Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies

Volume 5 Article 8

2018

Getting to Tier 1 by Revitalizing a Special Collections Program with Cultural Competence

Mark L. Shelstad
Colorado State University - Fort Collins, mark.shelstad@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas

 Part of the Archival Science Commons

Recommended Citation
Shelstad, Mark L. (2018) "Getting to Tier 1 by Revitalizing a Special Collections Program with Cultural Competence," *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*: Vol. 5 , Article 8.
Available at: https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol5/iss1/8

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by EliScholar – A Digital Platform for Scholarly Publishing at Yale. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies by an authorized editor of EliScholar – A Digital Platform for Scholarly Publishing at Yale. For more information, please contact elischolar@yale.edu.

Getting to Tier 1 by Revitalizing a Special Collections Program with Cultural Competence

Cover Page Footnote
The author wishes to thank UTSA Library Special Collections staff, whose hard work and dedication proved invaluable to moving the department forward: Melissa Gohlke, Sean Heyliger, Juli McLoone, Angela Ossar, Tom Shelton, Nikki Thomas, and Tatina Wulzer.

This article is available in Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies: https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol5/iss1/8

GETTING TO TIER 1 BY REVITALIZING A SPECIAL COLLECTIONS PROGRAM WITH CULTURAL COMPETENCE

In front of the Alamo on June 5, 1969, Texas governor Preston Smith signed House Bill 42 to establish the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). When UTSA began offering classes exactly four years later, San Antonio lost its distinction as the nation's largest city without access to a public institution of higher education. City attorney John Peace, Jr., had led the effort for UTSA's creation as a member of the University of Texas Board of Regents. During Peace's two-year term as board chair, the University of Texas System had greatly expanded its reach to serve the higher educational needs of the state. In 1973, UTSA became part of five newly established public universities opening throughout Texas, joining the University of Texas at Dallas, the University of Texas Medical School at Houston, the University of Texas of the Permian Basin in Odessa, and the University of Texas Marine Science Institute at Port Aransas. No other college or university in the United States opened outside of Texas that year.[1]

Figure 1. Signing ceremony to establish UTSA, 1969. Courtesy San Antonio Light Photograph Collection, UTSA Special Collections—Institute of Texan Cultures

In its first decade, UTSA responded to its charge to be "a university of the first class" in a multicultural community with particular emphasis on graduate teacher, business, and science

[1] University of Texas Board of Regents, "John Robert Peace," n.d., https://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents/former-regents/john-robert-peace.

education. Its first 671 students attended classes in an executive business center while the university built seven buildings on a new campus located in northwestern San Antonio, at that point the country's largest university construction project. UTSA would also open a downtown campus in 1997 aimed at providing professional degrees. This expansion came amid criticisms that UTSA was actually the University of Texas at Boerne, referring to the university's closer proximity to a small town north of San Antonio than to most of the city's residents.[2] UTSA had earlier assumed operations of the Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC), a cultural heritage museum that explored the state's ethnic makeup. The ITC, housed in a downtown location known as HemisFair, was an artifact from the city's participation in the 1968 World's Fair.

More recently, UTSA has been one of the state's fastest growing public universities, with enrollment nearing 31,000 students, and is one of the country's top universities in the number of undergraduate and graduate degrees awarded to Hispanic students. It is one of approximately two hundred Hispanic-serving institutions, placing special emphasis on providing educational access and opportunities. Its student population is approximately 70 percent minority and 50 percent first-generation college students.

In late 2008, the state of Texas determined that its number of so-called Tier 1 institutions (that is, top-level research universities) relative to its overall student population was disproportionate; with a state population of more than 24 million, Texas only had three top research institutions—Rice University, Texas A&M, and the University of Texas at Austin. By contrast, Pennsylvania, with a state population of 12 million, has four and Virginia, with one-third of Texas's population at 8 million, has three. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board estimated that more than ten thousand students left Texas annually to pursue graduate programs in other states, and the state failed to retain nearly $3.7 billion in annual federal research and development funding.[3] In order to enable the state's emerging research universities to achieve national prominence, the state would provide funding and incentives for those seven universities—UT-Arlington, UT-Dallas, University of North Texas, Texas Tech, UT-El Paso, UT-San Antonio, and the University of Houston—for leadership in research, capital investment, and graduate education programs. The funding, amounting to $256 million over two years, would be made available if the universities obtained $400 million in endowments, graduated 200 Ph.D.s each year, and had $45 million in annual research expenditures. Less easily identified metrics included high-quality incoming classes and membership in Phi Beta Kappa or the Association of Research Libraries, or their equivalents. At the time, UTSA faced significant challenges to make the most significant Tier 1 thresholds, with a $50 million endowment, $38 million in annual research expenditures, and graduating approximately 100 Ph.D. students annually.[4]

[2] Tom Walker, "The Rise and Fall of the University of Texas Near San Antonio," *San Antonio Magazine*, November 1979, 27–36, 61–63.

[3] University of Texas System, "What Is Tier One? An Overview of HB 5," May 30, 2010, https://web.archive.org/web/20100530015942/http://www.utsystem.edu/tierone/tierone.htm.

