April 1, 2011

Dear Provost Johnson,

Special Collections in the University Libraries appreciates the opportunity to respond to “Proposal 7” of your Curricular Review Proposal of March 7th: “Close the Special Collections & University Archives Department of the University Libraries.”

We understand the extreme circumstances under which you have had to make very difficult choices, based on the information available to you, to sacrifice some areas of the university in order to protect and strengthen other areas, and we respect your sincere attempts to identify the options that would do the least harm to the University’s core mission.

We accept that the library budget must be reduced by a pre-determined amount in order to meet the devastating budget reduction imposed on the University, and we realize that your intention is to minimize the damage to the organization by closing a department that appears to be less central to the library’s operation, applying the “vertical cut” model that is used in the colleges.

However, that model is less applicable to an academic library. We can demonstrate that Special Collections is an integral part of a research library and a research university, performing a central function in supporting the University’s research and teaching, especially in the humanities and social sciences. We believe that the decision to close Special Collections at this time is unnecessarily hasty and that doing so would have unforeseen detrimental consequences, financial, legal, and otherwise, for the University.

We are able to respond to your proposal with an alternative that will meet your required budget reduction for the Libraries, yet keep Special Collections and University Archives open through the next biennium. It is our hope and expectation that our short-term proposal will allow for the development of a long term strategy to preserve this valuable resource without damaging other library services.

In addition to its academic functions, Special Collections has served a central development function for both the Library and the University. That role provides both an incentive and the means to remain open during the biennium. Generous donations to Special Collections in the
past will allow a slightly reduced department to remain open while the entire library organization engages in a thoughtful process, informed by data, to re-examine its priorities and operations, determining the best allocation of library resources to serve the needs of our stakeholders.

Strategic planning that could result in reorganization, realignments and budget adjustments requires deliberation, communication, and widespread participation. This process should not be rushed. The Library has a tradition of boldly adjusting its structure and services in response to internal and external change. With the departure of our long-time Vice President for Information Technology and Dean of Libraries and the subsequent appointment of an Interim Dean for the next biennium, as well as with Teaching and Learning Technologies units moving into the library organization, adjustments in priorities and staffing will be addressed in the forthcoming biennium. The role and functions of Special Collections will be examined along with other parts of the organization during this process.

To meet Special Collections’ portion of the required budget reduction for the Libraries, state funds will not be used to support Special Collections during the forthcoming biennium. Please see the attached summary, “Alternative funding proposal for Special Collections and University Archives FY 12-1” for details.

We hope that this alternate plan will meet with your approval and that you will trust us and work with us over the biennium to ensure that library priorities are in harmony with academic priorities. Attached is additional information about Special Collections for your review.

Sincerely,

Donnelly Curtis
Director of Research Collections and Services and
Head of Special Collections
### Alternative funding proposal for Special Collections and University Archives FY 12-13

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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

- One part-time classified staff member will be transferred to Technical Services to fill a recent vacancy.
- Salaries and benefits of the remaining library faculty and staff assigned to Special Collections will be paid from soft funds during both FY 2012 and FY 2013.
- Student assistant wages and other departmental needs will be generated by self-supporting activities.
- Digitization activities will continue.
- Donations of new research collections will be accepted in strict accordance with the Collection Policy Statement (Appendix A).
Response to Proposal 7: Close the Special Collections & University Archives
Department of the University Libraries

Introduction

A Special Collections department within an academic library is unlike an academic department within a college. UNR librarians are members of the academic faculty, and tenured librarians are afforded the same rights as tenured teaching or research faculty if their department is under consideration for closure during a budget reduction process, but that is the only similarity. Therefore, a review of the Provost’s proposal and the department’s response must take the differences into consideration. Most of the criteria established for the review of academic departments will not apply to the library for several reasons:

• A library organization is more than the sum of its parts, and no department is entirely distinct or separate from the others. On faculty contracts, the department is listed as “Library.” It is a common practice for library faculty to move from one unit or department to another, and librarians usually have duties and assignments outside as well as inside their units. The library, not a unit of the library, is the tenure home for every librarian.

• The library does not stand alone. It serves and partners with academic departments and researchers across campus. Changes within the library can affect other campus units, sometimes radically.

• Resources in library departments such as Special Collections and University Archives include more than the salaries of the people who work there. Closing the department would restrict or terminate access to an extensive amount of unique materials unavailable online or anywhere else.

• The library is a large and complex organization that constantly adapts to changes in the internal and external environment. The administrative team and faculty are experienced and adept at adjusting priorities to meet changes and challenges, including budget reductions, always keeping in mind what is best for users and the university as a whole.

Letters from a number of users, donors, and other stakeholders are included in Appendix E not just as an indication of support, but to provide some personalized descriptions of what Special Collections means to various people and how they have used it. Each letter provides a different perspective and reveals a different facet of Special Collections.
Special Collections further defined: Roles, functions and collections

The Provost’s proposal defines and explains Special Collections in this way:

“The Special Collections and University Archives Department of the University Libraries houses, preserves, and provides access to historical resources related to the history and cultures of Nevada and the Great Basin. It also includes a program to digitize materials in the collection. The University Archives preserves the history of the university in documents, photographs, books, and memorabilia. This is an historic function of libraries, but its centrality to university recordkeeping has lessened as university records have become digitized and maintained at the department or college level. While still serving an important public service function, the materials contained therein are less directly connected to the University's broader instructional and research emphases than other discrete parts of the University Libraries.”

We must clarify and elaborate on this statement. First, for convenience in this document, we will use the name “Special Collections” to refer to “Special Collections and University Archives.” Once two different departments of the library, the units merged long ago, and we consider the University Archives to be an integrated collection of materials that relate to the history of the University.

The Provost’s first sentence is accurate but incomplete. Our own brief definition, from our website, is:

“The Special Collections and University Archives Department houses, preserves, and provides access to unique, specialized, and historically significant resources in a variety of formats to support research, teaching and learning at the University of Nevada, Reno … Most of the materials in Special Collections pertain to the history and cultures of Nevada and the Great Basin. University Archives preserves the history of the university in documents, photographs, books, and memorabilia.”

Collections

The majority of the materials in Special Collections do support research on the history and cultures of Nevada and the Great Basin, but other materials support research on the history of the book, art topics, and other specialized areas of research and teaching.

In addition to local historical materials that are actively acquired, Special Collections maintains significant collections of artists’ books, rare books, and “legacy collections” (largely donated long ago by private collectors and perhaps expanded at one time with new acquisitions). See Appendix A for a detailed description of the scope of Special Collections holdings and current collecting parameters. A collection policy cannot convey the remarkable range and depth of materials that have been received and purchased over the past 50 years.

The heart of Special Collections is its primary research materials, its manuscript collections that provide the raw materials (the data and first-hand reports) and documentation for original research. Manuscript collections come from families and individuals, as well as from environmental, cultural, social, and fraternal organizations and businesses. Collections may include a wide array of materials, such as correspondence, diaries, financial records, reports, membership rosters, maps, bylaws, minutes, subject files, architectural drawings, photographs, and legal papers. Research data such as linguistic notecards, climatology records and
audio and video recordings are also included in manuscript collections. Countless books and articles have been generated from the wealth of historical detail that resides in Special Collections manuscripts.

The 200,000+ photographs in Special Collections provide interdisciplinary historical information about the Great Basin region and supplement the work of scholars and writers. University students across the curriculum use these photographs to enhance Web-based class assignments. Increasingly, with digital enlargement and enhancement, researchers are able to discern details in old photographs that have never been seen before. In a visual age, photographs are increasingly popular. Special Collections digitizes the images in its collection for use in publications, films, and multimedia projects.

See Appendix B for a partial listing of books and films that incorporate Special Collections resources.

Access and Discovery

The Library’s online catalog enables researchers to identify some of the material available in Special Collections. Within collections, it is necessary to use a specialized database or a guide to an individual collection. Librarians in Special Collections organize a collection and create guides and databases to help with discovery and retrieval of collections and materials.

Research Assistance and Instruction

Special Collections responds to reference queries at its Reference Desk, via the real-time meebo instant messaging service, e-mail, and snailmail. The librarians also meet with individual students and with classes to provide research skills instruction, focusing on the use of primary resources. See Appendix D for classes taught this semester.

The librarians and staff in Special Collections are co-located with the materials. This is not a self-service area of the library, and none of the materials can be checked out. They are kept in staff-only climate-controlled and secure areas, for preservation and protection. Users often need help in identifying materials within collections using the guides and databases, and some of the collections are not yet searchable or findable without expert assistance. Some of our supporters, in their letters, have commented on the role of the staff of Special Collections:

"History that might have been lost is being saved because of the care and concern of the Archives personnel. And the knowledgeable assistance of the staff makes finding all these things possible." (Beverly McBride, UNR alumna)

"It is almost inconceivable that anyone would consider preserving the collection without maintaining the expert, experienced staff that makes access to its treasures possible. In my experience using Special Collections for twenty-five years, I found their assistance invaluable." (Tom King, Professor Emeritus, Oral History, UNR)

"I could not have fully understood what these collections contained without the help of Jacque and the other staff. Archivists in general know the collections they manage better than any researcher. We must have their help to discover the most important aspects of each collection to our work." (Leisl Childers, PhD student, UNLV)

"It would be critical to maintain of least some staffed access to the facility. There is no substitute for the "aha" moments from brainstorming with staff who handle the collection." (Penny Rucks, ethnographic researcher)
"Even very experienced researchers require substantial assistance with archival works, and student need even more guidance." (Sarah Cowie, new UNR faculty, Anthropology – Fall 2011)

Digitization

Digitizing Special Collections materials makes them available to anyone, anywhere, anytime, and this is a major initiative of Special Collections. As “digital objects,” our images are used in student multimedia projects, faculty publications, films, etc. Once digitized, images are made available in online collections such as these:

- A broad representation of Special Collections images
- Images of Lake Tahoe
- The Historic Lincoln Highway
- Campus Images

To search for specific images that have not been digitized (to be scanned on request), see our database.

Digital images are also used in online exhibits, and become part of collaborative projects with other libraries and cultural heritage organizations.

Materials in other formats are digitized as well: historical maps, audio files, and texts. Materials from manuscript collections are digitized as requested.

University Archives

The Provost’s proposal characterizes University Archives as a repository for records to be preserved, with a diminishing role in university recordkeeping. We would clarify that the primary function of the department is to acquire and make available materials that would document the University for administrative, legal, financial and historical reasons. The Archives functions as the central repository for these selected materials and maintains the continuity of the campus’ historical story, especially as the school grows or shrinks. Important records, whether in hardcopy or digital formats, maintained only at the office of record can be and have been lost not only at the time of routine retirements, but also when those offices and staffs are eliminated, realigned, or physically moved to a new location.

