

Curated Collections for the Curious: Exposing the Process of Research within Harvard Libraries

Overview

The goal of the project is to work with participating libraries across the Harvard Library system to develop an exhibit program that emphasizes connections between teaching and research. The exhibits will showcase Harvard's vast library holdings to visually expose the process of research throughout the university; this initiative will be supplemented by social media. The collections will display key sources (books, images, videos and artifacts) associated with the research of a prominent member of the library's larger community. A grant would enable us to:

- Identify participating libraries in which exhibits will be developed
- Physically construct and deploy the exhibits
- Gather the necessary materials to be displayed
- Develop a network between libraries and librarians to ensure the continued success of the program through the development of a written guide for future exhibit creation
- Establish relationships with parties interested in participating, including researchers and Museum staff.

Process: The Project and Proposed Solution

The overarching goal of the project is to expose the process of research within the Harvard community and link formerly isolated groups with others who share similar interests. These linkages will serve to foster discussion and cross-disciplinary engagement with larger ideas. The individuals whose work is to be displayed will work with a research librarian within the participating library. The librarian will then work with the researcher to identify the key formative sources used during their production of a project. The librarian will then set about compiling the items identified by the researcher and displaying them with the Curated Collections for the Curious exhibit. Researchers and their students will be invited to actively participate in presenting the collections, for example by spending time with the exhibit as convenient, and perhaps doing short presentations.

The collections will also have a web presence which will highlight the items displayed, provide a synopsis of the research, and introduce a space to discuss the projects. The web site will also serve as a digital archive of all prior exhibits to provide a clear record of the trajectory of research within the community.

The Harvard Library has many resources and offers many services that are often not familiar to users. Not only are there many hidden treasures in the various Special Collections, but patrons may not even be aware of readily accessible resources, or of the many special services that librarians can offer. The exhibits created by this proposal would work to highlight these numerous resources, and at the same time offer researchers the opportunity to showcase their research. The CCC exhibit series will also serve to grow connections between students, faculty, and library staff to improve the quality of research produced by the university. By making the information easily accessible, students especially will be able to recognize where research fits within the university.

Project Development

The NWB Exhibit

The first exhibit in the NWB will emphasize a biological topic because the librarians involved have established connections in the life sciences. There will be an open invitation to faculty, students and staff from any interested research laboratory in the NWB to become involved in brainstorming opportunities to showcase research, library treasures, and the evolution of research specialties. The second exhibit will then be selected from other disciplines represented in the building. This project will expand the libraries' exposure and connection to primary users and reach out to new audiences for collaborative installations that cross more subject boundaries.

Librarians will be on hand at exhibit "openings" to meet the NWB public, offer information about the exhibit and library services, and seek new ideas for future exhibits. A librarian presence will also be established by periodically stationing a reference librarian in the NWB cafeteria equipped with a laptop, handouts, brochures, and other various attractive materials intended to enhance the exhibits and showcase library services. Offering research assistance will also be an option, thus offering a variation on the "Embedded Librarian" concept. Signage will also be developed as a means to convey information in a passive manner when library staff is not available to manually facilitate the exhibit.

The methodology developed through the deployment of pilot exhibit at the NWB exhibit will be applied to future collections across campus.

Loeb Library

The deployment of the exhibit within Loeb Library will be the second of the series. The methodology will be adapted from that used in the NWB exhibition. The primary investigator (Kaitlyn Fitzgerald) will work closely with library staff to identify and speak with figures within the School of Design who's work will be displayed. By working collaboratively with librarians a

process will be developed and recorded to be used in the future within Loeb Library and other interested libraries across campus.

Future Projects: Sustainability of the Idea

Following the deployment of the Loeb Library exhibit, an intensive examination of the research and information gathered will be conducted. This will result in the creation of a document that will serve to guide future implementations of exhibits. The manual to be developed will include key questions asked; outline the process of gathering materials; and provide a general outline for the lifecycle of individual exhibits. By clearly outlining and documenting the process, implementation of future exhibits will be much smoother. It is the intention of the primary investigator to identify and make contact with libraries across campus over the course of the summer to facilitate the initial stages of the project.

In addition, the Northwest building project especially will partner with museums especially the Harvard Museum of Natural History, to showcase exhibits and resources that the museums can offer. Involvement of Museum personnel on an ongoing basis will definitely enhance the sustainability of the exhibits.

The future sustainability of the project will be ensured by fostering a network of libraries and librarians interested in developing and implementing the collections within their own libraries. Through this developed network it is plausible that the exhibit itself will grow and change but that it will maintain a presence within the Harvard Library system.

Budget

Staff Time

- Principal investigator (Kaitlyn Fitzgerald): 20 hours per week for planning, execution of exhibits, construction of exhibits, and coordinating future implementations.
 $20 \text{ hr/wk} * \$18/\text{hr (typical graduate work study)} = \$360 * 12 \text{ wk} = \$4320$
- Ernst Mayr Library Total: \$14,000 (approximately 200 hours for 2 pilot exhibits includes research, outreach to potential collaborators, materials selection, development of handouts, set-up, survey development, embedded librarian time)
- Botany Libraries Total: \$3,500 (approximately 50 hours includes research, outreach, materials selection, development of handouts,)

Equipment and Supplies

- Museum quality display cases on wheels with storage for the NWB project: ~\$12,000 (2 cases). It may be possible to have these custom built in house by staff of the Harvard Museum of Natural History and the Peabody Museum.
- Display for Loeb Library to include potential material purchasing and display construction: ~\$4500.00

- Holders for handouts and other materials: ~ \$50.00. +++??
- Imaging costs: ~\$500.
- Survey participation rewards (candy bars, thumb drives): ~\$200.

Dissemination

- Conference travel and accommodation for dissemination of results beyond Harvard: \$3,000.

TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST: \$42,070

Exhibit Planning and Execution: Kaitlyn Fitzgerald (primary); Dorothy Barr (primary for the science libraries); Lisa DeCesare and Mary Sears (initially). Others will be invited to participate as the program evolves.

Oversight: Constance Rinaldo, Librarian of the Ernst Mayr Library; Judy Warnement, Botany Librarian; Ann Whiteside, Loeb Library Head Librarian; Jeff Goldenson, Library Innovation Lab; Jeffery Schanapp, metaLab.

Research and Outreach Consultants (in-kind contribution for pilot): Renate Hellmiss, Senior Scientific Designer, MCB; Jan Sacco, HMNH Director of Exhibitions.