



Report of
the Collections
Committee

University
of Alberta

1998/99

the report



s u m m a r y

There are 35 museums and collections at the University of Alberta. Each of these collections is an integral part of the teaching, research, and public programs on campus. Each collection and museum has a curator, appointed by its department, to oversee the day-to-day business of the collection. Museums and Collections Services (MACS), part of the University's Learning Systems Enterprises, works to promote and assist collections on campus as a whole. Two committees – the Curators Committee and the Collections Committee – also provide advisory services to the museums and collections on campus.

This report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the Collections Committee, and selected collections-based highlights and achievements from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999.

The Collections Committee is a standing committee of the Vice-President (Academic) and Provost, and is made up of twelve representatives from across campus. Its role is to advise the President and Vice- Presidents on all matters pertaining to the collections.

committee

Members of the Collections Committee

Ex Officio (Voting)

J Andrews, Executive Director, Learning Systems Enterprises
Dr A Vanterpool, President, Friends of the U of A Museums
Dr P Willoughby, Department of Anthropology, Chair,
Curators Committee

Curators Committee (Elected)

* **Dr M Wilson**, Department of Biological Sciences
Dr R Belland, Devonian Botanic Garden
Dr J Nelson, Department of Biological Sciences
Dr J Rossiter, Department of History and Classics

General Faculties Council (Elected)

A Schmude, Office of the Registrar
Prof A Schmidt, Faculty of Extension

Graduate Students' Association (Elected)

H Santa-Balazs, Department of Art and Design

Students' Union (Elected)

A Idicula, Students' Union

Secretary (Non-Voting)

F Blondheim, Museums and Collections Services

* Chair, Collections Committee

Meetings

In 1998/99, the Collections Committee met on:

27 November 1998

26 January 1999 and

24 April 1999



Activities and Accomplishments of the Committee

Vision Statement

The Collections Committee approved the following as a working vision statement:

The museums and collections at the University of Alberta will be recognized nationally and internationally for their excellence and for the vital role they play in teaching, research and community outreach.

1. Election of Chair

In November 1998, the committee elected Dr. Mark Wilson as chair for a term ending 30 November 2000.

2. Vision Statement

The Collections Committee discussed a vision statement for collections at the University of Alberta. The vision statement is intended to guide all collections at the University both individually and collectively, as well as all associated activities, committees and individuals. As a result of this vision and to continue to build on the resources of the museums and collections on campus, the committee felt that there was a need for more collection programs, and a facility in which to undertake programs and events. J Andrews presented the possibility of developing case statements for endowment funds for collection programs and for a facility. The committee gave their support and approval to this idea.

3. Terms of Reference

The Collections Committee passed a motion revising the committee's Terms of Reference in relation to the undergraduate student representative on the committee. Instead of having the Students' Union supply one of their officers, the committee will in future themselves recruit a representative from the student body.

4. Adjudication of Funding Requests

Every year the museums and collections on campus submit proposals for funding from the Community Outreach Endowment Fund. The Collections Committee then reviews these requests, and recommendations for funding are made. Requests for funding always exceed the amount of funding available. Funding collections programs, especially outreach programs, continues to be a challenge. The Board of Directors of the Friends of the University of Alberta Museums asked the Collections Committee to adjudicate curatorial submissions for a \$1000 acquisition gift in honour of the 10th anniversary of the Friends organization. The Collections Committee short-listed three requests from which the Friends Board later made their final selection – Guatemalan wedding clothes for the Department of Human Ecology's Clothing and Textiles Collection.

5. Annual Report

Dr. Mark Wilson and Janine Andrews answered questions from the General Faculties Council Executive regarding the 1997/98 annual report. A result of this meeting was a recommendation for a new annual report format that provides more detail about the achievements and highlights of museums and collections on campus.



Department of Museums and Collections Services

Museums and Collections Services (MACS) provided the Collections Committee with relevant information on MACS activities during the year, many of which are highlighted in this report. The following are selected key initiatives currently being undertaken by the department.

