing in public-facing mediums about archiving or archival materials in our collection
- **Success looks like:** Build and maintain relationships with faculty who integrate archival instruction into their course; pursue outreach opportunities to connect with the campus community and beyond; develop topical displays and write articles that highlight parts of our collections
- **Fall Update:** We created two new displays during the fall to highlight archival material – one on the Library’s 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and one in the President’s house. We once again provided printed materials for the university’s Veterans Day dinner. Four more pieces were submitted to the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* for their “Nearby History” column. The ETIL workshops led by Dulce and Kelley both highlighted the importance of archival material, and a Graduate Student Essentials workshop also focused on archival resources. There were 6 classroom instruction sessions offered.

**Unit/Team Metrics:**

- # of extant finding aids
  - Fall (Aug. 15-Dec.31): 1,274
- # of finding aids added or updated
  - Fall: 82
- # of patron interactions (see Reference and Research Assistance)
  - Fall: 103
- # of visits to digital assets (see Web Properties)
  - **Fall** <https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/44b06426-d596-4e51-9d5a-81c1ab7bc641>
  - [Need to add Archives West visits](#)
  -
- # of displays created and exhibited within building (see Physical Spaces)
  - Fall: 1 – “Foundations for Learning: Reflecting on University of Idaho’s Historic Campus”

- # of displays created and exhibited outside building (see Physical Spaces)
  - Fall: 1 – University House display on alumni veterans
- # of exhibits hosted (see Physical Spaces)
  - Fall: 1 – Smokey Bear paintings
- # of workshops offered (see Workshops and Presentations)
  - Fall: 5 – Exploring the Information Landscape, Kelley x2 and Dulce x2; UI New Employee Orientation presentation on history of university
- # of classroom instruction sessions offered (see Instruction)
  - Fall: 6

**Membership:**

- Dulce Kersting-Lark, Department Head
- Kelley Moulton
- Rebecca Hastings
- Ariana Burns
- Zoe Stave (Beginning Jan. 2025)
- ~~Erin Gestani~~ (Until Sep. 2024)

**Reporting to:**

- Ben Hunter, Dean