Introduction to SCRC

The Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) of the Morris Library at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIU) collects and preserves unique and rare historical materials in selected subject areas, and promotes the use of these materials by Southern Illinois University Carbondale students and faculty, visiting scholars, and the wider public. Our goal is to advance scholarship and further the educational, research, and service missions of the university.

History and Organization

From its beginnings in 1956, when the library acquired a small collection of Walt Whitman first editions, SCRC has evolved in structure to reflect the growth of its holdings and the strengths of its subject areas. SCRC is organized into several curatorial units. The Manuscripts division includes our collections of American philosophy, theater, American and British expatriate authors, World War I, and Southern Illinois history and culture. University Archives documents the growth and development of the University, campus life, and campus constituencies. Rare Books collects materials related to First Amendment freedoms, expatriate and modernist literature, Irish literature and history, American philosophy, American and British expatriate authors, James Joyce, John Dewey, fine printing, and Southern Illinois history and culture. In 2006, Political Papers were separated from Manuscripts to highlight our collections of 20th and 21st century Illinois politicians, elected officials, political appointees and political parties and groups.

SCRC Responsibilities

Research

Materials are collected and made available to further the research of SIU faculty, students, visiting scholars and the public in the form of books, articles, undergraduate and graduate papers, journalism, historic preservation, exhibits, educational materials, live productions and film documentaries.

Preservation and Security

Crucial to the ongoing operation of SCRC is the physical protection and preservation of research materials. The holdings maintenance program for SCRC includes rehousing manuscripts, encapsulation and preservation photocopying. SCRC materials are non-circulating and maintained within dedicated, environmentally controlled areas monitored by university security personnel.

Outreach and Access
SCRC is committed to outreach activities that further the awareness, development and use of its materials. Outreach includes presentations, lectures, tours, workshops, and brochures. It also includes classes that provide general information to undergraduate and graduate students on the use of primary research materials as well as specific information on the holdings of the department. SCRC also prepares in-house and traveling exhibits to inform the university and larger public. Outreach aimed specifically at the scholarly community includes publishing notices of collection openings and articles about collections in professional journals, submitting bibliographical information about the collections to national cataloging databases, and increasing SCRC's internet presence.

**Curriculum Support**

The collections support both undergraduate and graduate curricula and programs at SIU. The collections program also provides support for University policy makers and program administrators.

**Acquisitions**

SCRC acquires materials through donation, transfer, loan, deposit, and purchase. Donations of materials and funds are essential to maintaining and developing the collections. Grant funding for special projects is sought when such projects will not diminish the level of care and service of the collections, and when they can contribute substantially to the acquisition, arrangement, description, or use of the collections. Materials are also purchased to supplement and support the research of the collections.

**SCRC Clientele**

SCRC policy is to make materials available to researchers on equal terms, subject to the appropriate care and handling of materials by the researchers. Regular clientele include scholars, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, SIU administrators and staff, donors, journalists, pre-college students, the philosophical and cultural community, as well as the general public. Persons wishing to use collections must register and present proper identification.