[4] Reeve Hamilton, "Texsplainer: What's A Tier-One University?" *Texas Tribune,* February 4, 2011, https://www.texastribune.org/2011/02/04/texplainer-whats-a-tier-one-university/; Jan Jarboe Russel, "If UTSA Gets to Tier 1, San Antonio Will Thrive," *San Antonio Express-News,* October 3, 2009, https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/education/article/If-UTSA-gets-to-Tier-One-San-Antonio-will-thrive-840484.php.

Meanwhile, by 2008, the UTSA libraries had become a perceived liability in the university's reaccreditation and Tier 1 ambitions due to infrastructure issues, unfilled positions, collections management allocations, and lack of student and faculty interactions. I arrived at UTSA that summer, with a special collections department of three professional staff and one paraprofessional staff. Seeking to revitalize a special collections program at a Tier 1 aspirant, I introduced a variety of innovative management techniques along with new outreach opportunities to demonstrate the department's value toward fulfilling the university's strategic plan. The revitalization efforts included creating collection development policies that incorporated web harvesting, becoming a trusted partner with the community, and finding new audiences using social media. The dramatic increase in access to and use of the collections, as well as collaboration within and outside of the libraries, demonstrated Special Collections' value and importance to UTSA's strategic goals of becoming a Tier 1 institution known for its outstanding research, quality education, and economic contributions to the region.

Management and Cultural Competence

Research and writing in the area of archival management and leadership has often focused around specific functions, events, changes in the historical record, workflows, software applications, or institutional setting.[5] Common themes among them, however, are taking advantage of opportunities as they arise, being able to tie archival functions and initiatives to larger institutional strategic plans and directions, the importance of planning and marketing, and finding internal and external allies. Bruce W. Dearstyne suggests there are varieties of leadership that managers can consider for implementation, such as leading at different levels within the organization, being consistent, making transformative changes, and undertaking a thorough review of a program's goals and needs.[6]

Patricia Montiel-Overall, Annabelle Villaescusa Nuñez, and Veronica Reyes-Escuder have provided one of the few resources for archivists, museum curators, and special collections librarians for recognizing the unique contributions from and attributes of Latinos, one of the country's fastest-growing populations. After reviewing how the concept of cultural competence is used in a variety of professional fields, these authors introduce cultural competence for the library and information field so that individuals can shift from external experts to people who listen, make resources available, and become partners with the community. Recognizing cultural differences and becoming aware of various societal factors that affect the local community can lead to a greater understanding of how organizations contribute to inequalities; such mechanisms can also help individuals understand their own cultural influence. The authors' framework for cultural competence are the convergence of three areas: knowledge of self, knowledge of others, and knowledge of the context in which acts occur. Montiel-Overall and colleagues conclude that being culturally competent involves "a requirement and motivation to broaden cultural perspectives at both the individual and institutional levels. It requires putting into place methods to carry out culturally competent services. Both must be activated to be successful." The authors

[5] See Bruce W. Dearstyne, ed., *Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs: Strategies for Success* (New York: Neal-Schulman, 2008), and Kate Theimer, ed., *Management: Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014).

[6] Bruce W. Dearstyne, "Leading Archives and Records Programs: Perspectives and Insights," in Dearstyne, ed., *Leading and Managing Archives*, 291–312.

similarly identify characteristics of culturally competent individuals as being aware of one's own culture, appreciating others' cultures, having an ethic of caring, understanding situational context, demonstrating respect, and understanding historical legacies.[7] A culturally competent reinvigoration of UTSA Libraries' Special Collections would require not only hard management skills but also the soft skills of communication, collaboration, and flexibility to move the program forward.

Establishment of UTSA Libraries' Special Collections

John Peace Jr. passed away in 1974, but his relationship with the university continued in two ways. The University of Texas Board of Regents dedicated the library building in his honor, and before his death, Peace donated to UTSA his books, manuscripts, and printed material relating to Texas prior to 1860. Consisting of nine hundred books and five hundred manuscripts, the collection covers the Spanish colonial, Mexican republic, and republic of Texas periods. Peace's contribution led to the donation of personal libraries of other San Antonians, the acquisitions of Spanish manuscripts from Mexico, a Texas fine press collection, titles on Texas's participation in the Civil War, the company library from a prominent San Antonio architectural firm, and the works of Texas folklorist and writer J. Frank Dobie. In 2001, Special Collections had also acquired a significant set of cookbooks, most dating from 1940 to 1980, gathered by San Antonio librarian Laurie Gruenbeck from her travels in Texas and Mexico. Considered to be the largest collection of Mexican cookbooks in the United States with several hundred titles, it focuses on traditional recipes and regional cooking.[8]

