Advocating for Collections Care

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CONSERVATION CENTER FOR ART & HISTORIC ARTIFACTS
SOCIETY OF FLORIDA ARCHIVISTS
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The Power of Internal Advocates

Internal Advocacy
Understanding Different Types of Value

- Intellectual (content)
  - Evidentiary
  - Informational
- Intrinsic
- Administrative
- Aesthetic
- Legal
- Historic (age)
- Rarity
- Commemorative
- Monetary
Why do we have to make the case?

- Perhaps not as “sexy” or exciting as other institutional functions like exhibitions
- Often behind the scenes
- Impacts are longer-term – there may be more immediate fires to put out
- Donor considerations
Mission Statement:

- Collect
- Preserve
- Disseminate

“Chester County Historical Society is a not-for-profit educational institution whose mission is to promote an understanding of the history of Chester County and southeastern Pennsylvania by collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting that history and its relationship to the region, and nation beyond, to audiences of all ages and interests.”

“The National Museum of Wildlife Art’s mission is to collect, display, interpret, and preserve the highest quality North American wildlife art, supplemented by wildlife art found throughout the world. The Museum enriches and inspires appreciation and knowledge of humanity’s relationship with nature.”

“The DePaul University Art Museum extends the institution’s commitments to excellence, diversity and social concerns through innovative exhibitions, programs, and events that analyze the variety and depth of artistic expression. The Museum acquires, preserves and displays the University’s diverse and growing collection of works of art.”
Institutional Strategic Plan

• To “adopt proactive preventive conservation as a standard practice.”
  ➢ “Develop and implement collections policies and procedures.”
  ➢ “Develop emergency procedures and responsibilities for site, staff and visitors.”
  ➢ “Develop a preservation plan for the House.”

• To “establish short-term and long-term preservation and conservation strategies for the [site] and [collections].”
  ➢ “Strategy 1: Establish protective procedures to minimize damage to permanent installations (Q2 2012 – Q4 2013)
  ➢ “Strategy 2: Develop a conservation and preservation plan (Q2 2012 – Q2 2013)
  ➢ “Strategy 3: Protect [the] main site and [collections] (Q3 2012 – Q4 2012)”

Desired Outcome: 68,000 prints, negatives (the majority cellulose acetate), and caption sets, which are presently housed together in acidic envelopes, are safely transferred and rehoused.

Resources Needed: Funding from an NEH Foundations Grant, associated resources, staff time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Lead for Implementation</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Feasibility/Impact Rating</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservation Archivist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2017 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stakeholders/Collaborators:
- Director of Programs and Services
- Reformatting Technician
- Executive Director
- Development and Communications Coordinator
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Not Helpful</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very Helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It raised awareness of collection needs</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It helped with organization of projects to improve collections</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It resulted in increased internal funding allocations for</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It supported efforts to solicit funds for recommended</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preservation or conservation projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Good communication cuts through the clutter, it doesn’t add to it. It does this by getting the right message in the right medium delivered by the right messengers, to the right audience.”

Cost of Inaction Calculator
AVPreserve
https://coi.avpreserve.com/

Digitization Cost Calculator
Digital Library Federation Assessment Interest Group’s working group on Cost Assessment
http://dashboard.diglib.org/

Preservation Statistics Survey Report
American Library Association, Association of Library Collections and Technical Services, Preservation and Reformatting Section
Compelling Stories

Data-driven:
- Economic impact
- Audiences served
- Outcomes achieved

Less tangible impacts:
- Knowledge gained
- Expression and recognition of community or group identity
- Engaging with historic and cultural collections teaches critical thinking – history helps contextualize and orient our current experiences
- Community enhancement
Stakeholder Analysis

Who is your audience?

- Are they **change-makers** (primary) or **influencers** of change-makers (secondary)?
- What is their current position, and what stakes do they hold?
- How best to reach them?
- Internal politics – understand relationships, timing
Specific Goals and Outcomes

- Funds
- Time
- People
- Support, authority
Make friends!

- Cross-disciplinary, cross-departmental collaboration
- Presentations to and special events for the Board and other administration
- All-staff meetings
- Departmental or working group meetings
- Tours of collections storage
- Inter-office memos, newsletters, emails
BE AN ADVOCATE

External Advocacy
Deciding to Advocate

“We’re nonprofit—we’re not allowed to advocate.”
Deciding to Advocate

“The best nonprofits both advocate and serve.”

--Crutchfield/Grant
Deciding to Advocate

What You Can Do:

• Educate/inform elected officials

• Support/oppose policies that affect your organization or industry
Deciding to Advocate

What You Can’t Do:

• Endorse candidates

• Make campaign contributions
Honing Your Advocacy Message

data = Impact

Stories = Relevance
Delivering Your Advocacy Message
Delivering Your Advocacy Message

Don’t Be the Only Messenger!
Delivering Your Advocacy Message

Allies and Champions:

• Board Members
• Patrons/Donors
• Teachers/Students
• Community Partners
Delivering Your Advocacy Message

Follow the Money!
Useful Tips
Useful Tip #1

Cultivate and Steward
Useful Tip #2

Staffers are your new BFFs
Useful Tip #3

Never underestimate the power of a photo opp
Useful Tip #4

Gifts: not worth the trouble
Useful Tip #5

The Actual Visit:

• Assign roles and rehearse

• Have a specific ask!

• Follow up
Useful Tip #6

Leave-behinds:

Less is more
American Alliance of Museums advocacy resources
http://www.aam-us.org/advocacy


CCAHA’s Save Pennsylvania’s Past Collections Advocacy Toolkit
http://ccaha.org/publications/collections-advocacy-toolkit


SAA Museum Archives Section Outreach/Advocacy links and resources
https://www2.archivists.org/groups/museum-archives-section/7-outreachadvocacy
Thank You

Dyani Feige, Director of Preservation Services, CCAHA

Michael Norris, Chief Strategy Officer, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance
Laura Hortz Stanton
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