

Library Collections Conservation Discussion Group 2011: Models for Educating Library and Archives Conservators

ABSTRACT

The Library Collections Conservation Discussion Group (LCCDG) of the Book and Paper Group was pleased to present, "Models for Educating Library and Archives Conservators." This session consisted of a panel discussion moderated by Ellen Cunningham-Kruppa, University of Delaware, who began with a brief introduction of the topic mentioning the Mellon Foundation's support to each of the programs represented on the panel. Those representing conservation programs gave an overview of their program, and how they intend to provide education and training for library and archives conservators. The presentations concluded with Michele Cloonan, Simmons College, providing some historical context to the teaching of library and archives conservation, and the library and archives courses she sees as critical for conservators. Finally, the discussion was opened up to comments and questions from the audience.

Representatives from the conservation programs included Margaret Holben Ellis, New York University and the Morgan Library and Museum, Lois Olcott Price, the University of Delaware-Winterthur, and Judy Walsh, Buffalo State College.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

ELLEN CUNNINGHAM-KRUPPA

Currently, they are trying to take a broad approach in developing the training of library and archives conservators by engaging the profession. With the support of the Mellon Foundation, Ms. Cunningham-Kruppa will be assembling

This open discussion took place during AIC's 39th Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA. The moderators organized the panelists, led the discussion, and recorded notes. Readers are reminded that the moderators do not necessarily endorse all the comments recorded and that although every effort was made to record proceedings accurately, further evaluation or research is advised before putting treatment observations into practice.

a committee, which will counsel with the three Art conservation programs. The committee will be composed of four U.S. and three Western European professionals. Ms. Cunningham-Kruppa went on to discuss the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to education, and how this has always been apart of library and archives conservation education. She concluded by introducing the panelists.

LOIS OLCOTT PRICE

University of Delaware, Winterthur

Ms. Price began by discussing the existing strengths of the University of Delaware program. These are a well established conservation and material science education, a strong interdisciplinary approach, an ability to encourage international study, the Winterthur Library with excellent collections and the knowledgeable onsite staff, and the preventive conservation program. An area of need is a Library and Information Science program. To address this lack of expertise, they will be partnering with Simmons College. Students will be able to obtain a certificate in Library Science. Students also need to develop relevant binding skills, therefore they be offering classes at the North Bennett Street School. Further, Ms. Price would like to strengthen ties and communication with professional organizations, such as ALA and SAA, in order to promote the program and its graduates. Ms. Price concluded by asking the profession to mentor promising pre-program students, and to consider taking students for summer work projects or internships.

JUDITH WALSH

Buffalo State College

Currently, their students are in class from 9–5 5 days/week, which would make it difficult to add additional course work. While the library and archive students are under paper conservation, they can take an interdisciplinary approach and collaborate in other areas. Overall, the emphasis of the program is on treatment with analytical components.

With funding from the Mellon Foundation, they are expanding the department and will be adding a book lab and additional paper labs.

They will be looking to supplement the curriculum by providing seminars and intersession courses in book subjects, as well as moving image and recorded sound. Also, if there is interest the students will be able to take summer courses at Simmons College and the North Bennett Street School.

Ms. Walsh has found that it is difficult to retain students in the library and archives. Therefore, additional funding has been added to allow these students to attend conferences, take non-credit courses, and/or pursue other projects.

MARGARET HOLBEN-ELLIS

NYU has a long history of collaboration in the education of library and archives conservators. When the Conservation Education Program, Columbia University, founded in 1981 by Paul Banks opened Ms. Ellis taught many of these students during the nine years of the program.

Ms. Holben-Ellis described the rigorous NYU program: students receive an MA and Advanced Certificate in Conservation after completing six Art History courses and fifteen conservation courses culminated by a full-time nine-month internship. They are required to have a reading knowledge of French or German, and to complete a thesis.

In order to address the needs of the library and archives, NYU would like to strengthen their program in three ways:

1. By integrating additional coursework offered within New York University by the Palmer School of Library and Information Science.
2. Adding more focused practical treatment courses at Columbia University Libraries, and the Morgan Library and Museum
3. Providing opportunities for learning during winter intersession and the summer with courses at the NYC Rare Book and Manuscript Workshop, Rare Book School, and the Book and Paper Intensive.

MICHELE CLOONAN

Simmons College

Ms. Cloonan's presentation started with discussing the history of conservation in libraries, and then went onto explored how the mission of libraries and archives has evolved over the years from collecting, organizing and managing to preserving, providing access, reference services and sharing resources. From there, she discussed some core library and archival subjects that conservators need to know. These range from more traditional subjects, such as History of the Book and Archives, Organization of Collections and Preservation Management, as well as to more contemporary topics, such as Archiving and

Preserving Digital Media, Digital Curation and Stewardship, and Audio-Visual Materials. In their program students will be able to pick which courses suit their needs or areas of interest. Some courses will be offered in person the first year, and by the second year, many will be online.

DISCUSSION SESSION

Following the final presentation, the moderator opened the discussion period for comments, questions and responses. These are summarized and paraphrased below.

The primary focus of the discussion centered on adequately preparing students for the job market, and if there will be positions available to them.

Each of the programs has built into their curriculum a great deal of flexibility in order to be able to respond appropriately to the market. Many of them see the proposed programs as being in a pilot phase, and would appreciate and will be seeking feedback from the profession in order to improve them. They see the biggest issue with the job market as there being too few entry level positions. It is hoped more post-graduate fellowships will be created, and that employers would look to fill grant positions with newly graduated students. Further, each of the programs will be graduating fewer overall graduates, which will ease competition for available positions. Although, there is this concern, it has been found that 90% of University of Texas graduates have found positions. In the current economic climate, it may take students longer to find jobs, but eventually they do find them.

Lastly, private practice has often been a viable option for students, and these conservators are also willing to be mentors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The co-chairs of LCCDG wish to express their gratitude to Ellen Cunningham-Kruppa for moderating the panel, as well as to all of the panelists Michele Cloonan, Margaret Holben-Ellis, Lois Olcott Price and Judith Walsh. Their willingness to participate in the panel is greatly appreciated. The co-chairs would also like to give a special thanks to Marieka Kaye for coordinating the session in the absence of the co-chairs.

WERNER HAUN

Collection Conservator
The New York Public Library
Barbara Goldsmith Preservation Division
wernerhaun@nypl.org

JUSTIN JOHNSON

Assistant Book Conservator
Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens
jjohnson@huntington.org