Two separate projects to document underrepresented communities in San Antonio initiated UTSA's archival collections. UTSA formed a Hispanic Research Center (HRC) in 1989 to focus on interdisciplinary research on the growing Hispanic population across the United States, with a special concentration on Texas. In addition to facilitating collaboration across UTSA departments, the HRC secured grant funding for researchers and disseminated their findings through forums, seminars, and cultural activities. The center focused on seven major areas of research, and two of them—Hispanic involvement in the political process and economic sectors, and historical and cultural research into an understanding of Hispanic social and cultural traditions and institutions—prompted discussions about acquiring primary-source materials for research. Starting in 1999 in conjunction with Special Collections, the HRC created the Mexican-American Archives Collection, with donations from attorney and judge Albert Pena, Jr.; community activist Rosie Castro; José Angel Gutiérrez, a leading Chicano activist and political leader in the 1960s and 1970s, who cofounded the La Raza Unida Party; and other individuals and organizations working to document the contributions of Mexican Americans in San Antonio and south Texas since World War II. The HRC would eventually be merged with UTSA's Metropolitan Research and Policy Institute to form the Culture and Policy Institute in 2003.[9]

---

[7] Patricia Montiel-Overall, Annabelle Villaescusa Nuñez, and Veronica Reyes-Escudero, *Latinos in Libraries, Museums, and Archives: Cultural Competence in Action! An Asset-Based Approach* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 28–38, 38 (quotation).

[8] Special Collections and Archives Department, "Rare Books and Fine Press Collection," April 19, 2003, http://web.archive.org/web/20030419045049/http://www.lib.utsa.edu:80/Special_Collections/books.html#book.

[9] Hispanic Research Center, "Homepage," April 16, 2003, http://web.archive.org/web/20030416020617/http:/hrc.utsa.edu/hrc/main.htm.

In 1989, UTSA's Center for the Study of Women and Gender initiated the Archives for Research on Women and Gender (ARWG) to acquire and provide access to materials documenting the lives of women, constructions of gender, and expressions of sexual identity in south Texas. It soon became a joint effort with Special Collections and pursued materials from activists, politicians, educators, authors, foundations, and organizations. A university strategic initiative provided the funding to hire an archivist to process these collections in 1996, and a 1998–2001 grant from the National Historic Publications and Records Commission funded additional processing.[10] UTSA closed the Center for the Study of Women and Gender in 2001, but the collecting focus of ARWG and HRC continued. By the early 2000s, Special Collections had acquired sixty manuscript collections documenting modern Hispanic political activism, women's organizations, LGBTQ groups, and San Antonio's population and architectural growth, with an ongoing commitment to documenting the diverse communities of San Antonio and south Texas. Most collections originated from the greater San Antonio area, while to a lesser extent some collections came out of the Rio Grande Valley and north Texas. Special Collections also ventured into a number of new collecting areas (San Antonio literature and authors, and the performing arts) without a formal collecting policy, resulting in isolated and sometimes fragmented collections.

Collections Management

By 2008, Special Collections faced a significant backlog in providing access to its manuscript and university archives collections. Previous processing had been very detailed, generally providing access at the folder or item level rather than the box or series level. This in-depth, time-consuming processing led to a backlog of approximately half of Special Collections' manuscript and university archives holdings. Previous staff had typically created folder-level inventories in spreadsheets at the point of accessioning. The spreadsheet files were printed, put in the collection case file, and stored on a series of floppy disks. Curiously, these accession records were not made available through the statewide Encoded Archival Description (EAD) collaborative, Texas Archival Repositories Online (TARO), of which UTSA had been a founding member.

Special Collections accordingly changed tactics, opting to focus on providing better access to its collections rather than embarking on more processing. It used two approaches to eliminate the logjam in approximately one year; the first was to repurpose the accessioning files and, using a new EAD template, provide box- or series-level descriptions for minimal finding aids. This template, borrowed from my time at the University of Wyoming, had been developed specifically to provide baseline finding aids during the accessioning process. By using Excel macros, we converted the existing spreadsheets into EAD-compliant finding aids for online delivery through TARO. The second approach, for collections without accessioning information, was to use a minimal EAD template to efficiently provide online access points. In all, Special Collections staff created new finding aids for nearly 150 collections, which totaled approximately 3,000 linear feet.

[10] Special Collections and Archives Department, "Archives for Research on Women and Gender Project," April 4, 2003, http://web.archive.org/web/20030402144306/http://www.lib.utsa.edu:80/Archives/WomenGender/index.html.

Addition of August 2006 (Acc. 2006-58)

Box	
1	San Antonio branch yearbooks,1999-2004
	Binder with files and correspondence,1993-1997
	Secretary Files,1991-1997
	Board member handbook, undated
	Cards, undated
	Legacy Circle, undated
	Clippings, undated
	Book, San Antonio College, undated
	Emails, undated
	Founder's Day, undated
	Breaking the Glass, undated
	Secretary files,1995-1997
	Awards, undated
	Get out the vote, undated
	Vote Smart, undated
	Newsletters, undated
	Longwith, undated
Box	
2	Newsletters, correspondence, and clippings, undated
	Handbooks, yearbooks, auction, 1997-2005
	Budget, reciepts, undated

Return to the Table of Contents

Figure 2. San Antonio branch of the American Association of University Women inventory with accession-level information

Using the EAD template became standard practice for newly acquired collections to quickly provide access to collections. As noted by Yale University archivist Christine Weideman, maximizing accessioning information instead of waiting for detailed processing leads to "a collection that is ready for research quickly and never enters the backlog."[11] The elimination of the backlog and a focus on access through minimal processing proved to be a boon for our staff and others in the library providing reference services. It likewise built political capital with our new library dean and led to discussions with potential donors, who appreciated our efforts in providing online access to collections. Several donors, in fact, began discussions with Special Collections by noting how they had researched potential repositories and discovered that UTSA had more of its collections online than other institutions.