Multi MIMSY

MACS staff have continued to assist the campus collections community with their use of Multi MIMSY (Oracle-based relational database management software for collections use). Ongoing support is now provided to 13 Multi MIMSY campus clients, with 4 new databases having been established in the areas of Vertebrate Paleontology, Soil Sciences, Pathology, and the Ukrainian Folklore Archive during the current year. Plans to pilot Web access to the Meteorite and Pathology databases are currently in place. The University's use of Multi MIMSY was demonstrated at Edmonton's InfoCity Festival in February and at the Campus Computing Symposium in June.

Sun SITE

Together with Computing and Network Services, the University Library and the Department of Biological Sciences, MACS staff participated in the Sun Microsystems / UofA launch of the University as a Sun SITE (<http://www.sunsite.ualberta.ca/>) on 3 December 1998. The University of Alberta Virtual Museum project will be an initial feature of this Canadian site - providing the University with new, efficient and exciting ways to present its object-based teaching and research collections to a variety of audiences, resulting in enhanced access

and education. MACS staff will work with the University's curators, researchers and professors to determine and implement various types of electronic access through the Sun SITE gateway - as appropriate to each collection.

MA:IN

The Museums Alberta: Information Network, a joint partnership of the University of Alberta and Museums Alberta, continued to provide a variety of services (advisory, communications, professional development and training, museum site visits) to Alberta's provincial museum community. Network operations - headquartered at the University since 1997 - were transferred to the Museums Alberta offices as of 30 June 1999.

Funding Assistance

Each collection on campus must rely on external funding to maintain and develop collections, facilities and programs. Most collections make use of the various granting organizations to fund ongoing and one-time projects. The grants listed on page five constitute museum-related funding sources, and were facilitated and coordinated by staff at MACS. Other research funding source information will be compiled during the current year and summarized in next year's annual report.

funding

Museums Alberta (Provincial lottery funds support this granting agency)

\$4000.00	Anthropology (Ethnographic Collection) – conservation analysis
\$3900.00	Anthropology (Zooarchaeology) – documentation upgrade
\$4000.00	Renewable Resources (Wildlife Collection) – storage
\$22,600.00	MACS/ MA:IN partnership – grant in aid

Friends of the University of Alberta Museums

\$400.00	Renewable Resources (Soil Sciences Collection) – field collection
\$2373.00	Music (Centre for Ethnomusicology) – summer public relations student
\$1000.00	Human Ecology (Clothing and Textiles Collection) – artifact acquisition
\$1268.00	Museums and Collections Services (University of Alberta Art and Artifact Collection) – two print acquisitions

Community Outreach Endowment Fund
(University of Alberta supported fund)

\$1000.00	Anthropology (Fossil Hominid Collection) – upgrade collection material
\$60.00	Anthropology (Zooarchaeology (Faunal) Reference Collection) – volunteer recognition
\$2500.00	Biological Sciences (Paleobotanical Collection) – specimen cabinets
\$3306.00	Biological Sciences (Laboratory for Vertebrate Palaeontology) – specimen cases
\$865.00	Biological Sciences (Vascular Plant Herbarium) – specimen freezer
\$980.00	Devonian Botanic Garden (Herbarium of Cultivated Plants) – microscope light source
\$200.00	Renewable Resources (Soil Sciences Collection) – documentation project

Museums Assistance Program
(Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada)

\$30,000.00	Museums and Collections Services – Multi MIMSY database project for Laboratory for Vertebrate Paleontology
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Knowledge Network – Received and Administered by Museums and Collections Services (Department of Advanced Education, Government of Alberta)

\$10,000.00	Mineralogy Collection – Multi MIMSY database project
\$15,000.00	Vascular Plant Herbarium – Multi MIMSY database project
\$15,000.00	Soil Sciences Collection – Multi MIMSY database project
\$15,000.00	Palaeobotanical Collection – Multi MIMSY database project
\$10,000.00	Ukrainian Folklore Archives – Multi MIMSY database project
\$35,000.00	Museums and Collections Services – Virtual Museum