The variety of material from the University’s schools, colleges, academic departments, administrative offices, student organizations, faculty and staff help trace the intellectual, cultural, and social environments that have shaped the University throughout its history. The University Archives maintains the resources enabling the University to tell its story and has been proactive in acquiring such materials from campus units undergoing reorganization during the last few years.

Several student organizations are regular users of archived materials that document their history. Given the inherent nature of a university, with a steady turn-over of students active in campus activities, organizations such as ASUN and Coffin and Keys rely on University Archives as a safe repository that will provide access to future generations of students. There is also a steady demand for University Archives photographs, campus publications, and historical records for use in publications and the media.

In the following sections, we share some of the voices of those who know Special Collections best, our users and donors.
Special Collections, a Long-Term Investment

For over fifty years, Special Collections materials have been gathered and organized into research collections by curators. Some of the collections are still under development; some of the donors are still contributing to their donated collections.

Dr. Ann Ronald, professor emerita and one of the founders of the Literature and Environment program at UNR, commented about a current Special Collections initiative in which she is participating, developing a body of environmental literature materials: “If we hope to keep our standing as a research institution, we need to keep our specialized focus, and we need to keep collecting.”

Dr. Bernard Mergen, a UNR alumnus and emeritus professor from George Washington University wrote,

“A Special Collections is special because its value and reputation grow by accretion. I have watched the University’s archivists carefully assemble this excellent collection. The hard work and dedication of three generations of librarians have made Special Collections the jewel that it is today. Momentum is built steadily and the cumulative effects of a great research collection cannot be turned off and on like tap water. Close a collection, even for a brief period, that has become essential to research in any field and you destroy the base for future development. Scholars are frustrated by lack of access and turn away from the topics that are unique to that collection.”

Quoting donor Tina Nappe, “Special collections is a treasure trove of Nevada history. … Without Special Collections there will be gaps in publications of Nevada history. Unfortunately, there is not enough information online for students to conduct adequate research. … to mothball Special Collections and thus cut off access to critical information is not in the best interests of Nevada, its students, or research.”

It is important to keep a long-term perspective in place when trying to solve short-term budget problems.

Special Collections and Student Learning

The University’s core mission is to provide a high quality educational experience for its students. Special Collections’ unique resources position it to be a campus-wide partner in meeting that goal. To quote Emeritus History Professor Jim Hulse, “This small unit is one of the richest teaching-learning opportunities in the University System – a place in our academy where in the scholars in the arts, humanities and social sciences interact to develop their skills at research.”

Bernard Mergen believes that

“The archives and special collections of every major university are the place where young scholars get their first practical experience in humanistic research … A collection of unpublished materials is like a laboratory to a chemist, a stratum of Devonium shale to a paleontologist, or the night sky to an astronomer.”

To quote one of our current undergraduate history students, Ani Leja Burge, “How can we train people to do research properly if we do not allow them to have the resources they need? How will we be able to explore Nevada’s past if the doors are shut?”
Special Collections and Research

Research undertaken in Special Collections touches lives in different ways. To quote Ann Ronald, “It is not an exaggeration to say that without Special Collections, my career could not have happened.”

From Bill Fox:

“As a researcher who has been lucky enough to use libraries around the world in order to write, publish, and lecture—to have a career, in short—I am horrified that I will no longer have access to records I would use in future books. That means I will literally write less about Nevada and the region—if the research materials in the Archive are no longer available, I can't cover certain topics about the Great Basin. The materials that I have typically used in the past include rare books, maps, photographs, and manuscripts that are not available elsewhere.”

Shelly Davis-King, an ethnographic researcher wrote that "No other institution in the world contains the original manuscripts, photographs, letters, maps, and other materials of Nevada's heritage and original people. In short, the research my firm has conducted on Great Basin anthropological tribes and other people could not have been accomplished without the materials held in your institution.”

Cheryll Glotfelty stated: “If scholars such as myself do not publish research on Nevada's literary history, the rest of the country will understandably conclude that Nevada is a cultural wasteland.”

Special Collections, Donors, and the Public Trust

While Special Collections has obtained some of its resources from commercial publishers and at public auctions, its most important source for acquiring manuscript material has been the generosity of private donors. Relatives of historically significant people, conscientious affiliates of regional businesses and non-profit organizations, student officers of University organizations, emeritus faculty, and prominent Nevada politicians have entrusted unique primary material to Special Collections – all with the understanding that the material would be available for future generations of students and other scholars. The University is the guardian of this public trust. Moreover, many people who have donated research resources to Special Collections have made monetary contributions to support other areas of the University. If this carefully nurtured good will and trust is violated, there will be irreparable harm to the University’s relationship with the descendants of past donors and potential future donors.

William Bliss has placed important papers of his family concerning the development of the Lake Tahoe area with us. “...over the years many papers, publications and books have referenced the collection – precisely my hope and intent at the time and my intent in the future when giving more of Glenbrook and lumbering days at lake Tahoe, now in my private collection.” He says that closure would be a “loss to all those who, in good faith, gave to the department over the years.”

The deposit of personal papers of U.S. Senator Majority Leader Harry Reid, Senator Richard Bryan, and Senator Paul Laxalt, to name a few prominent politicians, create a high profile connection to the university for the consideration of other Nevadans contemplating donations. As Peter Goin states, “To say a potential closure of Special Collections is disruptive only scratches the surface of the potential problem; donors will not contribute, and I will potentially lose the good faith and following of numerous contributors from the Tahoe Basin.”
Two emeritus professors from UNR express the thoughts of many other donors:

**Ann Ronald**: “When I retired from the university, I donated several hundred books and gave all of my papers to Special Collections. As President and later as Executive Secretary of the Western Literature Association, and as an ardent supporter of environmental writing, I had accumulated artifacts and research materials and letters that essentially trace the development of an entire field of literary study. If Special Collections closes, I fear all this information will be locked away somewhere, inaccessible to anyone who wants to study what I gleaned. Even more significant than Ann Ronald’s contributions are Harry Reid’s. The senior senator from Nevada generously is donating all of his papers to the University of Nevada, Reno. Will they, too, be inaccessible and locked away?

And should Harry Reid or Ann Ronald or others like us keep on donating? While working on my most recent book, Friendly Fallout 1953, I acquired an enormous archival range of information. I must have several hundred government reports, memos, letters, and personal reminiscences about aboveground atomic testing in Nevada, not to mention the books I bought to survey the field. It would take years for someone else to accumulate the same information that I would make easily accessible. Everything is boxed, ready to go to the Knowledge Center. I’ve always planned to offer all of this material to Special Collections, for it rightly belongs there. But there would be no point in doing so if the university follows through on its plan to lock such donations away.”

**Jim Hulse**: “Over the years, the University and the Friends of the UNR Library have assembled hundreds of treasures of the printed and engraved arts, mostly from gifts entrusted to the University’s care by generous donors …Certainly the state of Nevada and your administration do not mean to close this window into the world of shared learning . If it were to do so, it would be breaking trust with those who have contributed valuable resources to the University. It would discourage any future donations and bequests.”

Rachel Dolbier, the Curator of the Keck Museum on camps, astutely noted that

“Special Collections is the home to our rare, fragile, archival, or other holdings needing special care, and is used not only by our University faculty but by researchers throughout the world. Donors have contributed numerous, valuable items to this collection with the expectation that those items would be accessible to anyone who is conducting research in the particular field of interest that those materials represent. The effect on donor relations that would occur by essentially mothballing the collection will be huge and devastating, permanently scarring our reputation for preserving Nevada history.”

We owe it to our donors to honor their trust in Special Collections, the University Libraries, and the University of Nevada, Reno.

We should note that several donors and friends of Special Collections have made large financial contributions to the university in the form of scholarships and endowments.
Special Collections, the Knowledge Center and the University

The library is the heart of the university. Special Collections contributes to its cultural influence by creating exhibits and hosting events which enhance the quality of life for students. These events help to broaden students’ understanding of the world around them and can reinforce their sense of place in it.

Paul Quinlan, Coffin & Keys has told us: “We believe that this area of the institution is important to maintaining tradition and history on our campus. . . . We are slightly worried as we were planning to donate a large amount of materials from the last 100 years to special collections as well.”

Bill Fox, a well-known local writer and the Director of the Art + Environment program at the Nevada Museum of Art: “The language that the President of the university and others have developed to promote this school centers around ‘academic and research excellence.’ Sorry, but you can't have that excellence without archives and special collections. There are other areas where the university can cut the budget without negatively affecting its mission statement.”

In conclusion, we believe that it would cause irreparable damage to the university to close Special Collections. We urge you to allow the library the time to plan for a future that would include a Special Collections and University Archives.
Appendices

A. Special Collections and University Archives Collection Policy
B. Special Collections materials in books and films
C. Political papers in Special Collections
D. Class orientations for academic year 2010-2011
E. Letters from users, donors, and other stakeholders
Collection Policy
Special Collections and University Archives
University of Nevada, Reno Libraries

December 23, 2008

Mission of Special Collections and University Archives
Access to Special Collections and University Archives Materials
Collecting Levels
I. Special Collections
   A. Collecting Scope
      1. Active Collections
         a. Local Subjects – Comprehensive
         b. Premier Collections – Comprehensive
         c. Regional areas and Tangential Topics – Selective
         d. Book Arts – Selective
         e. Environmental Literature – Selective
      2. Legacy Collections – Maintain
         a. Rare and antiquarian books
         b. Robert Burns book collection
         c. Western Americana book collection
         d. Southern Nevada
         e. Children’s literature
         f. Samuel Johnson book collection
         g. Mark Twain book collection
         h. Wallace Stegner book collection
         i. Pre-19th century witchcraft and the occult
         j. Nevada-oriented works of art
   3. Exclusions
   B. Collection Format Considerations
      1. Books
      2. Photographs
      3. Manuscripts
      4. Serials
      5. Maps
      6. Government publications
      7. Architectural records
      8. Audiovisual formats
      9. Printed ephemera

II. University Archives
   A. University Records
   B. Faculty Papers
   C. Personal or Organizational Records
Mission of Special Collections and University Archives

The Special Collections and University Archives Department of the University of Nevada, Reno Libraries selects, preserves, organizes, creates access to, provides reference assistance for, and promotes the use of unique, rare, and historically significant resources in a variety of formats to support research, teaching and learning at the University of Nevada, Reno. The department also serves researchers at large, including visiting scholars, local historians and writers, and the general public.

