

THE PRIMARY SOURCE

NEWSLETTER FROM WESTERN LIBRARIES
ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS FROM A&SC STUDENT EMPLOYEES

William Powers (Anthropology, Fall 2023)

The field of archives and special collections has held my interest for a long time. In early 2021, I was lucky enough to get in touch with Director Joffrion and the Archives & Special Collections staff. Learning that they hired students ultimately pushed me to apply for Western, and I've been working in A&SC ever since. After spending a year at Special Collections, I've most recently been working at the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies (CPNWS) under the management of Ruth Steele. My favorite experiences so far have been assisting researchers, handling archival material, and taking the lead on my own projects. After I graduate later this year with my BA in Anthropology, I plan to pursue a Masters in Library and/or Archival Science. The overall experience has solidified my love for this field, provided me with invaluable work experience, and connected me with truly wonderful and skilled people.

Jade Harding (Economics, Summer 2023)

I started working with Archives & Special Collections during my last year at Western. I didn't work my first year, so working in addition to classes was a fresh experience and I learned a good deal about time management. Also, my work was relatively unrelated to my major in Economics. A lot of it was new to me and I have a different perspective on some aspects of my major, particularly considering the context surrounding economic activity.

I worked at the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, which focuses on archival materials from or about the Pacific Northwest. Much of my time was spent with the newspaper collection, which includes regional newspapers ranging from 1853 to 1987. It has been a lot of fun getting to know the collection



William Powers, photograph courtesy of William Powers.

and its idiosyncrasies, of which there are many. It has been incredibly interesting to look through the older publications and see both what was happening day-to-day back then, and how different news reporting is today. I've also worked with photo collections, looking into people's lives in the Pacific Northwest throughout the last hundred years from family photos to floods.

At the end of winter quarter I will start studying abroad in Tokyo through a WWU international exchange program. (Actually as of writing I'm already here. It's great!)

D I R E C T O R ' S L E T T E R

In this issue we celebrate and honor the hundreds of students who have contributed their talent, time and labor to the mission of archives and special collections. Through their own words and those of their supervisors and mentors, we seek to highlight the impact of their work.

For many decades Archives & Special Collections has offered exciting opportunities for motivated and intellectually curious students to learn about the stewardship of the archives, manuscripts and rare book collections managed by University Archives, Special Collections, and the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies. These students have served as volunteers, work study students, interns, in grant positions, and as temporary contract employees, gaining valuable experience that helped prepare them for professional positions in the museum, library, and archives fields and beyond. In fact, several of our current staff members started with us in one or more of these roles, and most are graduates of Western's former graduate program in archives and records management.

Past students have engaged in the creation of online exhibits and documentary film, processed

collections and produced archival finding aids, contributed to digital collections and associated metadata, assisted in an array of preservation activities, provided research support, and developed specialized curriculum and teaching tools. Students have also provided essential support for the records management program, working closely with campus departments to ensure compliance with the legal requirements for university recordkeeping.

Supporting the student work experience is just one of the many ways in which our division contributes to Western's teaching and learning mission. In support of student research needs, we continue to expand our teaching presence by offering specialized curriculum using primary sources, by actively developing sustainable online content, and by continuing to build and refine our outreach and programming efforts.

On behalf of Archives & Special Collections, I extend our deep appreciation to all the students who have worked with us to expand this mission over the years. We are very proud of our shared legacy.

~ Elizabeth Joffrion, Director

T E A C H I N G & L E A R N I N G W I T H A & S C

Archives & Special Collections staff have enjoyed welcoming and working with students from several classes over winter and spring quarters. Courses hosted by A&SC in 2023 so far include:

- ART 120 Surface and Color
- C/AM 302 Columbia River Treaty
- COMM 240 Media Studies
- DSGN 230 Type 1
- ENG 307 | 317 Medieval Survey
- ENG 335 Global Texts Outside N. America
- ENG 341 Studies in Children's Literature
- ENVS 497Y Methods in Environmental Studies
- HIST 112 Western Civilization
- HIST 310 History of Ancient Mesopotamia
- HIST 390 Golden Age of Piracy
- HIST 391 History of the Pacific Northwest
- HIST 490 | 597C Gender, Reproduction and Health in the N. American West
- HNRS 350 Coming to Terms with the Holocaust
- HUMA 281 Representations of Otherness
- HUMA 390 Indigenous Art and Histories of Resistance
- HUMA 390 Reading, Religion, and Power
- JOUR 207 Newswriting
- JOUR 340 History of U.S. Journalism
- REL 336 New Testament

Interested in scheduling a class session with A&SC? Please contact us at archives.speccoll@wwu.edu!