Faculty of Arts

\$ 4000.00	Museums and Collections Services – Interdepartmental course development
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\$182,452.00 Total funds acquired for collections projects in 1998/99

highlights

Attract and satisfy outstanding undergraduate, graduate, international and life-long learning students

In 1998, the University of Alberta adopted seven strategic initiatives to guide all facets of the University's operation as part of its Strategic Business Plan for 1998-2001. The museums and collections on campus, as critical components of University life, worked towards meeting these initiatives in diverse ways.

The research and learning opportunities available in the collections satisfy the academic needs of their outstanding students. Some examples of student excellence related to museums and collections include:

Meet the research needs of the future



There are two types of stickleback shown here: *Culaea inconstans* and *Pungitius pungitius* - part of an ongoing research project. From the Museum of Zoology, Department of Biological Sciences.

- Nine graduate students, under the supervision of curators from the **University of Alberta Museum of Zoology, Cryptogamic Herbarium, and the Wildlife Collection**, were featured in the 1998/99 biennial report for the Bio-Diversity Grants Program.

- A PhD student in the Department of Music received an Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship and a Fulbright Scholarship. An MA student in the same department was awarded a Province of Alberta Graduate Fellowship.

- In the **Clothing and Textiles Collection**, students worked on

research for an exhibit entitled *Material Meaning*. Other students in the department designed and created mounts for the artifacts to be displayed in the exhibit.

- A PhD student in **Biological Sciences** published several papers during the 1998/99 academic year, and made presentations at both the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology meetings in Salt Lake City and the IGCP 406 Annual Meeting in Warsaw, Poland.

Students and staff at the University of Alberta are actively involved in research related to museums and collections. Some examples of research from the past year include the following:

- In the **Vascular Plant Herbarium**, curator Dr. Sean Graham along with undergraduate and graduate students are working on scientific research using DNA isolated from herbarium specimens to measure genetic and phylogenetic variation.

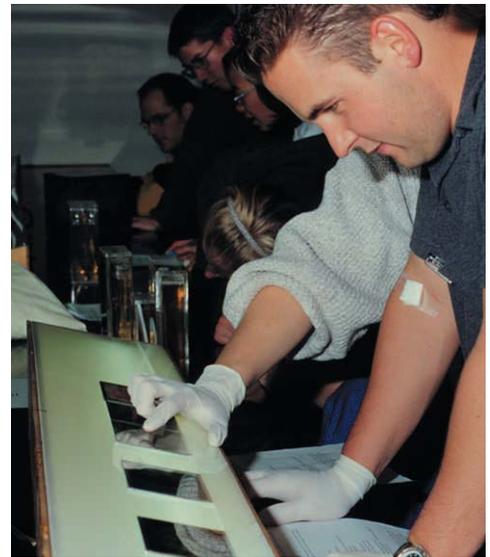
- A partnership has developed between the **Parasite Collection** and the **University of Alberta Museum of Zoology** to conduct important research on the stickleback fish in Hawrelak Park. The researchers are investigating how parasites in the fish are modifying fish behaviour, causing the stickleback to swim towards their predators instead of away from them.



The **Pathology Gross Teaching Collection** in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry is being used in a variety of educational and research projects. The Collection is used for undergraduate and postgraduate pathology training, and for the preparation of single case reports. In 1998/99 planning began for the development of a web interface for the searchable database of specimens in the Pathology collection.



Calycanthus floridus (Carolina Allspice)
Researchers in the Vascular Plant Herbarium are using these plants in their DNA isolation research.