During the summer of 2011, the UTSA administration approached the libraries regarding management of the Institute of Texan Cultures' library and photographic collections. Budgeting and staffing reductions at the ITC had prompted discussions about how to share expertise and management of the collections. Acquired by the ITC's museum staff to prepare exhibits for the 1968 World's Fair, the collections consisted of more than one thousand oral histories of significant Texans and others about Texas folklife, a small noncirculating library collection, and

[11] Christine Weideman, "Accessioning as Processing," *American Archivist* 69, no. 2 (2006): 274–83, 277 (quotation).

an extensive set of subject files. The photographic collections included more than 3 million images from the two San Antonio newspapers and several local photographic studios. The photographic and oral history collections in particular had limited online access resulting from time-consuming, item-level scanning and description, even though they had a staff database with folder-level information. Similar to Special Collections' earlier accessioning project, we repurposed the database into online finding aids in TARO for broad online access while continuing to address the preservation challenge of storing photographic negatives in a less-than-perfect storage environment at the museum, which had not been built with the intention of outlasting the 1968 fair. Following a preservation assessment by an outside consultant and strong data demonstrating the museum's drastic swings in temperature and humidity control, Special Collections received funding from the UTSA's Office of the Provost to stabilize the storage environment and digitize a portion of the most at-risk nitrate negatives with a vendor.

Collection Analysis and Development

Having gained intellectual and physical control over Special Collections' holdings, building a collections analysis and development policy were the next logical steps for understanding the archive's strengths and weaknesses, and for communicating collecting priorities with potential donors. The collection analysis, started in 2011, contained the following set of activities: (1) a broad survey of collection size, scope, subject foci, and geographic scope of archival repositories in Texas; (2) an analysis of current archival holdings by gender, ethnicity, record type, and subject; (3) an analysis of community, faculty, and student use from the past five years; (4) an analysis of collections at other archival institutions in subject areas that are either current or potential collecting areas; and (5) input from UTSA faculty about their research interests and desired collections.[12] The information gathered from the collection analysis would be used to identify priority collections at national, regional, or local levels, and to make recommendations for targeted acquisitions in each subject area.

Special Collections' 2011 survey identified sixty-two archival repositories in the state of Texas; of those sixty-two, fifty are associated with a college or university. The remaining twelve are part of a public library, city government, or historical society. Of the fifty repositories associated with a college or university, Special Collections ranked as the eleventh largest in the state and can be considered the largest repository in south Texas (roughly defined as the geographical area west of Houston and south of Austin). In the TARO database, out of thirty-one participating institutions as of 2011, Special Collections ranked seventh in the number of available collections and fifth in the number of users; only the significantly larger Texas State Archives and the

[12] For more information on collection analysis and planning, see Judith Endelman, "Looking Backward to Plan for the Future: Collection Analysis for Manuscript Repositories," *American Archivist* 50, no. 3 (1987): 340–55; Gloria A. Thompson, "From Profile to Policy: A Minnesota Historical Society Case Study in Collection Development," *Midwestern Archivist* 8, no. 2 (1983): 29–39; Christine Weideman, "A New Map for Field Work: Impact of Collections Analysis on the Bentley Historical Library," *American Archivist* 54, no. 1 (1991): 54–60; Mark A. Greene and Todd J. Daniels-Howell, "Documentation with an Attitude: A Pragmatist's Guide to the Selection and Acquisition of Modern Business Records," in *The Records of American Business,* ed. James O'Toole (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1997), 161–229; Terry Cook, "'We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are': Archival Appraisal Past, Present, and Future," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 32, no. 22 (2011): 181; and Patricia J. Rettig, "Collecting Water: An Analysis of a Multidisciplinary Special-Subject Archives," *American Archivist* 80, no. 1 (2017): 82–102.

Benson, Ransom, and Briscoe Centers at the University of Texas-Austin received higher use and made more collections available for use.

The analysis found that Special Collections' largest holdings were and remain in the areas of San Antonio history, women's history, urban development, and Mexican American history. Some subject areas, however, were represented by just a few collections and lack broad documentation. Patron statistics revealed a large number of community users interested in the 1968 World's Fair and women's history; faculty focused on the history of the university and the World's Fair; students, who made up by far the largest user group, were much more likely to use collections related to women's history, African American history, Mexican American history, LGBT history, and the university. For all user groups, women's history, the 1968 World Fair, African American history, and Mexican American history were priority topics, while collections related to ranching and neighborhood associations received little use.