Access to Special Collections and University Archives Materials

Since Special Collections materials preserve the history of the area and the university, and since many of the items are unique and/or irreplaceable, every effort is made to keep collections safe and in good condition. Shelving and storage areas are climate controlled and alarmed. An alarmed vault protects the most valuable materials. Materials do not circulate outside the department, and the Special Collections Reading Room is monitored at all times. Staff will copy materials for researchers upon request.

Increasingly, Special Collections provides high quality digital facsimiles of content in collections to support multimedia projects throughout the university. Digital objects from Special Collections are also used for publications and media outside the university. Guides to collections, searchable databases and browsable images, video, and sound files are available to users through the libraries’ website.

Collecting Levels

For the purpose of this policy, designations for collecting level are applied to geographical scope, topics, and formats. These designations direct current acquisition and processing priorities.

- **Comprehensive** – seek and acquire through donations or purchase any item within the scope
- **Selective** – enhance a collection, add donations or acquire items through purchase with consideration to condition and quality
- **Maintain** – preserve collection at the current status and conserve at-risk items. In some specified cases, expand a collection through selected donations. Do not purchase additional items.
- **Exclude** – do not purchase or add donations; do not process unwanted items

1. Special Collections

   A. Collecting Scope

   Within Special Collections are both “active” and “legacy” collections. **Active collections** are under continual development, reflecting the current priorities of curators in response to current user needs and interests. Items for active collections are acquired through solicited and unsolicited donations and through purchase. **Legacy collections** reflect earlier priorities of curators and administrators and user groups; donated items may or may not be added.
1. Active Collections

The majority of active collections support research on local and regional topics. The core collection is intended to serve the current and future needs of UNR students and faculty, especially those in the following disciplines:

- Anthropology
- Art
- English
- Environmental Studies
- Geography
- History
- Journalism
- Political Science

a. Local Subjects – Comprehensive

Special Collections actively acquires primary and secondary materials in all available formats (books, photographs, manuscripts, maps, audio and video, periodicals, printed ephemera, documents, architectural drawings, etc.) about the Reno/Sparks area and surrounding communities in Northern Nevada (north of Tonopah) and the Lake Tahoe Basin. The following list indicates the major topics of local collecting that encompass multiple formats. The list is not exhaustive:

- Mining
- Railroads
- Business and businesses
- Agriculture and ranching
- Public lands
- Natural history, environmental matters; water resources
- Tourism and recreation
- Biographical material about Northern Nevadans (distinguished and ordinary)
- Architecture
- Monographs by Nevada Hall of Fame members
- Native tribes
- Minority populations and diversity of culture
- Fiction with local settings
- Historical treatments and analysis
- Medicine
- Burning Man event

b. Premier Collections – Comprehensive

Premier collections are those which are widely recognized as the best (the largest or most complete or containing the finest items) or among the best on their topic in any institution, attracting non-local researchers. Collection
development has been and continues to be extremely thorough for these collections. Manuscript collections (MSS) usually include photographs and personal papers as well as literary manuscripts of authors. MAC indicates that the author's works were once part of the library's Modern Authors Collection, which includes stories and poems in anthologies, articles by and about the author, cataloged as separate items.

- **Joanne de Longchamps** – Reno poet – books, MSS, MAC, art
- **George Stewart** – California writer recognized as a pioneer of environmental literature; several works are set in Nevada (second largest collection after UC Berkeley) – books, MAC
- **Walter Van Tilburg Clark** – Reno author – books, MSS, MAC
- **Robert Laxalt** – Reno author – books, MSS, MAC
- **Ann Ronald** – Reno author and a pioneer in the scholarship of environmental literature as a genre – books, MSS
- **Virginia Coffman** – Reno author credited with launching the American Gothic Romance genre – books, MSS
- **Frederic DeLongchamps** – Reno architect – architectural records, MSS
- **Alf Doten** – chronicler of Comstock history – MSS, diary, photos
- **Brother David/Gareth Hughes** – actor who ministered to Pyramid Lake Paiutes – MSS, video, artifacts
- **Virginia and Truckee Railroad** – books, MSS

c. **Regional areas and Tangential Topics – Selective**

Materials covering a broader geographical range or regional issues are added to Special Collections when they include scholarly information specifically about local areas or when a discussion of the broader topic provides essential context for the study of local manifestations.

- Overland narratives of journeys through Nevada
- Contiguous areas in neighboring states (the Great Basin areas of Idaho, Oregon, California, Utah; Eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada)
- California Gold Rush
- Local authors (depending on subject matter and reputation)
- Public lands management
- Nuclear testing, nuclear waste
- Directories – city and telephone
- Statewide treatments (limited to scholarly works)
- Great Basin Indians
- Women in the West and Nevada Women’s Archives
- Gaming

d. **Book Arts – Selective**
A strong collection of artists books and fine printing supports the Art department and history of the book program.

- Emphasis on modern fine print in the 20th century
- Formats include books, broadsides, serials, portfolios, and multimedia
- Examples of the work of particular printers, presses, designers, and typographers
- Examples of limited editions and handmade books by artists

e. **Environmental Literature – Selective**

An emerging collection of books and manuscripts supports the English Ph.D program. UNR is home to the world’s major graduate program in environmental literature and ecocriticism; the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment was founded in Reno in 1992. A collection policy in this area, with a local focus, is under development.

2. **Legacy Collections – Maintain**

These collections fall outside the above core collecting areas. Individual items or collections were acquired as gifts or were once actively developed but are no longer considered a priority. The materials in these existing collections are maintained and in some cases are promoted for educational uses. Selected gift materials relating to some of the legacy collections may be added on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to processing requirements and the nature of the collection. Materials are rarely purchased for legacy collections outside the current collecting scope.

a. **Rare and antiquarian books**

Special Collections houses an abundance of rare and valuable books published in the 15th – 19th centuries, which generally were acquired as gifts or have been transferred from the circulating collection. They are used by students in Book Arts and History of the Book courses and occasionally by those studying the History of Science or by students of history and literature or descriptive bibliographers who want to consult early or special editions of classics. Antiquarian books received as donations are currently added to the collection only if they are in very good or excellent condition and fit into one or more of these categories:

- Incunabula – published prior to 1501
- Illuminated manuscripts; books with fore-edge painting
- Early American Imprints – intact and published prior to 1850 (as teaching examples for the history of American printing)
- Exceptional examples representing aspects of the history of the book or the development of printing: binding, design, typography or representing certain presses
- Publications held in fewer than five U.S. libraries according to Worldcat
• Works in the public domain containing exceptional illustrations with the potential to become digital objects

b. Robert Burns book collection

In 1961, a large collection of primary and secondary works relating to Robert Burns was donated to Special Collections. At the time, it was one of the largest Burns collections in a U.S. library. New volumes are added only if donated or transferred from the circulating collection.

c. Western Americana book collection

Fiction and nonfiction relating to the Western United States was once considered within the scope of Special Collections. Although the collecting level was never comprehensive, the collection includes standard works. “Western Americana” is now considered too broad.

d. Southern Nevada

When UNR was the only academic library in the state, Special Collections comprehensively collected materials documenting the history of the entire state. Now that the UNLV Library Special Collections department collects Southern Nevada materials, there is no need to duplicate holdings.

e. Children’s literature

Historical examples of general pedagogical and literary works for children are well represented in Special Collections. New acquisition of children’s books are limited to works by local authors or on local topics.

f. Samuel Johnson book collection

This collection includes first editions of Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary and Boswell’s Life of Johnson as well as many other editions of these works and other works by Johnson.

g. Mark Twain book collection

During the preparations for the 100th anniversary of Mark Twain’s arrival in Nevada in 1863, funds were raised to purchase a collection of 137 books by Mark Twain, including the first editions of all major works, lesser-known titles, and six books from Twain’s own library, with marginal notes in his hand. Additional donations of Twain books were received in conjunction with the event.
h. **Wallace Stegner**

Wallace Stegner's works were collected as part of the Modern Authors Collection. When most of that collection was sold, Special Collections retained the Stegner works, which include multiple editions of every book, with some translations, and articles and essays by and about Stegner, cataloged as individual items.

i. **Pre-19th century witchcraft and the occult**

Among the rare books of Special Collections are a number of books on witchcraft.

j. **Nevada-oriented works of art**

A legacy collection of works by Nevada artists consists primarily of watercolors of Nevada landscapes. Prominent artists represented are Robert Caples, Craig Sheppard, Jim McCormick, Hildegard Herz, Mildred Lane, and Vernon Lane.

3. **Exclusions**

- Artifacts, collectibles, three dimensional objects
- Newspapers
- Materials that more appropriately belong in specific collections in other repositories such as the Nevada Historical Society
- Clark County, Nevada
- Materials on Basques (refer to the Basque Library)
- Biological specimens
- Art that is not related to Nevada
- Official Nevada state records (held by State Library and Archives)

B. **Collection Format Considerations**

1. **Books**

   Monographs are purchased or accepted as gifts according to collection parameters outlined above. New editions are added when content has been changed. Existing copies might be replaced by copies in better condition, or with inscriptions or other distinguishing features. Books are withdrawn only because of serious deterioration, especially if their condition might pose a risk to other materials.

2. **Photographs**

   Photographs documenting any of the subjects listed above in 1A are collected, especially images depicting persons, geographic areas, landscapes, cities, towns, buildings, economic, vocational, and avocations activities in the local area. Originals photographs
are desired (negatives or prints made from original negatives at the time the picture was taken; derivative prints are rarely added to the collection. Donations may be rejected if use restrictions are excessive. Photographs of unidentified persons or places have little value for the collection. All forms of photographic images are collected, regardless of size. Digital photographs are also accepted.

3. Manuscripts

Whenever possible, Special Collections solicits donations for processing costs when manuscript materials are donated. All non-published materials dealing with the subjects outlined above in 1A are collected. Manuscript collections include business, private and personal correspondence, financial records, diaries, letters, Congressional papers, literary manuscripts, family papers, organizational papers, and other original primary source materials on paper, microfilm, microfiche, audiotape, or videotape or film. Research data is collected if it fits within the subject parameters in 1A.

4. Serials

Subscriptions are maintained for periodicals which deal directly with aspects of the history, development and contemporary life in Northern Nevada as described above in section 1A, Local subjects. This includes trade, business and professional publications. Excluded are government serials and periodicals published within the state that do not deal directly with Nevada.

5. Maps

Current and non-current (revised) maps are collected for the entire State of Nevada or the northern portion, contiguous counties of bordering states, Lake Tahoe basin and the surrounding region. Included are USGS topographic maps, printed relief maps, atlases dealing with Nevada and manuscript (unpublished) maps.