Top left and above: Students working with the Pathology Gross Teaching Collection.

highlights

Meet the needs of our communities

The University of Alberta's collections attract visitors from all age groups and walks of life. Public outreach services include identification services, school tours, loans of artifacts or specimens, and public events. Some examples of these in 1998/99 include:

- **Ukrainian Folklore Archives** assisted the public in researching genealogy and special event traditions.
- **The Mineralogy and Petrology Museum** provided schools with education kits, and toured numerous classes through their exhibits.
- **The Archaeology Collection** loaned material to other post-secondary institutions, such as Grant MacEwan Community College and the Faculty of Extension, to aid in their teaching programs.

- **The Print Study Centre** hosted a number of exhibits during the 1998/99 academic year, including works by Ryoji Ikeda - prints completed while a guest artist in the Department of Art & Design, and prints from the University of Selesia with the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies.

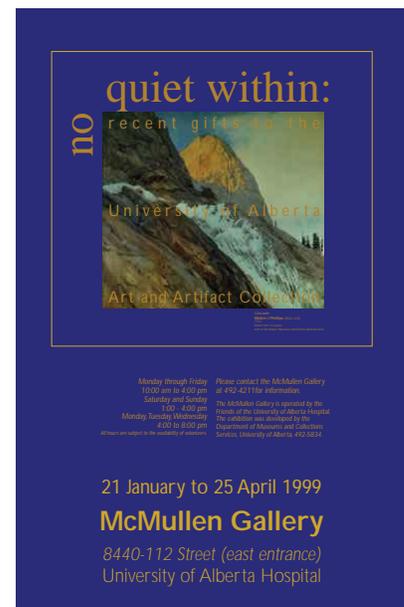
- A new display was completed in the **Mineralogy-Petrology Museum: *The Canadian Shield*** is the third of a series of displays mounted in the last three years to illustrate the Geology and Petrology of Western Canada.

- To celebrate International Museums Day in May of 1999, curators from the University of Alberta were featured in studio for the A-Channel's ***Big Breakfast*** program, and on campus for the ITV ***First News*** program.

Respond to enrolment and fiscal challenges



As a thank you to Wayne Roberts for speaking to their classes about zoology, students from Lendrum School sent **Thank You** cards, such as the one shown here.



The University of Alberta Art and Artifact Collection prepared an exhibit entitled ***No Quiet Within*** at the McMullen Gallery in the University of Alberta Hospital, from January to April of 1999.



Flowers and Flowers (Some with Thorns), J.C. Heywood, 1999.

• **The Centre for Ethnomusicology:** *Eric Dalen: A Prairie Fiddler's Life* exhibit at the Print Study Centre was sponsored by the Centre for Ethnomusicology. Other events featured performances by students, members of the local community, and well-known national musicians. In total, approximately 500 visitors participated in their public programs.

New Acquisitions

The museums and collections at the University of Alberta acquire new artifacts, specimens, and works of art

through donations, field collecting, purchases, or exchanges. Building collections is an important way of ensuring that collections remain active and relevant for teaching, research and public programming purposes. Some examples of recent acquisitions include the following:

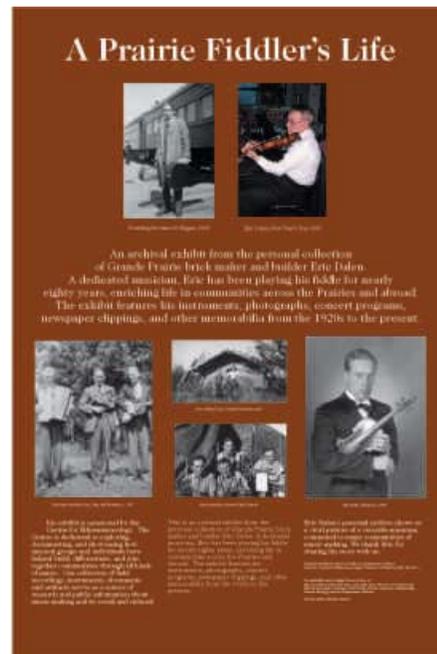
• **Dentistry Museum Collection:** dental chair made in Estonia, circa 1850 (Value \$1500), and a treadle dental drill, made in USA, circa 1880 (value \$1000).