Further, the collection analysis compared Special Collections' holdings, staffing patterns, and budgets against other repositories at institutions the university had identified in its strategic plan as those to which it aspired to be compared in the near, medium, and long term. This comparison would help provide different models on how the department could help the libraries chart a path toward Association of Research Library membership, one criteria for being awarded Tier 1 funding.[13] UTSA's strategic plan identified aspirant institutions as a group of medium-to-large public universities without medical schools in large metropolitan areas with higher key performance characteristics than those of the university. The universities used for comparison in the plan were the University of California, Santa Barbara (long-term aspirant); the University of Texas at Arlington (medium-term aspirant); and the University of Central Florida (near-term aspirant). While these may have been appropriate for the university overall, the University of Texas at Arlington served as the best model for Special Collections relative to the size of its holdings and staff, outreach activities, and longevity. Arlington also faced a similar set of economic and political constraints to UTSA. The University of Central Florida had a significantly smaller set of collections and staff and offered fewer outreach/instructional activities. The University of California, Santa Barbara, had nearly twice the staffing of Special Collections, while its overall library staffing size and budget were on par with the UTSA libraries as a whole. Its rare book and archives collections are also significantly larger than those of Special Collections.

[13] For more information on archival institutional profiles, see Jackie Dooley, "Taking Our Pulse: The OCLC Research Survey of Special Collections and Archives," 2010, http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2010/2010-11.pdf. For Special Collections to reach Association of Research Library status from this survey, it would need collections roughly 23,000–32,000 feet in size, an acquisitions budget of $60,000–170,000 annually, and a staff of 10 to 12 professionals, 6 to 8 paraprofessionals, and 1 to 3 temporary positions. At that time, Special Collections had 5 professional staff, 1 paraprofessional, a manuscript and university archives holdings of 5,000 feet and 20,000 books, and a rare book acquisition budget of $50,000.

Institution	Special Collections Staff	Total Library Staff	Annual Library Budget	Year Special Collections Started	Number of Rare Books	Collections Size	Number of Collections
University of Texas at San Antonio	6	121	$8,885,000	1974	25,000	5,000 ft.	275
University of Central Florida	4	107	$12,500,000	1967	17,000	1,000 ft.	123
University of California, Santa Barbara	14	139	$15,000,000	ca. 1909	250,000	16,000 ft.	853
University of Texas at Arlington	9	116	$13,000,000	1967	50,000	9,000 ft.	300

Table 1. Comparable aspirant universities' special collections

The collection development plan established priorities for future collecting activities: the African American and LGBTQ communities in San Antonio and South Texas, the history of women and gender in Texas, Mexican American activism, Mexican American advertising, the Tex-Mex food industry, water resources, and urban planning. These collecting areas mapped to core research areas in UTSA's strategic plan focused on energy and the environment, human and social development, and sustainability, as part of its larger goals of providing access to education, creating new knowledge, serving society, and offering students enriching experiences.[14] With the input of relevant UTSA faculty members, Special Collections developed four collecting levels for solicitation: active, passive, no longer accept but will maintain, and collections considered for deaccessioning. The limitations on active collecting reflected the available human resources to put toward acquisitions.

> Level 4—Pursue Prominent Collections
> Material in these subject areas are generally not collected by other archival repositories at either a national or regional level and have a strong connection with UTSA's strategic goals; Special Collections' previous collecting strategy; or prominent cultural, social, or scientific activities in the San Antonio area.

[14] UTSA, "UTSA 2016: A Shared Vision," March 9, 2010, https://web.archive.org/web/20100309222940/http://www.utsa.edu/2016/docs/2016StrategicPlan.pdf.

> Level 3—Accept Selective Addition
> Special Collections will continue to maintain their current archival collections and accept new additions based on the following factors. Materials in this level are (1) well-documented by archival collections already held by Special Collections, (2) not frequently used by patrons, (3) heavily collected by other archival institutions in Texas, or (4) typically cost prohibitive to collect. Prospective new collections will be largely judged on whether they intersect with Special Collections' other collecting areas.
>
> Level 2—No Longer Accept New Collections
> Special Collections will maintain its current holdings but will no longer accept new archival collections. These areas include military, health/healthcare, and Mexico/Mexican history-related collections. Donors in these collecting areas will be directed to more appropriate repositories.
>
> Level 1—Do Not Accept New Collections and Consider Deaccessioning Select Holdings
> Deaccessioning will be considered for the records of neighborhood associations located in the San Antonio area.

In select subject areas (San Antonio and Rio Grande Valley LGBTQ communities, San Antonio and Rio Grande Valley organizations, U.S.-Mexico border and immigration, San Antonio food and restaurants, and Texas alternative energy), Special Collections used web captures to fulfill its collecting strategy. It also used web captures to supplement and complement traditional collecting, such as harvesting the websites of existing organizations where documentation on their activities were sparse and Mexican cooking blogs to complement the subject strength in rare books. Using web captures made strategic sense for Special Collections given its limited staffing and resources.[15] Of the eighteen web collections started by UTSA, one is devoted to the LGBTQ communities in Texas generally and two in San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley. Our analysis of other LGBTQ web collecting programs identified a gap in broad LGBTQ coverage, resulting in the establishment of a national collection devoted to capturing different organizations, social media accounts, and national issues.[16] Using social media to capture perspectives and activities not found in traditional sources is a tactic that I had used earlier, on a documentation project about the murder of University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard, which supplemented existing paper-based collections.[17]

[15] UTSA, Web Collections, https://archive-it.org/organizations/318.