6. Government publications

Government publications about the local area and the subjects listed above in 1A may be collected if they are rare, or if they were published before 1935.

7. Architectural records

Drawings, sketches, renderings, specifications, or photographs of drawings by Northern Nevada architects and landscape architects are collected. Also collected are their office records, correspondence and financial records. Original drawings including tracings, presentation drawings and renderings are preferred.

8. Audiovisual formats

Obsolete audio or video formats are collected when the subject matter is considered important. Whenever possible, it is desirable to collect the equipment needed to play
obsolete formats. Spare parts are welcome. A separate policy for preservation and access reformatting is under development.

9. Printed Ephemera

Printed ephemera is collected if it contains information which falls within subject boundaries. The informational value and substance of the item will determine whether it is cataloged as a separate item or within a group of items.

II. University Archives

To document the intellectual, administrative, cultural, and social history of the University of Nevada, Reno and the Nevada System of Higher Education, the University Archives actively collects faculty papers and records of administrative units and organizations.

A. University Records

The administrative records produced by the university in the course of its teaching, research, service, and outreach activities comprise the core of the University Archive’s holdings and these materials have the highest collecting priority. The primary role of the Archives is to document the functions of the university through records produced by the president, vice-presidents and other upper level administrators; schools and colleges, academic departments and programs; and research centers, libraries, committees, boards, councils and other governance bodies.

All information formats (e.g., published, typescript, audio-visual formats, and electronic data) are appropriate for the collection. Examples of some of the types of historically valuable university records in the University Archives are:

- Correspondence and memoranda
- Constitutions and by-laws
- Topical/subject files
- Meeting agendas, minutes, and other committee materials
- Planning documents
- Accreditation records
- Policy and mission statements
- Reports, summaries and surveys
- Procedures manuals
- Publications
- Promotional and outreach materials
- Grant and project files
- Event records
- Research records
- Teaching and curriculum materials
- Press releases
- Photographs and videos
Because they are only of transient value or contain confidential information and have little or no research value, the following types of records are not collected by the University Archives:

- Personnel records
- Employment records
- Student records
- Purchasing records and other materials related to specific financial transactions
- Travel records
- Routine letters of transmittal and acknowledgement
- Other administrative support records

B. Faculty Records

To capture the intellectual vitality of the university community, the University Archives collects the personal papers of representative faculty. The primary collecting objective is to document the careers of faculty members who have

- been recognized as valued teachers
- defined significant ideas
- undertaken important research
- carried out exemplary service to the university or the larger community

The Archives will give highest priority to those faculty papers which can be open for research use. The following types of faculty papers are considered to have potential historical value:

- correspondence of a substantive nature, including e-mail
- lecture notes and curriculum materials, speeches
- records of departmental or university-wide activities
- research-related records
- bibliographies, vitae, photographs, films, and audio and video recordings

C. Organizational Records

The University Archives also collects personal correspondence, diaries, photographs, scrapbooks, memorabilia, and other personal papers, organizational records, and general historical materials that document various aspects of the university community and complement official records created by the University of Nevada, Reno and the Nevada System of Higher Education.

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1 Active collecting on the topic of Great Basin Indians was directed by Sven Liljeblad, an anthropologist in residence in Special Collections, with the enthusiastic participation of anthropology faculty. The collection is especially strong in languages and linguistics and ethnography, and most of the tribes are from Nevada. Types of materials include books, field notes, site reports, audio tapes, videos, and photographs. The broad scope as originally defined includes sixty tribes. With the retirements of the ethnographers and linguists from the anthropology faculty and with much of the collection unprocessed, focus has shifted to processing and preserving the Nevada materials previously acquired, with selective acquisitions of additional local materials. The collection policy is under revision.
A strong collection of books and papers documents the experiences of women in Nevada and the western United States and presents the history and development of the West from women’s points of view. Works are primarily first person accounts: autobiographies, diaries, and memoirs, with a secondary collection of biographical materials. These collecting efforts were meant to fill gaps in the historical record, but have lapsed in favor of “mainstreaming” women’s published writing within the scope of Special Collections policies. The Nevada Women’s Archives was a statewide funded initiative coordinated by the late Jean Ford. Special Collections still actively seeks donations of unpublished manuscript materials and photographs documenting women’s experiences in Nevada, which are still underrepresented.

As an important part of the history of the local area, and of the state as a whole, books and MSS collections relating to gaming have been collected. However, UNLV Special Collections has become the recognized repository for general works on the topic. Only in exceptional cases will UNR Special Collections accept collections of importance relating to gaming. One such collection is the Russell Barnhart collection of books and manuscript items, a wide-ranging collection including rare items.
Appendix B. Selected Books and Films Utilizing Resources from University Libraries
Special Collections and University Archives

Special Collections' support of the University’s curricular and research missions is reflected in the use of its unique resources in publications and films. Through the years, University faculty and students have used photographs, primary manuscript records, archived University publications, and other materials for course assignments, master’s theses, doctoral dissertations, and for the publication of monographs and articles in scholarly journals. Moreover, the publications and films of non-affiliated researchers, government agencies, and regional newspapers demonstrate how Special Collections enhances the national reputation of the University.

Books Utilizing Special Collections/University Archives Resources


Films with Content from Special Collections and University Archives


Our West: We the People. Greg Carson. KRNV-TV (Reno), 1999.


Appendix C. University Libraries Special Collections - University Archives: Primary Sources of Nevada Politicians Supporting Faculty and Student Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nevada Politician</th>
<th>Offices Held</th>
<th>Nevada Politician</th>
<th>Offices Held</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams, Eva</td>
<td>Director, United States Mint</td>
<td>League of Women Voters of Nevada</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley, Delos R.</td>
<td>U. S. Congressman</td>
<td>Malone, George W.</td>
<td>U. S. Senator and Nevada State Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balzar, Fred</td>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>McCarran, Patrick A.</td>
<td>U. S. Senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartine, Horace F.</td>
<td>U. S. House of Representatives</td>
<td>MacEachern, Janet</td>
<td>Nevada lobbyist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett, George A.</td>
<td>U. S. House of Representatives; District Judge</td>
<td>Martin, Anne</td>
<td>Pioneer suffragist; first Nevada woman to run for U. S. Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennett, Kay M.</td>
<td>Carson City Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>Miller, Thomas W.</td>
<td>Nevada State Park Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible, Alan</td>
<td>U. S. Senator; Nevada Attorney General</td>
<td>Newlands, Francis G.</td>
<td>U. S. Senator &amp; House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilbray, James.</td>
<td>U. S. House of Representatives</td>
<td>Nye, James W.</td>
<td>Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyle, Emmet D.</td>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Oddie, Tasker L.</td>
<td>U. S. Senator and Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown, Ernest S.</td>
<td>U. S. Senator</td>
<td>Pittman, Key</td>
<td>U. S. Senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan, Richard H.</td>
<td>NV Attorney General; Governor</td>
<td>Pittman, Vail M.</td>
<td>Governor, State Senator, and Lt. Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunker, Berkeley L.</td>
<td>U. S. Senator &amp; House of Representatives</td>
<td>Reid, Harry</td>
<td>U. S. Senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafferata, Patricia</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman</td>
<td>Rives, Henry M.</td>
<td>Sixth District Judge of Nevada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cain, Virginia S.</td>
<td>Nevada State Democratic Party Chair</td>
<td>Roberts, Edwin E.</td>
<td>U. S. House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carville, Edward P.</td>
<td>Governor and U. S. Senator</td>
<td>Russell, Charles H.</td>
<td>Governor and U. S. House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassidy, George W.</td>
<td>U. S. House of Representatives and State Senator</td>
<td>Russell, George B.</td>
<td>Nevada State Treasurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffin, Trenmore</td>
<td>State Assemblyman</td>
<td>Santini, James</td>
<td>U. S. House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daggett, Rollin M.</td>
<td>U. S. House of Representatives</td>
<td>Sawyer, Grant</td>
<td>Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derby, Jill</td>
<td>Nevadans for ERA; National Women's Political Caucus</td>
<td>Scruggham, James G.</td>
<td>Governor and UNR Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford, Jean</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman and Senator</td>
<td>Segerblom, Genevieve</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman; Boulder City Councilwoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frazier, Maude</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman; Lieutenant Governor</td>
<td>Slattery, James M.</td>
<td>State Senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman, Vivian</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman</td>
<td>Smith, Louise Aloys</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glomb, Diana</td>
<td>State Senator</td>
<td>Stewart, William M.</td>
<td>U. S. Senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gojack, Mary</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman and Senator</td>
<td>Swain, Courtenay jameson</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomes, Nancy</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman; Washoe County School Board</td>
<td>Sweeney, James G.</td>
<td>U. S. Senator, Nevada Attorney General; Chief Justice, Nevada Supreme Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosse, Marguerite H.</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman</td>
<td>Tripple, Patricia A.</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herr, Helen</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman and Senator</td>
<td>Vucanovich, Barbara</td>
<td>U. S. House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hug, Procter R.</td>
<td>State Senator</td>
<td>Wagner, Sue</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman and Senator and Lt. Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laxalt, Paul D.</td>
<td>U. S. Senator and Governor</td>
<td>Woods, Josie</td>
<td>State Assemblywoman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D.

Support for Teaching; Spring 2011 classes in Special Collections:

Geography/History 488B/688B: Lake Tahoe Landscapes. Elizabeth Raymond. 35 students.
History 300: Research & Writing. Linda Curcio. 25 students.
History 300: Research & Writing. Barbara Walker. 19 students.
History 311: Public History. Alicia Barber. 22 students
English 102, Sec. 009 Theme: Nevada. Sylvan Goldberg. 24 students. (with Pat Ragains)
English 102, Sec. 015 Theme: Nevada. Sylvan Goldberg. 24 students. (with Pat Ragains)
English 102, Sec. 103: Theme: Food. Laurel Griffiths. 22 students
English 102, Sec. 018: Theme: Food. Laurel Griffiths. 24 students
Art 414: Section 2. Book Arts. 11 students.

Selected classes taught other semesters in Special Collections

Anth. 404: Wovoka
Art 124: Introduction to Printmaking
Hist. 322: Public History
Hist. 499: Senior Thesis
Hist. 384: Italian Renaissance
Hist. 725: Seminar in Nevada and Far Western History
Hist. 404/604: American Social History
Hist. 432/632: American Women’s History
Hist. 482A/682A: Age of Discovery
Hist. 484A/684A: History of the Book in European Society
Hist. 498/698: Venice: Cultural History
Dear administrators,

I appreciate the difficulty of making budget cut decisions, and I sincerely appreciate your leadership in shouldering these grave responsibilities at this time. I also appreciate the process by which programs that are slated to be cut may make an appeal for reconsideration. To that end, I am writing to urge you to keep Special Collections open. Below I review some of the ways that Special Collections has enabled my research and teaching, and I offer some concluding thoughts on the value of Special Collections to the research mission of the university.