REFLECTIONS FROM A&SC STUDENT EMPLOYEES**Grafton Grimm (History + Museum Studies, Spring 2023)**

Over the past four years, I've had the pleasure to assist with a variety of operations within Archives & Special Collections units at both the Wilson Library and Goltz-Murray Archives Buildings. Interviewing for the position at Special Collections was one of the very first experiences I had at Western, meeting with former Special Collections Manager Tamara Belts before beginning my freshman year. Since that time, I have participated in a large-scale reorganization of the rare book and children's collection, digitization and organization of materials such as Judaica and Jewish oral histories, various conservation efforts, and a multitude of archival rehousing projects.



Grafton Grimm, photograph courtesy of Grafton Grimm.

My time spent working in Archives & Special Collections has provided both inspiration towards possible career paths as well as a wide breadth of experience within these fields of interest. Having the opportunity to grow within this wonderful department over my entire academic career at Western has been an opportunity I greatly cherish. Moreover, working alongside these incredible materials, faculty, and staff has guided and bolstered my interest in museology and library sciences. If not for the wonderful relationships I had the chance to develop with the materials and incomparable staff, I could have very well taken a drastically different direction in my studies and aspirations. I am so very grateful that this is the path I ended up taking.

Following my graduation from Western this spring, I plan to take a small break from academia before pursuing graduate studies. While I have yet to pick an exact school, I'm considering both local museology programs and opportunities abroad. Hopefully, in this impending interim, I can find employment within the museum, library, or archival field, and continue gaining valuable experience and saving funds for future education.

Archives & Special Collections' dedication to collecting, organizing, and making accessible a vast array of rare and unique materials is truly remarkable. From meticulously curated collections of books, photographs, and manuscripts to countless fascinating examples of artifacts and memorabilia, these materials provide a window into the past that is both illuminating and inspiring. Your commitment to preserving and promoting the vast cultural heritage held within your collective walls is truly commendable.

I would not be the person I am today without the incredible kindness and support displayed by everyone within the department. On behalf of the entire community, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for all that you do. It has been my utmost pleasure to have been a part of this most distinguished institution and I thank you all for everything you have done on my behalf.

CELEBRATING AND THANKING A & S C STUDENT EMPLOYEES

Maya Becerra (Sociology + Spanish and Psychology minors, Spring 2023) and Sarah Welti (Environmental Policy + Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Spring 2023)

University Archives & Records Management is grateful to have two fantastic work study students on our team. Maya Becerra has worked for UARM since the beginning of her freshman year in Fall of 2019. Maya is majoring in Sociology with minors in Spanish and Psychology. Maya stuck it out with us through the pandemic, working remotely on a project to transcribe Board of Trustees records from the 1950s. She continues to provide highly efficient and capable work, including transporting records to and from the Records Center, fulfilling records retrievals, and other special projects. Maya's ongoing effort to digitize older Board of Trustees records helps make our archival materials more accessible online via Western Libraries' MABEL platform. Maya graduates this summer. After school, she plans to expand her professional experience in human resources, eventually seeking a graduate degree in leadership and management.

Sarah Welti joined UARM in Winter 2023. She is nearly done with her double majors in Environmental Studies - Policy, and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies. After school, Sarah plans to stick around Bellingham and enjoy the Northwest. Sarah has tackled a large indexing project for us, involving Fairhaven student academic files. In the last couple of months, Sarah has indexed 118 of 218 boxes in this project. These kinds of indexing projects hold

great value to the department as they provide increased searchability and access to our records, allowing us to serve our patrons and WWU offices more efficiently. Sarah also conducts records retrievals for us when needed. We benefit from the intelligence, focus, and conscientiousness of both Sarah and Maya.



Maya Becerra (left) and Sarah Welti (right), photograph courtesy of Sarah Nelson Smith.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our volunteers and student employees for all they do in support of Archives & Special Collections. We would also like to thank the many individuals, families, and organizations who have made generous monetary gifts and contributions of collection materials.

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