

Preservation of Materials Policy

Rationale

The collections of the Central Washington University Libraries, in addition to their research and intrinsic value, represent a significant cost investment. The CWU Libraries is committed to preserving its collections, consistent with the goals and objectives of Central Washington University and its other campuses.

An active preservation program encourages respect for the library and its collections, reduces the loss of materials through neglect or carelessness, and conserves resources through the application of preventive and corrective measures. Preservation, in fact, is an essential component in any activity involving introduction of library materials into collections (selection, acquisition, and cataloging) and handling by library staff and users. Much of this depends on staff understanding and observance of good preservation practices. Active participation and leadership in the preservation program is the responsibility of all staff.

Preservation Defined

"Preservation" is the set of procedures taken to prevent, stop, or neutralize deterioration of library materials through the administration of: storage techniques and housing of materials, environment; security/prevention of theft; handling practices; as well as through user and staff education. Replacement is a form of preservation, as is changing the format of materials (both in print and electronic) in order to preserve the intellectual content.

"Conservation" defines the actions taken to prevent, stop, or retard deterioration of individual items through treatment level intervention into the physical state of the item.

"Preservation" is used here as the broader term encompassing both preservation and conservation.

Stake Holders

Responsibility for directing the preservation program rests with the University Archivist, who, with appropriate consultation, formulates, implements, and coordinates preservation policies and activities on a library-wide basis. However, as safety and security is everyone's responsibility, the same applies to the care of the Library's collections.

Goals Of Preserving Collections

Within the limitations imposed by current budget and staffing levels, the Central Washington University Libraries strive to provide a preservation program that includes the following elements for preserving its print, electronic, and digital collections:

1. Adheres to nationally (ALA¹) and professionally (SAA², RBMS³) accepted preservation standards and techniques. This includes limited conservation treatment of library materials using permanent, nondestructive materials.
2. Remains consistent with current and future standards as directed by federal, state, and local law. Specifically, outlined by the State of Washington Administrative Code (WAC).
3. Assesses and improves the physical care of library materials (electronic and print). This includes: intellectual/physical handling, reformatting, migrating, storage, environmental conditions, collections security, and up-to-date disaster prevention/preparedness planning.
4. Ensures that effective preservation options are implemented. Present options include commercial binding and rebinding, minor in-house repair and binding, protective enclosures, replacement, limited preservation photo-duplication and, in rare instances, conservation treatment.
5. Reviews and identifies materials requiring preservation. Items in poor condition can be identified through

general stack maintenance, circulation, and physical surveys of collections. In cases of non-routine treatment, subject-specialists, and other librarians and staff may recommend preservation options appropriate to the material being reviewed.

6. Conducts periodic training of staff and awareness as needed.

¹ American Library Association

² Society of American Archivists

³ Rare Books and Manuscripts

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