I am an English professor who specializes in Literature of the American West, Literature of Nevada, and Literature and the Environment. In my research I have used Special Collections extensively in the past, and I plan to use it extensively in the future. I'll briefly review a representative sample of my past research projects that relied on Special Collections:

*Literary Nevada: Writings from the Silver State.* Reno: U of Nevada P, 2008. 831 pp. *Literary Nevada* is a comprehensive anthology of Nevada literature. It was selected by the UNR Foundation as a gift book for major donors. This important treasury of Nevada's literary heritage could not have been compiled and written without Special Collections. The knowledgeable staff in Special Collections helped me discover important source material, locate biographical information that informed the headnotes, and find photographs of selected authors, which are reproduced in the book. Based on Nevadans' keen interest in the state's history and literature, I have given more than 25 talks to communities throughout Nevada, an important public outreach effort.

"Old Folks in the New West: Surviving Change and Staying Fit in The Misfits." *Western American Literature* 37.1 (Spring 2002): 26-49. Finalist for the Don D. Walker Award for exceptional contribution to Western scholarship, Western Literature Association, 2003. I used Special Collections to research the filming of *The Misfits* and to reproduce photographs that supplement the essay.

My current book project, a critical biography of landscape photographer Peter Goin, likewise depends upon access to materials in Special Collections. At the present time I have been taking notes on Goin's limited edition (only 15 copies were printed) of *Tracing the Line: A Photographic Survey of the Mexican-American Border* (1987). As the project continues, I will need Special Collections for other materials, such as archives on Lake Tahoe, the Truckee River, and the Nevada Test Site.

I have three future book projects in mind, all of which require access to Special Collections and consultation with staff trained in the collection. One project is a book that profiles major Nevada writers and introduces their work. I think of this book as Nevada's version of *Ten Tough Trips: Montana Writers and the West* by William W. Bevis (1990). A second, future book project is a biography of Robert Laxalt, whose work merits a national reputation but who is currently known only within the state. If scholars such as myself do not publish research on Nevada's literary history, the rest of the country will understandably conclude that Nevada is a cultural wasteland. And a third project is to publish an edition of the journals of Jean McElrath, a fascinating woman who although physically disabled (she was bed-ridden) and blind was an ace newspaper reporter in the Great Basin in the mid-twentieth century. McElrath's amazing story of overcoming severe handicaps will appeal to a wide audience. Her papers are housed in Special Collections. None of these books can be written if Special Collections closes. My research agenda will be closed with a clear message from the university, "access denied."

My teaching has also been enriched by Special Collections. I have, of course, used Special Collections to research lectures on Nevada and western material. I have also taken my classes to visit Special Collections. On one memorable occasion, my class was able to see artifacts from the career of Robert Laxalt—including a first edition of *Sweet Promised Land*, the book that we were then reading. "How cool is that?!!" my students exclaimed. On another occasion our study of the writers of Nevada's mining frontier was brought to life when we saw the Comstock exhibit put together by Special Collections. I have on occasion required students in my English 102 course (which focuses on researched writing) to use archival materials in Special Collections. I recently worked with Special Collections to help plan a graduate seminar for Spring 2012 on Bioregional Literature and Theory. Thanks to the work of Special Collections staff, my class will be the only class in the nation to have access to the complete publications of the San Francisco-based Planet Drum Foundation, a leader in the bioregional movement. I anticipate that this opportunity will spawn original research and possibly even a dissertation or book. Needless to say, without Special Collections my students—both undergraduate and graduate students—will not gain skills in working with archival documents and will not experience the excitement of that *Eureka!* moment when one's diligent research strikes pay dirt.

I would like to close with just a few thoughts about the unique value of Special Collections to the university. While my heart aches to hear of proposed cuts to foreign languages, theater, and dance, among others, nevertheless, I console myself that those programs can be rebuilt when times are better. Not to sound cavalier, but there are many qualified people in the country who can teach those courses. But it takes years of training and experience for a staff person to master
all the nooks and crannies and quirks and curiosities of the holdings in Special Collections. The librarians in Special Collections are not so easily replaced. They represent walking encyclopedias of knowledge—the keys to the kingdom, if you will. Furthermore, the student who yearns to study French, for example, has many other universities to choose from. But the student, faculty member, or visiting researcher who aims to study Nevada history, the Great Basin, or UNR itself has very few—if any—other options. The materials Special Collections are unique. That is what makes them "special." To close Special Collections is essentially to say that the past does not matter and that people who have died have nothing further to teach us—an alarming specter of cultural amnesia, especially considering our own mortality.

Thank you again for your very hard work on behalf of the university and the state. I wish you much wisdom. And I cast my vote that the doors of Special Collections will remain open.

Sincerely,

Cheryll Glotfelty
Professor
Dear Provost Johnson:

I am writing you in response to the proposal to close the university’s Special Collections Department in the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center. I am a linguistic anthropologist who specializes in the study of the indigenous peoples of North America. This year I have been working very hard, as co-chair of the Multi-Ethnic Coalition, to build collaborative relationships with members of the indigenous communities in the area surrounding Reno. We anticipate that this effort will grow into additional federal grants, collaborative research and indigenity-focused course offerings. I know you are receiving numerous appeals, so I will make my points brief.

First, Special Collections holds unique, irreplaceable materials from previous anthropological and historical research projects involving the Native communities surrounding Reno. These materials are held in public trust not only for future academic researchers; but also for future community members endeavoring to recover tribe/colony histories, languages and cultural practices. There are regional histories and ethnohistories that have not yet been written with indigenous communities at the focus, but which current scholarship and community interest make possible. To close Special Collections would be to miss an opportunity for growth.

Special Collections is also important to Native communities’ efforts to develop language and culture curricula. For example, a delegation from the Washo Language teaching effort spoke at UNR in Fall 2010 and expressed a desire to work with faculty to further their efforts. In particular they cited a need for a stable, non-circulating professionally managed repository for their materials, so that the next group of teachers could build on what others have done. Special Collections would be the obvious institutional structure to answer their needs.

Also, while the collection as it stands represents a unique and irreplaceable resource on Great Basin languages and cultures, in its current state it would be very difficult to fully utilize if not managed by a professional archivist staff. I am told that there is still much for archivists to do in organizing and describing some of the materials before they can be fully accessed and used. Having materials that have not been catalogued and described in enough detail means there is much of value that would inaccessible if the materials were simply added to the non-circulating collection and were not professionally managed and developed.

I am currently working with Special Collections to prepare an NSF/NEH Documenting Endangered Languages grant that would enable us to digitize and more finely describe the Washoe and Paiute language collection, in consultation with community members and in furtherance of their language recovery efforts. Having a professionally managed archive is a bit of infrastructure that makes us more likely to secure this and other competitive grants.

Finally, losing Special Collection would be a blow to our abilities to professionalize our students, because it would deprive them of ready access to primary archival research. For example, I teach a unit on Wovoka and the Ghost Dance in an upper division Anthropology class. Our Special Collections department holds the most important primary materials in the world on this internationally recognized indigenous religious movement. Students value the opportunity to visit the archive, learn about the research that has been conducted here, and pursue their own projects with the collection.
Also, some of my graduate students have been able to work with the collection of pioneer diaries to fulfill class assignments in ways that further their Master’s or PhD theses.

In sum, removing Special Collections would diminish the research standing of our library and the institution as a whole, making it harder to win competitive grants, and would be a breach of public trust for the persons, especial indigenous persons, who were party to the deposition of materials there with the expectation that they would be held in a professionally managed archive in perpetuity. I urge you to preserve Special Collections because it is crucial to the support of primary research in the College of Liberal Arts, and because research, in all of its public relevance, is and should be one of the central missions that define a flagship university.

Thank you for considering my letter,

M. Eleanor Nevins  
Co-chair Multi-Ethnic Coalition  
Assistant Professor  
Anthropology Department  
University of Nevada, Reno
Dear Members of the Curricular Review Committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposed closure of the Special Collections department at the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center. As a researcher and writer, a history professor, and the director of the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP), I rely upon Special Collections for critical research materials available nowhere else, for expertise in helping my students to locate and analyze primary source materials, and for the careful stewardship of the hundreds of recordings and transcripts that make up the extensive research collection of the UNOHP.

Along with many other researchers, writers, and students who specialize in state and local topics, I consider Special Collections indispensable to my work. Special Collections is where I conducted nearly half of the research for my book, *Reno's Big Gamble: Image and Reputation in the Biggest Little City* (University of Kansas Press, 2008). Many of the materials I found there are available nowhere else; these range from the collected papers of downtown Reno business organizations and individuals to promotional brochures, unpublished manuscripts and lectures, photographs, and oral histories from the very program I now direct.

With the loss of all state funding in 2009, the UNOHP lost its public reading room, and from that point forward, Special Collections has been the point of public access for the entire UNOHP research collection. The Special Collections department also manages our archive of original recordings, and is helping to coordinate the digitization of our cassettes through an ongoing Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant. Were Special Collections to close, I would have to seriously reconsider our decision to archive this unique and valuable collection at the university, as it is our trust in the professional expertise and knowledge of the staff that makes this partnership so successful.

Inspired by the online exhibits created by Special Collections in recent years, I assigned my entire Introduction to Public History class (History 311) this semester to create online exhibits about campus history for the Special Collections website. The staff is working closely with my students to help them locate materials, scan selected images, and design the overall exhibit, which we believe will successfully promote not only the University Archives, but the University as a whole. The students are incredibly enthusiastic about this project, thanks to the intensive assistance provided by Donnie Curtis, Betty Glass, and others.

Maintaining a Special Collections department staffed by professional archivists and librarians is critical to maintaining the university’s role as a viable research and teaching institution that serves not only our students, faculty and staff, but the surrounding community, and indeed, all of Northern Nevada. Due to a series of state cutbacks, researchers can only access the research library of the Nevada Historical Society for a mere 16 hours/week. These limitations make it even more essential for the university's Special Collections department to continue to provide researchers with unfettered access to its collection of materials concerning our city, state, and region. Please do everything you can to keep this important department open and professionally staffed.