[16] UTSA Libraries, Special Collections Manuscript Collecting Policy, July 2012, https://web.archive.org/web/20170802202145; UTSA Libraries, Special Collections Manuscripts Development Plan, April 2011, http://lib.utsa.edu/files/default/1283/personal_papers_coll_dev_policy.pdf.

[17] University of Wyoming, Matthew Shepard Web Archive, https://www.archive-it.org/collections/1176; Laura E. Uglean Jackson, "Documenting an Aftermath: The Matthew Shepard Web Archive," in *Queers Online: LGBT Digital Practices in Libraries, Archives, and Museums*, ed. Rachel Wexelbaum (Sacramento: Litwin Books, 2015), 165–80. The project, unlike other web harvests that capture tragic events as they occur or shortly afterward, captured materials that provided a variety of perspectives not from the University of Wyoming administration or from national media outlets in a one-time crawl a decade after the murder.

Figure 3. Screenshot of San Antonio LGBTQ web collection

The collection analysis strategy for Special Collections' rare book materials closely followed that for its manuscripts, with some variations. In response to the university's needs over the years, the rare books area had built strong collections in diverse subject areas, supporting faculty teaching and research, serving as a repository for south Texas and the border region, as well as preserving materials from the general collection that require additional care and protection. In addition to identifying the collecting rationale, the collection development policy identified methods for collection, languages, type and format, geographical area, and subject area. The Library of Congress Research Library Group Conspectus collection analysis tool assigned priorities to the department's collecting areas that we tailored to our specific environment and research needs.[18] These levels are

0. Out-of-Scope: Special Collections does not collect material in this area though it may maintain existing holdings.
1. Minimal Level: Subject area is peripheral to the primary foci of Special Collections but acquisitions may occasionally be made, if they also relate to core areas.
2. Basic Information Level: General historical materials are collected to introduce this subject area but in-depth research would require recourse to other repositories.

[18] Library of Congress, "Collecting Levels," n.d., https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/cpc.html.

3. Instructional Support Level: Materials of sufficient scope and depth are collected in this area to support most coursework-based research at an undergraduate or graduate level.
4. Research Level: Although not comprehensive, this subject area is one in which depth beyond that required in the classroom is desired. In-depth graduate and independent research is supported along with an acquisitions focus on materials with relatively low representation in OCLC that could contribute to a collection of regional importance.
5. Comprehensive Level: To the extent possible, all significant, relevant material—both contemporary and historical—will be collected to build a collection that will be of national research importance.

The active collecting areas included existing subject strengths of San Antonio history, San Antonio authors, and the Mexican cookbook collection (with an emphasis on pre-1900 titles); new priority areas included San Antonio and south Texas art and artists, along with tourism and fairs, particularly documented immigrant guides and travel accounts. Western Americana and nineteenth-century English literature are considered static collections. The rare book areas also identified Texas and Mexican cooking blogs and fairs and fiestas as web collections for priority capture.[19] Being a Tier 1 aspirant significantly benefited the rare book collecting area for new acquisitions, which had been historically severely underfunded. Special Collections staff evaluated rare book acquisition budgets at other Association of Research Libraries members; as a result the library dean subsequently increased Special Collections' rare books acquisition budget from five to fifty thousand dollars. Among other notable examples, the budget increase allowed Special Collections to expand the Mexican cookbook collection to nearly 1,800 titles through cooperation with several book dealers, adding seventy handwritten or typed cookbooks. Working to identify pre–World War II printed and manuscript cookbooks on an approval plan, the addition of titles dating back to 1789 provides an intimate view of domestic life and culinary culture, regional cooking, and corporate advertising.

Digitization

Prior to 2008, the UTSA Libraries and Special Collections had initiated little digitization of its collections. Getting a late start to this effort allowed Special Collections to avoid performing preservation-level scanning for all collections regardless of content and physical condition.[20] Instead, Special Collections used a variable approach, ranging from highly detailed to streamlined processes that balanced user expectations for quantity and quality of the digitized content by linking to minimal records in our digital management system, CONTENTdm, from our finding aids, often at the folder level as a single PDF, making the earlier minimal processing work even more valuable. The streamlined approach also allowed for the conversion of the entire run of university publications, which helped improve our reference services and our standing with the university's Communications Office by providing online access to past content.

[19] UTSA Libraries, Special Collections Rare Book Collection Development Policy, June 2010, https://web.archive.org/web/20160622211350/http://lib.utsa.edu/files/default/rare-books-coll-dev-policy-updated-2011-04-05.pdf.

[20] Ricky Erway and Jennifer Schaffner, "Shifting Gears: Gearing Up to Get into the Flow," 2007, http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2007/2007-02.pdf; Mark A. Greene, "MPLP: It's Not Just for Processing Anymore," *American Archivist*, 73, no. 1 (2010): 175–203.