• **Vascular Plant Herbarium:** accessioned 1216 new specimens.

• **Dendrology Collection:** acquired 277 specimens of woody and other forest plants from British Columbia and eastern North America.

• **Fieldwork in 1998 for the Laboratory for Vertebrate Paleontology** produced the second known specimen of the primitive shark-like fish called *Kathemacanthus* - and the first specimen in which the head and jaws are visible.

• **The University of Alberta Art and Artifact Collection** acquired numerous prints, paintings and portfolios with a total value of \$199,018.14 in 1998 and 1999. Included were important Japanese prints and a portfolio that was a gift from the graduating class in Art and Design.



Provide high quality support services and facilities



Volunteers move artifacts from the Clothing and Textiles Collection.

Meet employer's needs

In order to maintain their collections for future research, teaching and community outreach, the collection spaces must meet appropriate museum standards. Many collections at the University of Alberta have the same beginnings as the rest of the campus' physical plant. As a result, collections require capital renewal to upgrade and maintain their facilities. The following collections made improvements to their collection facilities in the past year:

- **The Clothing and Textiles Collection** completed the majority of their move to the department's new home in the Human Ecology Building.
- **The W. G. Hardy Collection of Ancient Near Eastern and Classical Antiquities** started the process of relocating to their new collection space in the Tory Building.
- **Renewable Resources** renovated storage space and supplied new cabinetry for the Wildlife Collection.

Many of the museums and collections have collections-based programs that encourage participants to gain work skills and experience in the museum field. Volunteers, interns, co-op students, and temporary

paid employees are able to work on everything from entering data into computerized collections database systems, to supervising collection usage.

- A partnership between **Museums and Collections Services** and the **Department of Art and Design** resulted in the development and delivery of Interdepartmental Studies 425: Museums Studies – Issues and Practice. This senior undergraduate and graduate course was delivered in the winter of 1999 to a full class, with a waiting list of interested students.
- Collections that utilized volunteers in the 1998/9 year include: **University of Alberta Museum of Zoology, Clothing and Textiles Collection, Centre for Ethnomusicology, Print Study Centre.**
- **The Pathology Gross Teaching Collection** employed a summer student starting in June of 1999 to work on case selection and database entry for their Multi MIMSY database project. The database will be linked to a searchable web site for use by students in medical fields.
- **Museums and Collections Services** employed a co-op student from the Faculty of Business to work on marketing issues.

Attract and retain outstanding faculty and researchers



As with attracting outstanding students, many departments are able to attract and retain excellent faculty and staff because of their collections.

Three new faculty members were hired and took on responsibilities within the collections in their departments.

They are:

1. **Dr. Michael Frishkopf**, Killam Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Music's Centre for Ethnomusicology
2. **Dr. Felix Sperling**, Department of Biological Sciences, Curator of EH Strickland Entomological Collection
3. **Dr. Sean Graham**, Department of Biological Sciences, Curator of the Vascular Plant Herbarium



Researchers in the **Laboratory for Vertebrate Paleontology** began work on the Wonder Block this year. This remarkable fossil slab, containing a total of eight fish fossils, was found in 1996 by Allan Lindoe during a field expedition to the Mackenzie Mountains.

The Future

Museums and collections at the University of Alberta are looking forward to an active future. Proposals have been prepared for the development of important community outreach projects such as the Virtual Museum and Discovery Tours.

In addition, a proposal for a major exhibit is under consideration to highlight the various collections on campus. The continued use of collections in teaching, research and community service will ensure that museums and collections at the University of Alberta remain a vital part of the community. Raising the profile of collections on campus and across the country will remind students of the unique opportunities available at this University and help instill pride in U of A graduates.



This report was prepared by:

Museums and Collections Services

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