Yours very sincerely,

Alicia Barber, Ph.D.
Director, University of Nevada Oral History Program
March 28, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Donnellyn Curtis

Director of Research Collections and Services

FROM: Ann Ronald

Foundation Professor of English Emerita

SUBJECT: Special Collections

It is not an exaggeration to say that without Special Collections, my career could not have happened. The entire trajectory of my own scholarship and a great deal of my teaching has been dictated by the research resources of the department and the helpful suggestions from members of the staff. Shutting down Special Collections, or mothballing it for awhile, would mean that future careers like mine and similar publications simply wouldn’t occur. I’m egotistical enough to think that would be unfortunate.

I was trained at a research institution with a very large assortment of primary materials. When I came to Nevada, I already was addicted to spending my time in library archives. As soon as I discovered Special Collections, I veered toward the American West and began working with its treasures. Some of my favorite publications came from what I found upstairs in Getchell Library. Walter Van Tilburg Clark’s correspondence with his editor, for example, led me to write an essay on his creative practices; narratives by forgotten ladies of Tonopah led me to write an essay about early western women diarists; the Modern Authors holdings of Wallace Stegner led me to write an essay about the drift of his environmental attitudes. And I think it’s safe to say that a whole host of other materials led me to write individual chapters in every one of my books about the West. Without Special Collections, no New West of Edward Abbey, no Earthtones, no GhostWest, and certainly no Friendly Fallout 1953.

Special Collections affected my teaching, too. Whenever I taught the research course for graduate students in English, I included projects that drew directly from manuscripts, correspondence, and original texts. In my upper division courses, too, I often directed undergraduate students to similar materials, offering them a rare opportunity to experience the joys of research first hand. Without access to Special Collections, these assignments would not have been possible.

Colleagues from other universities have found our archives equally invaluable. Two of my friends, in particular, have spent months in Reno digging into holdings that needed exploration. Larry Berkove, from Michigan, has published both essays and books on the Comstock, focusing on writers like Mark Twain, Dan DeQuille, and Ambrose Bierce, while Jackson Benson has written the definitive literary biographies of John Steinbeck, Wallace Stegner, and Walter Van Tilburg Clark. None of these critical studies would have been possible without the resources of Nevada’s Special Collections.

Dwelling on the past is perhaps inappropriate, given the current budgetary problems, but Special Collections, after all, is dedicated to the past and to preserving its legacy for future generations. So I wanted to begin this story by describing my own past experiences there and the successes of just two exemplary colleagues. But it is important to think about how Special Collections does its job and to consider what might happen to the present and to the future if its doors were to close.
When I retired from the university, I donated several hundred books and gave all of my papers to Special Collections. As President and later as Executive Secretary of the Western Literature Association, and as an ardent supporter of environmental writing, I had accumulated artifacts and research materials and letters that essentially trace the development of an entire field of literary study. If Special Collections closes, I fear all this information will be locked away somewhere, inaccessible to anyone who wants to study what I gleaned. Even more significant than Ann Ronald’s contributions are Harry Reid’s. The senior senator from Nevada generously is donating all of his papers to the University of Nevada, Reno. Will they, too, be inaccessible and locked away?

And should Harry Reid or Ann Ronald or others like us keep on donating? While working on my most recent book, *Friendly Fallout 1953*, I acquired an enormous archival range of information. I must have several hundred government reports, memos, letters, and personal reminiscences about aboveground atomic testing in Nevada, not to mention the books I bought to survey the field. It would take years for someone else to accumulate the same information that I would make easily accessible. Everything is boxed, ready to go to the Knowledge Center. I’ve always planned to offer all of this material to Special Collections, for it rightly belongs there. But there would be no point in doing so if the university follows through on its plan to lock such donations away. Then the present becomes an unknown and unknowable past.

Finally, let me talk about the future. Right now I’m contemplating writing a new factual/fictional book-length study about the Newlands Project along the Truckee River. I cannot do so without Special Collections. Period! I might as well throw away the work I’ve done to date and forget about pursuing the project further. How many other scholars would find their work similarly thwarted? Historians, political scientists, artists, archaeologists, as well as English professors, would surely turn away from Nevada and would study other places. How many young researchers would focus elsewhere in their work? No more visiting scholars like Berkove and Benson. That would be a great loss—no one to write about Nevada’s past and thus no opportunity for readers to study thoughtful commentary about bygone times and projections for the years ahead.

Inaccessible, too, would be the growing body of environmental literature that the university has been accumulating. Undoubtedly the books can become part of the library’s general holdings, although that subjects them to damage and loss. Manuscripts cannot be circulated, however, so they necessarily will be unavailable to anyone wishing to peruse them. If we hope to retain our standing as a research institution, we need to keep our specialized focus and we need to keep collecting. Closing Special Collections stymies those plans, stymies the future, in fact. It also stymies our aspirations. I wrote a letter last year about the value of a university press to a mature institution of higher learning. The same argument holds true for archival holdings.

I apologize for writing too much about me, but I’m typical of users who need Special Collections. It is a Nevada treasure chest that must remain open if we are to share its contents with each other and if we intend to grow its resources for our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. If my own career is a paradigm for what is possible when utilizing Special Collections, multiply that by hundreds and thousands. That’s what’s possible and what could be lost.
March 29, 2011

To: Donnie Curtis, Director of Collections & Research Services
   Kathy Ray, Senior Director of Libraries
From: Martha Hildreth, for the Department of History
Re: Proposed closure of Special Collections

The Department of History has an important stake in the continuation of the Special Collections Department of the Knowledge Center. In addition to the role of Special Collections in faculty and graduate student research, our undergraduate curriculum emphasizes hands-on work with primary sources. We expect our undergraduates to leave UNR with direct knowledge of how history is done, and with the skills to perform basic research, as well as basic knowledge of how archives are gathered and curated. Reno is a long distance from any substantial archives outside of what exists in our area. Whereas graduate students are expected to travel for research, this is not practical for most undergraduates.

As one of our faculty has commented: “Giving students a chance to handle actual letters, diaries, artifacts, and other primary source documents in person serves to engage them in ways that working with internet or published sources does not.” In the words of another colleague: “There is no substitute for the experience of seeing and handling the actual documents, photographs, and books that have been collected and curated at such great institutional cost … the loss of Special Collections would also significantly weaken my students’ educational experience.”

Many of our courses depend on the collaboration of the skilled staff of Special Collections, as well as upon the simple material existence of the archives in Nevada History and the collection of rare books and imprints that extend to Europe as well as America. The staff regularly gives presentations to our students on the issues of collecting and maintaining archives and the regulations that researchers are required to follow in using archives. Working in archives is basic to historical research; it can also be quite intimidating to the uninitiated. Our students who go on to graduate work, or other occupations that require archival work, thus have a significant advantage.

Special Collections, as one faculty member remarks, “is absolutely indispensable to the teaching and study of Nevada History.” It is important to keep in mind also that Special Collections contains, in addition to many documents relating to Nevada History and to the experiences of Nevadans, rare books relating to European History. There are some fifty books currently catalogued dating from 1478-1777, and many more from this period that are in the process of receiving a call number.
The History of the Book is an area of scholarship emphasized in our scholarship and curriculum.

Below is a list of courses that regularly use Special Collections and brief description of the integration of the staff into the curriculum.

History 300: Historical Research and Writing (required of all History majors). In this course Special Collections has come play a central role. We teach three sections a year, and most of these visit the collection for a formal presentation by the staff. In many sections, the staff also creates workstations of documents that students examine and write about. The staff gives ideas about what one learns about history from documents like the Reno city directories, letter collections from soldiers and ranchers, and documents relating to the Elko Rodeo Days.

History 322: Public History. This is a field of specialization the History Department has expanded in the last two years. The use of Special Collections is critical to this course. Currently, the class is creating online exhibits in collaboration with the Special Collections staff, using materials in the collection. The staff have given several presentations on how to search the archives, and on the documentary materials that tell the story of public history. The staff meet with individual students and mentor their specific exhibit projects.

History 499: Senior Thesis. All History majors write a Senior Thesis. For those who explore local and state topics, Special Collections provides a multitude of sources. These students spend a great deal of time in the collection working with the professional staff who thus become an extension of our teaching faculty, helping students to navigate these sources and understand their provenance.

HIST 384: Italian Renaissance. The curriculum has a section on printing and publishing that incorporates visiting Special Collections to examine the collection of Venetian/Florentine imprints from 1476-1645.

HIST 404/604: American Social History and HIST 432/632 American Women’s History: students frequently do research projects on local history, for which the instructor sends them to work in Special Collections.

HIST 482A/682A: Age of Discovery. This class visits Special Collections at least once a semester where in particular students examine and discuss the Nuremberg Chronicle (1493).

HIST 484A/684A: The History of the Book in European Society, 1450-1800. This course, taught every two years, depends on Special Collections. The class visits the collection seven to eight times each semester to work on the unique collection of books described above. In addition, students design projects that necessitate their
visiting the collection on their own. Access to the collection is crucial to their success in these projects.

HIST 488B/688B: Lake Tahoe Landscapes and HIST 488/688: Creating North American Landscapes. Students undertake research projects based upon primary sources. To this end, the classes met in Special Collections for an orientation from the staff on documents they might use. Subsequently, many students visit Special Collections to continue work on those projects.

HIST 498/698: Venice: A Cultural History. The illustrated Venetian imprints are used here as a “window into Venetian Identity.”
940 Grandview Ave.
Reno NV 89503
March 31, 2011

Dr. Milton Glick, President
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno NV 89557

Dear President Glick:

Within the last couple of weeks, someone in the UNR administration has suggested that the Special Collections unit of the Mathewson-IGT Learning Center might be closed to save money. This idea must have originated with someone who does not remember what our University's mission is and need for the resources of Special Collections to fulfill it.

This small unit is one of the richest teaching-learning opportunities in the University System --- a place in our academy where in the scholars in the arts, humanities and social sciences interact to develop their skills at research. It is comparable to the chemistry and physics laboratories for undergraduates, advanced students and faculties.

I had the privilege of using the predecessor of the Special Collections as a student in its infancy in the old Clark Library fifty years ago and in guiding students to its resources when, in my years as a professor, it was in Getchell library. Now it has a highly efficient professional staff and excellent facilities for serving researchers at all levels.

Over the years, the University and the Friends of the UNR Library have assembled hundreds of treasures of the printed and engraved arts, mostly from gifts entrusted to the University's care by generous donors. The new technology and the staff at Mathewson-IGT now make these resources easily available. There is no richer library resource in Nevada than Mathewson-IGT, and Special Collections is one of its most useful units.