Starting in 2010, Special Collections modified its gift agreement to allow the department to scan collection materials, retain a preservation copy, and make derivative copies publicly available without restriction. The donor could choose to maintain or transfer copyright and have the originals returned. The approach—adopted by other institutions at about the same time—allowed for the acquisition of content from donors who might be hesitant to permanently transfer collections for a variety of reasons.[21] These included apprehension of large institutions, being unfamiliar with archives, a desire to remain anonymous, preferring to retain the originals, and being assured that donors and their families would not be denied access to the materials. It furthered collecting goals within two core subject areas: several LGBTQ publications and the *San Antonio Register*, the city's African American newspaper. In both cases, donors were eager see broad online access through multiple avenues while retaining the originals and/or copyright.

This approach also helped to further donor development with a fraternal organization that donated a large set of Mexican manuscripts to UTSA on permanent loan in the 1970s. Comprising 1,500 books and pamphlets and 3,600 manuscript items predominantly in Spanish, the collection dates from the sixteenth to the twentieth century and contains government documents, financial records, legal petitions, political and ecclesiastical decrees, wills and legal testaments, and personal and business letters, concentrated around the Mexican state of Hidalgo. The collection covers the social and cultural history of Mexico, including contemporary political, governmental, and religious affairs. The organization did not wish to discuss the possibility of converting the loan to a gift, but when offered the option of Special Collections' scanning and retaining a digital preservation copy to promote the collection's usage, the group's leadership was satisfied that this would serve as a viable alternative to potentially contentious negotiations. The discussions over granting and obtaining digital rights also brought to light the funding needed to provide access, which the organization provided to UTSA.

Outreach

A review of Special Collections' outreach activities prior to 2008 revealed participation in undergraduate instruction classes, along with several presentations annually to groups and associations who had already donated their records to UTSA. Tamar Chute, in her analysis of outreach activities at different university settings, urges archivists to consider it central to their activities. Chute observes that "while outside activities do not guarantee visibility, lack of outreach activities will certainly guarantee invisibility." Chute identifies five goals of outreach, including finding large audiences to promote the archives, having users recognize collections, teaching university history, teaching users about the role of archives, and showing the value of archivists and collections.[22] With these goals in mind, and in addition to a strong commitment to instruction, Special Collections embarked on coordinating a series of guest speakers, a targeted student activity for the cookbook collection, and social media participation.

[21] April M. Hathcock, "From Dusty Boxes to Data Bytes: Acquiring Rights to Special Collections in the Digital Age," *Reading Room* 1, no. 2 (2016), http://readingroom.lib.buffalo.edu/readingroom/PDF/vol1-issue2/From-Dusty-Boxes-to-Data-Bytes.pdf; Montiel-Overall, Nuñez, and Reyes-Escudero, *Latinos in Libraries, Museums, and Archives*, 175–203.

[22] Tamar G. Chute, "Selling the College and University Archives: Current Outreach Perspectives," *Archival Issues* 25, nos. 1–2 (2000): 33–48, 46 (quotation).

The opening of a renovated Special Collections reading room in 2009 created an opportunity to reconnect with collection donors and users. Highlighting a national book award finalist, whose papers are part of our collections, seemed like a natural choice to draw in university supporters and donors. Special Collections organized a reading from and signing of his new work. In cooperation with a new libraries communications specialist, Special Collections developed a speaker series for authors to share with the campus their unique experiences and perspectives. Our second speaker, an author, artist, and storyteller whose papers are also part of Special Collections, discussed the creative processes behind storytelling and how art can serve as a vehicle to explore and preserve family heritage, drawing on his experience of growing up in a small border town. This author made subsequent visits to campus to present a writing workshop with UTSA's downtown campus in cooperation with UTSA's College of Education. The third speaker, a nationally syndicated columnist, used Special Collections materials for a book on the history and culture of Mexican food in the United States. His talk highlighted what constitutes Mexican food in the United States and why Americans love it so much. His event highlighted the university's Hispanic Heritage Month, had sponsorships from local restaurants, and featured a chef from the Culinary Institute of America's San Antonio campus emceeing the event.

Special Collections' holding of the country's largest Mexican cookbook collection similarly led to a unique outreach effort for our rare books curator. To raise awareness of the collection and culinary history in particular, we held a series of cooking demonstrations with the cooperation of the Hispanic Student Association (HSA) in the University Recreation Center kitchen, using recipes from seven cookbooks. Special Collections provided funds for the ingredients, translations, and the publicity; the HSA identified the recipes and provided volunteers for promotion and event support. The Recreations Center supplied the kitchen and a student chef for food preparation. These events typically had about twenty participants each over the next two years.

