Special Collections Strategic Plan

Mission Statement

The mission of Illinois State University’s Rare Books and Special Collections Department is to enhance accessibility and integration of unique print and digital materials into the teaching, learning and research of the University and broader community. The Department additionally supports the strategic directions of the University by acquiring and preserving rare materials relevant to these purposes; by providing instruction and reference assistance in finding, interpreting and using these materials; and by serving as a resource for marketing and fundraising that highlights University’s valuable artifacts and collections.

Special Collections Goals

Goal 1: Establish a program of assessment that gathers information about faculty and student needs, creates services and products in response to that information, and documents the outcomes. (Library Goals 1 and 3)

a) Conduct regular assessments of faculty and student needs through surveys, focus groups, campus meetings, etc. in order to ascertain the curricular and research importance of various collections and services.

b) Develop services and products in response to emerging assessment of campus priorities

c) Document and publicize ongoing activities in support of teaching, learning and research. These may include, among other strategies, the posting of statistics on the Special Collections web page; summaries of instructional sessions; and notes of meetings with various constituents.

d) Generate a collection development policy that reflects identified campus needs

e) Inventory high value items and establish policies and procedures that provide adequate security while also providing access.

Goal 2: Enhance accessibility to materials held in the Rare Books and Special Collections Department in order to permit patrons to more easily find and use them without mediation. (Library Goal 1)

a) Develop and enhance the Rare Books and Special Collections web presence

b) Prioritize collection interests of constituents and create appropriate pathfinders and finding aids

c) Based on prioritization of collection interests, catalogue non-book items that will enhance the ability of constituents to teach, learn, and conduct research

d) Extend hours of operation in order to make access more convenient for library users

e) Digitize collections of highest need for teaching, learning and research
Goal 3: Integrate the Rare Books and Special Collections Department into the teaching, learning and research of the University in order to fulfill the educational mission of Milner Library to the University. (Library Goals 1 and 3)

a) Increase breadth of activity in teaching and research endeavors of the University. An important strategy in this process may involve working with the subject specialists to contact academic faculty. Other strategies include delivering presentations to academic departments and brainstorming with them about instructional possibilities

b) Develop repertoire of individual and sequenced learning experiences that may be integrated into the curriculum

c) Implement a crowdsourcing initiative related to curricular interests

d) Incorporate Rare Books and Special Collections prominently into campus learning, teaching and research projects and events

Goal 4: Transform the physical and virtual spaces allocated to the Rare Books and Special Collections Department in order to meet the needs of current and future users. (Library Goal 2)

a) Within the context of assessing campus needs, define specific physical and virtual space needs.

b) Develop a clear plan for the use of the Special Collections annex next to the 6th Floor work room.

Goal 5: Enhance the capabilities of library staff. (Library Goal 4)

a) Rare Books and Special Collections staff engage in training and educational experiences concerning the management, care and issues related to those materials

b) Library staff participate in orientations, trainings and brainstorming associated with enhanced use and integration into library work

Goal 6: Build a program of donor relations (Library Goal 3)

a) Based on assessment of campus needs, prioritize projects for funding through private sources or grants. One such project may consist of processing specific collections.

b) Explore the possibility of endowing collections, spaces and positions.

c) Investigate opportunities for departmental staff to conduct development work

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