Certainly the state of Nevada and your administration do not mean to close this window into the world of shared learning. If it were to do so, it would be breaking trust with those who have contributed valuable resources to the University. It would discourage any future donations and bequests. Above all, it would deprive students of the benefits of a very Special library and its professional staff.

Yours truly,

Jim Hulse
Professor of History Emeritus
March 26, 2011

Marc Johnson, Executive Vice President & Provost
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, Nevada 89557

Dear Provost Johnson (Marc),

I am writing this letter in support of retaining the Special Collections Department within the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center. As you may know, I am a dedicated educator and researcher, and believe, deeply, in the core mission and values of the university. With this in mind, I am distressed over the proposed closure of the Special Collections Department. Why?

This is, on one level, an easy question to answer. Any research university requires as a cornerstone of its mission and identity access to visual materials and specialized documents. Denying faculty, staff, students and the community access to these materials violates, in my view, the public trust. I am an outspoken advocate of the importance of visual literacy among our students, and believe this area is critically underserved, at present. To close Special Collections sends a message that the university does not value visual literacy. I am now, and have been, an ambassador of the Special Collections department, gathering important materials from long-time Nevada donors that now reside on the shelves and in the databases of Special Collections. It never crossed my mind that one day, an administration would consider closing such a critical university archive. Breaking the confidence of the public trust is from my view inadvisable and potentially harmful. It could take a decade, or longer, to rebuild from this closure.

Secondly, I am actively using the archives at Special Collections, and my research activity depends on access to the visual materials. This proposal will seriously undermine my efforts, and require me to work disproportionately to gather materials in advance of any closing. To say a potential closure of Special Collections is disruptive only scratches the surface of the potential problem; donors will not contribute, and I will potentially lose the good faith and following of numerous contributors from the Tahoe Basin.

These are, indeed, troubling times. My heart goes out to each and every one of us. However, I urge you to employ your good name and the efforts of your fine offices to find suitable resources to maintain some access for the Special Collections Department.

Respectfully,

Peter Goin
foundation Professor of Art
March 30, 2011

Donnelyn Curtis
Head of Special Collections
University of Nevada, Reno Libraries
Mail Stop 322
1664 No. Virginia St.
Reno, NV 89557

Dear Ms. Curtis:

Over the past 25 years, my fraternity, the Epsilon-Iota Chapter of Lambda Chi Alpha, has utilized the services of the University Archives and Special Collections for a growing number of our fraternity's historical records and paper-based artifacts. And although our utilization of these services over that time may have been sporadic at best, we are thankful.

It took me two years to realize the value of the University Archives and Special Collections as it relates to my fraternity's 80-plus years of photographic memories. (Better late than never, as they say.) Although I supplied the digital images and not the original photographs in most cases, I am relieved that there is a central repository to serve/display these images on the Web. This methodology's added value is three-fold: 1) it strengthens my fraternity's association with the University; 2) the system used guarantees consistency and continuity as my fraternity's history-capturing initiatives can/would vary according to the initiative, energy and enthusiasm of the members/alumni administering the program; and 3) the rapport between my fraternity and Archives and Special Collections staff can develop an additional system of checks and balances to where staff can prompt the fraternity periodically for any new images/records.

So, no sooner after I was praising the services of Archives and Special Collections as I dropped off 1,700-plus digital images earlier this month, I had to mourn its imminent passing as news broke out that Archives and Special Collections is on UNR's budget chopping block.

I am aware that tough times call for tough measures, but eliminating the program and its staff is throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Campus organizations come and go, but their history builds while they are here and their legacy will always remain. And as I stated above, I could administer my own system (along with its inherent weaknesses) that illustrates my fraternity's history; but I want it to be something that is ongoing and can be shared beyond our membership. Archives and Special Collections has done -- and can continue to do -- a far better job at ensuring this, given the vast, searchable Web-based tool.

I understand that I am not fully aware of the extent of the State of Nevada's Higher Education's budget crisis, but if it determined that this program is an underutilized resource, I think that with some grassroots communication and awareness-building, other campus organizations can view the value of Archives and Special Collections in the same way I do. Even with minimal staffing I foresee it helping ensure the continuity I feel is so valuable.

I thank you for your time and consideration. If you would like to discuss my concerns in more detail, please call me at 775-225-4985 or e-mail me at blauthaus@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

John E. Blauth
April 1, 2011

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed closure of the University of Nevada, Reno, Special Collections Department. I am a fourth-year Ph.D. student in Anthropology at the University, studying historical archaeology. The materials housed in the Special Collections Department have been an invaluable tool for my research, and have aided me in writing numerous research papers and reports. The highly-knowledgeable staff in the Special Collections Department are always able to help me find what I am looking for and give me suggestions for additional avenues of inquiry.

While I plan on graduating before July 2012 (the date at which Special Collections would close completely if it is eliminated from the school budget), there are several other students in my department whose research relies heavily upon information gathered from Special Collections. These students would be unable to complete a large portion of their research if this department were to be eliminated. Graduate students would then be forced to rely upon untrained personnel to attempt to retrieve the (often obscure and hard to find) materials they need.

I hope you will read this letter closely and consider the impacts that cutting Special Collections would make, not only on graduate students in the Anthropology Department, but on students in a number of other Liberal Arts disciplines at UNR.

Sincerely,
Sarah Heffner, MA
To whom it may concern,

My name is Edan Strekal, I am a graduate student in the History Department at the University of Nevada, Reno. I am writing on behalf of Special Collections located within the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center. It has recently been brought to my attention that Special Collections is scheduled to be closed due to the impending budget crisis. If budget cuts do deem it necessary to close Special Collections, I believe the state will be doing students such as myself and colleagues a great disservice. I rely heavily on the expertise of the staff to help me locate manuscripts, books, and maps for my research. If this material was mismanaged, without a competent staff, it might be impossible to locate within the library. In addition, Special Collections is not just an archive for students of the university, it is an important supplemental resource to the state archives and Nevada Historical Society. Special Collections is important to local history buffs, students, and visiting researchers alike. It would be a shame for this department to be closed without any further consideration. It fair to say that the materials located in Special Collections and the staff are vital to supporting the study and research of this state and region's rich and unique history. Therefore, I feel this matter should be reconsidered and reviewed on behalf of myself, others like me, and the staff before something rash is done.

Sincerely,

Edan Strekal
Hello,

I just wanted to let you know I have sent the following letter to the Provost regarding the budget cuts:

"I am currently a student at the University of Nevada, Reno, finishing a bachelors degree in History. This semester, I have used the services of Special Collections several times. Without their collections and assistance, I would have had a much more difficult time writing my thesis and my research would have been incomplete without this service. How can we train people to do research properly if we do not allow them to have the resources they need? How will we be able to explore Nevada’s past if the doors are shut? Please reconsider your decision to close Special Collections."

I don't know if there's much I can do to help, but I definitely support you and your department!

Anita Leja Burge
Dear President Glick:

I am writing as a concerned alumnus (English, 1959), as a professional historian, and as fellow academic to urge you to keep the Special Collections and University Archives of the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center and University Library open for processing new materials and for research.

You are faced with extraordinary difficult budget cuts and you will hear pleas from every program affected, but as someone who cares deeply about the university and who has benefited in his career from both the education he received and from the unique unpublished materials in the University’s Special Collections, I must share my reasons for thinking that Special Collections cannot be downsized or terminated using the same criteria as used to evaluate other programs.

First, the Library, the Knowledge Center, is historically the intellectual heart of the University. Students, professors, departments, administrators come and go, but the collections of books, periodicals, media materials, and above all, unpublished correspondence and manuscripts provide a necessary record of the past and the foundation for the future. Special Collections is far more valuable than its small budget indicates. The material it contains is not available on the Internet or anywhere but in its stacks and small but pleasant reading room.

Second, an archive with its collections of personal and corporate papers is not like an academic department or program that may spin off from an older discipline in an effort to serve a temporary employment need or generate innovative research in an otherwise stagnant field and then disappear. A Special Collection is special because its value and reputation grow by accretion. I have watched the University’s archivists carefully assemble this excellent collection. The hard work and dedication of three generations of librarians have made Special Collections the jewel it is today. Momentum is built steadily and the cumulative effects of a great research collection cannot be turned off and on like tap water. Close a collection, even for a brief period, that has become essential to research in any field and you destroy the base for future development. Scholars are frustrated by lack of access and turn away from the topics that are unique to the collection.

Third, a glance at the very professional and user-friendly web site of the University’s Special Collections Department immediately reveals what would be lost by closing. Here, a researcher can find guides to the papers of politicians—Alan Bible, Mary Gojack, my old classmate Jim Santini—literary figures—Walter Clark, Dan De Quille, Joanne De Longchamps, Robert Laxalt—and the unclassifiable geniuses—Margaret Wheat and James E. Church. The
University has greatly helped the state create a better image of itself, the work of some of the people who made that possible can only be found in Special Collections.

I have used material from Special Collections in my last two books and I am depending on about a dozen record groups from the collections for the history of Pyramid Lake I am working on now. This is not a special plea, as I will finish my research when I visit the University next month, before the scheduled closing of the collections. I am making a plea for those who will come after me, depending on the collections to tell the stories of science in Nevada, of tourism, of ranch life and mining, of women’s rights and Civil Rights, of business, and of education. Moreover, scholars, especially those beginning graduate degrees need not only access to collections, but the experience and knowledge of professional archivists and collections specialists. Ms. Donnelly Curtis and Ms. Jacquelyn Sundstrand are two of the finest special collections librarians I have worked with in fifty years of research. They know the material, they take an interest in a researcher’s project, and they think creatively about how the collections can be augmented and used.

The archives and special collections of every major university are the place where young scholars get their first practical experience in humanistic research. Scholars I know in literature and history and even in political science and policy studies work closely with librarians and archivists to teach students about the challenges and limitations of primary materials. A collection of unpublished materials is like a laboratory to a chemist, a stratum of Devonian shale to a paleontologist, or the night sky to an astronomer.

Hard times require hard choices. Based on my experience as a department chair and from service on university budget committees, small amounts of discretionary funds can be found and soon add up to substantial savings that can be applied to academic programs. You list some in your March 7th letter. Your list made me think of a discussion I had recently with an officer in a professional association to which I belong who had asked how the organization could be more “green.” My answer was, “Easy, hold conferences every other year instead of annually. That’s a 50% reduction in greenhouse gases.” I would guess that Special Collections’ budget is equal to about 700 academic trips annually. Travel budgets don’t have to be eliminated, but at a University with several thousand faculty and staff, cutting them in half would provide a pretty good pool of money and might actually help the planet. As a wise colleague once pointed out to me, “Most academic conferences are merely the leisure of the theory class.”