Figure 4. Blog post from participant in Culinary Tour of Mexico. Kelley Klepper, "The Food and Drink of Mexico (1964)—Arroz con Piña / Rice with Pineapple," La Cocina Historica, April 6, 2012, https://lacocinahistorica.wordpress.com/2012/04/06/the-food-and-drink-of-mexico-1964-arroz-con-pina-rice-with-pineapple/

Special Collections also adopted social media as an outreach and marketing channel. It established two Twitter accounts, one based on a nineteenth-century line-a-day diary of a Sandy, Texas, homesteader, while the other offered a look at UTSA history through daily press releases, news clips, and photographs from the university archives. The department also established a general departmental blog and a collection-specific blog focused on the Mexican cookbook collection.[23] The blogs employed different strategies in terms of audience, content, and authorship. The cooking blog, titled "La Cocina Historica," posted recipes in English and Spanish, with roughly half of the recipes cooked by the staff. Other members of the campus also contributed to testing the recipes, including the library dean and vice provost. The focus of this

[23] UTSA Libraries, "Redford Diaries," https://twitter.com/RedfordDiaries; UTSA Libraries, "UTSA Yesterday," https://twitter.com/utsayesterday?lang=en; UTSA Libraries, "The Top Shelf," https://utsalibrariestopshelf.wordpress.com; UTSA Libraries, "La Cocina Historica," https://web.archive.org/web/20161018222508/https://lacocinahistorica.wordpress.com/.

particular blog led to better media coverage, including a mention on Fox News Latino during the 2010 holidays. In all, the blogs averaged more than 120 visitors per day and were cited as an innovative use of social media that built readership based on collecting focus, staff expertise, and institutional support.[24]

Just as it was a conscious decision to begin these outreach activities, Special Collections made a deliberate effort to evaluate their effectiveness and outcomes. For the cooking demonstrations, participant surveys indicated that the students appreciated the emphasis on Mexico's contributions to culinary history and made ties to the collection and Mexican cooking but found it difficult to attend on a regular basis. The analysis of Special Collections' blog postings and topics indicated that the research-based postings generated two and a half times as many page views as announcements for our general blog. Constant and frequent postings for both blogs are an important factor in generating and maintaining readership.[25] Effectiveness of any outreach activity has to be valued relative to available staff time, breadth of collections, and other resources.

Conclusion

In 2008, the libraries were seen as a potential liability in UTSA's accreditation review. It was crucial that we find innovative and new ways to serve our population and become relevant to the campus and community. Through a variety of strategic changes in collection management, outreach, and use of new tools, Special Collections became a steward of the heritage of south Texas. Specific lessons learned during my time at UTSA include

1. Communicate. Use success stories about student engagement when speaking with library and university administration. The author used these stories—along with firm data, such as our reference use increasing nearly 500 percent over five years—to obtain additional rare book acquisition funds with the library dean. She in turn shared the stories with the vice provost to encourage funding for a six-figure scanning outsourcing project for the at-risk museum negatives. Pointing out critical preservation concerns such as boxes of decomposing negatives also strengthened the argument.
2. Help yourself. Work with development officers to identify and ask donors for support for collection activities and preservation. I worked to obtain the library's first endowed fund in my first year and successfully advocated for subsequent gifts for collection support, evidenced by the gift for the digitization of the Mexican manuscript collection.

[24] Kate Thiemer, *Web 2.0 Tools and Strategies for Archives and Local History Collections* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 2010), 33–52, 121–33. UTSA Libraries also ranked number 28 within the top 100 social media friendly college and university libraries. Beth Parker, "100 Most Social Media Friendly College and University Libraries for 2013," LibraryScienceList.com, April 4, 2013, http://librarysciencelist.com/100-most-social-media-friendly-college-university-libraries/.

[25] Sean Heyliger, Juli McLoone, and Nikki Lynn Thomas, "A Tale of Two Blogs: Lessons Learned Establishing the Top Shelf and La Cocina Historica at the University of Texas at San Antonio," *Primary Source* 30 (2011), https://msarchivists.org/the-primary-source/volume-30-2011/. See also Jill S. Stover, "Making Marketing Work for Your Library Blog," *Internet Reference Services Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (2008): 156–67, http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J136v11n04_10, and Amanda E. Cowell, "Social Media at the College of New Jersey Library," In the Library with the Lead Pipe (blog), January 18, 2017, http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2017/social-media-tcnj.

3. Know your local environment. Familiar themes emerged of donors being wary of large institutions, unfamiliar with archives, and concerned about a lack of representation or misrepresentation of their community. In this situation, online access through streamlined processing and scanning services to ensure that collections would not just be sitting on the shelves resounded with donors.
4. Be aware of cultural norms and build trust. For one organizational donor, I participated in a "Memory-o-Rama" event as part of their monthly meeting to introduce the archives to their membership. While some of the members expected that I would quickly leave after my presentation, I stayed through their meeting and dinner, listened to questions, talked with the members, put away tables, dried dishes, and made appointments for follow-up conversations.

By having a vision for how Special Collections could support larger institutional goals, I identified activities and processes that the department could accomplish with existing resources while continuing to advocate for additional support. Taking a culturally competent approach also led to ways in which activities could be tailored to our circumstances in south Texas. A revitalized Special Collections advanced UTSA's pursuit of Tier 1 status by reorienting collection development, improving collections management, focusing on access, and connecting the university with its community and culture. As a result of strategic changes, Special Collections are now a vital part of campus, accessible to scholars and people whose communities they represent. Students and faculty take advantage of resources and services, and the San Antonio community recognizes UTSA as a major steward that ensures physical and digital access for a more nuanced understanding of south Texas history.