I don’t envy your task. Good luck and keep Nevada strong.

Sincerely,

Bernard Mergen
Professor Emeritus of American Studies
George Washington University
PO Box 309
Franklin, WV 26807

Cc: Donnelly Curtis
March 26, 2011

Donnelyn Curtis, Head of Special Collections
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia Street
Reno, NV 89557

Dear Donnelyn,

I am a doctoral candidate and President’s Fellow (2009-2010) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, completing with my degree in American West and environmental history this spring. I am deeply concerned about the proposed budget cuts which will severely impact my nascent career as a historian. On the cusp of my graduation and with a visiting professor position at Northern Arizona University in hand, these budget cuts threaten to curtail my access to the most crucial resources necessary to convert my current research project into a book and continue my work in the history of Nevada and the Great Basin.

My dissertation, “The Size of the Risk: An Environmental History of the Nuclear Great Basin,” closely examines the impacts of major federal programs enacted on the region’s public lands. These programs include public lands grazing, nuclear testing, homesteading, outdoor recreation, and wild horse preservation. Already, several national presses are interested in my work which, if published, would assist policy-makers throughout the country by helping them better understand the needs of rural Nevadans. Access to unique archival collections throughout the state was fundamental to the completion of my project. Continued access to these collections is crucial for the conversion of my dissertation into a book. Nevada’s repositories of manuscript, photograph, oral history, and map collections that detail the history of this region have been and will continue to be of the utmost importance to my work.

At the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), I worked with Jacquelyn Sundstrand and the staff in Special Collections researching the Tina Nappe Papers, the Sagebrush Rebellion Papers, and the Gus Bundy Photograph Collection. These resources significantly informed my work by providing key insights into range management and the state’s response to federal land policy. It was impossible, for example, to accurately write about wild horses in the Great Basin without access to these collections. In addition, the digital map collection Nevada History in Maps, a compilation of historic maps from the Nevada Historical Society, the DeLaMare Map Library, the Nevada State Library and Archives, and Special Collections, also proved crucial. But I could not have fully understood what these collections contained without the help of Jacque and the other staff. Archivists in general know the collections they manage better than any researcher. We must have their help to discover the most important aspects of each collection to our work. Jacque helped me realize the important relationship between the Tina Nappe Papers and the Gus Bundy Photographs.
In addition to researching in UNR’s Special Collections, I have also worked with Susan Searcy and the staff at the Nevada State Library and Archives examining the gubernatorial papers from the Frederick Balzar administration through the Robert List administration. I worked with Su Kim Chung and the staff in Special Collections at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, researching the Howard Cannon Papers, the Nye County Town History Project and Nye County photograph collection, and the Nevada Test Oral History Project. All of these archival collections have been fundamental to accurately writing the history of Nevada and the Great Basin and making a significant contribution to the national understanding of this beautiful and wonderful region.

In order for me to complete my book, I plan to continue research at UNR’s Special Collections. The Alan Bible Papers contain key correspondence between the senator and his constituents. In addition, I will also need to examine the Clel Georgetta Papers and the Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter Papers. The proposed closure of Special Collections at UNR would prevent me from completing my work and continuing to research the environmental history of Nevada and the Great Basin, an increasingly popular region under discussion in the historical discipline as demonstrated by James W. Hulse’s recent book *Nevada’s Environmental Legacy: Progress or Plunder* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2009).

Special Collections has proved of great value to other well-established scholars such as Eugene Moehring, Martha Knack, James Hulse, Peter Goin, C. Elizabeth Raymond, Ann Ronald, William Fox, William Rowley, Eric Charles Nystrom, David Schwartz, Philip Fradkin, and many, many others who utilized these archives to further the understanding of this state and the Great Basin region. In addition to the current work done by myself, my colleague Christian Harrison is writing an environmental history of Las Vegas and will require access to several manuscript collections at UNR. I strongly encourage the university to keep Special Collections open to researchers. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Leisl Carr Childers
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Contract Researcher
Autry National Center, Los Angeles
CarrL4@unlv.nevada.edu
(702) 280-3546

Department of History
Box 452050 • 4505 S Maryland Parkway
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http://www.unlv.edu/History
26 March 2011

Ms. Jacquelyn Sundstrand
Manuscripts & Archives Librarian
UNR Public Records Officer/Special Collections Department
Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center/322
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia Street
Reno, NV 89557-0322

Dear Ms. Sundstrand:

Over the last few years, my company, Davis-King & Associates (DKA) has accomplished unique and unusual archival research in the University of Nevada Reno Special Collections Department. No other institution in the world contains the original manuscripts, photographs, letters, maps, and other materials of Nevada’s heritage and original people. In short, the research my firm has conducted on Great Basin anthropological tribes and other people could not have been accomplished without the materials held in your institution. As an example, world renowned expert on the Washo Tribe of Nevada and California, Professor Emeritus Warren d’Azevedo, has made UNR Special Collections the solitary home for his research materials collected over decades of investigation. These data are unique, with interview notes and photographs conducted with people long since passed on and correspondence with other scholars about the nature of Great Basin and Nevada ethnic groups. Hand drawn maps, later penciled annotations on his own and other’s scholarly writings, ideas jotted down that were not pursued—all these and more are found in your archive. No one else has this information in the world, and scholars and others come just to access these, along with your other unique collections.

UNR is fortunate to have the caring and committed staff of the Special Collections Department. Since the 1960s DKA has been conducting research in archives throughout the American West, and we can think of no other institution can match the dedication of your staff. As you may recall, after my first visit to your facility, I was so very impressed by your staff and you that I wrote a letter to the University of Nevada Reno President Glick in October 2008 expressing my appreciation.

At this time of financial crisis in so many sectors of our nation, it would be short sighted to eliminate funding for the very institutions which document and preserve our collective past. Your state-of-the-art electronic system, your detailed and user-friendly web connections and finding guides, and the accessibility of reference materials in the outer room make UNR collections readily accessible, on a timeliness scale unequaled elsewhere. The knowledge of your staff about the collections, and their ability to assist researchers is of value not to be overlooked. On my last visit, which occurred over a one-week period, daily I watched UNR students and faculty conduct research in the Special Collections, depending on the speed and accuracy in the retrieval of materials you house there. I cannot imagine the loss to the academic community that would be suffered by closing the most important repository of Nevada history in the world.

Sincerely,

Shelly Davis-King, R.P.A. 10037
Principal
Dear Jacquelyn,

I have three responses to the proposed elimination of the Special Collections & University Archives Department. One response is as a Nevada author and donor of materials, one is as a research scholar with many published books, and the third is as Director of the Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art—which means I oversee the Archives and Research Library here. My understanding is that the archive materials you have on hand will be kept, but simply not accessible, as there will be no staff to available to researchers or the public, and that you would no longer be processing archives. You would have only dead stacks.

First, then, as a donor, I am deeply dismayed that my materials would not be available to students, faculty, and visiting researchers. If this proposal passes, I will be forced to immediately shift my additional planned donations, which cover from early this century onward, to another archive. Substantial holdings of my work are both at Brown University and at the Nevada Museum of Art, both of which would like to have my materials. This would be a shame, as the proper context for most of my work is alongside of that of my regional peers.

I have published eleven nonfiction books about cognition and landscape, as well as numerous essays in magazines, journals, and art monographs. I have used your collections extensively for the basis of many of those publications. As a researcher who has been lucky enough to use libraries around the world in order to write, publish, and lecture—to have a career, in short—I am horrified that I will no longer have access to records I would use in future books. That means I will literally write less about Nevada and the region—if the research materials in the Archive are no longer available, I can't cover certain topics about the Great Basin. The materials that I have typically used in the past include rare books, maps, photographs, and manuscripts that are not available elsewhere.

Second, as the person responsible for the Archives and Library here, I find it ironic that this proposal has surfaced within two years of our establishing, after much careful consideration, our own international archive effort.

This is the fundamental project of the Center for Art + Environment: to collect archives and make them available to scholars, who work here on a regular and increasing basis from around the world. Archives are critical to the creation of new knowledge, and our archives collected from six continents—and in league with our newly expanded (but very tightly focused) special collections—offer a unique resource. We have a local goal to serve the community as a generalist museum, but what brings us recognition and funds from outside the Reno-Tahoe area is the new scholarship we develop out of our archives and special collections. It's what distinguishes us from a hundred other regional museums.

The idea of closing Special Collections and Archives at the University simply runs counter to the mission of a learning center. If UNR wants to run a generic and increasingly online resource for
a library, that's fine—but it simply makes the university learning center much less of a player in a field of much larger libraries. What makes the UNR Learning Center unique and valuable as more than a convenient coffee shop with books and magazines is Special Collections and Archives. That's true of all but the largest libraries.

Furthermore, we are engaged in several exhibitions and research projects that are predicated on materials you have in those areas, in particular materials about James Church and Charles Cutts, which are intimate to the founding of our institution. If UNR proceeds with this plan, we will be in discussion with officials at the university about the future disposition of those materials.

The language that the President of the university and others have developed to promote this school centers around "academic and research excellence." Sorry, but you can't have that excellence without archives and special collections. There are other areas where the university can cut the budget without negatively affecting its mission statement.

Yours with great concern,

Bill Fox
To Whom It May Concern —

I wish to express my deep concern over the proposal to eliminate the Special Collections & University Archives Department — I cannot imagine a more appropriate or vital research source than Special Collections & Archives at the University of Nevada —

Some years ago I gave a number of items & documents pertaining to my family's historical lumbering interests at Lake Tahoe to the Department — the gift is now referred to as the William W. Bliss Collection — over the years many papers, publications & books have referenced the Collection — precisely my hope & intent at the time & my intent in the future when opening more of Glenbrook & lumbering days at Lake Tahoe, now in my private collection —

I am considered Alumni because of an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree conferred by the Board of Regents in 1993 — I am a Trustee Emeritus of the University of Nevada Foundation —
But all that aside, closure would be a devastating loss to available research of the state's history. To say nothing of the loss to all those who, in good faith, gave to the department over the years —

Sincerely,

William W. Bliss

29 March 2011

(CVP John Carothers)
March 29, 2011

Dr. Milton Glick, President
University of Nevada, Reno/001
Reno, NV 89557

VIA EMAIL

Re: proposal to close Special Collections

Dear Dr. Glick,

The Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club has entrusted many of its records to UNR Special Collections, an institution with impeccable professional credentials. We have been reading, with great dismay, recent newspaper accounts of proposals to close Special Collections, as well as a number of other highly valuable programs at the University due to "budget cuts." While reducing budgets of university programs may be required because of revenue shortfalls due to unsustainable economic activity in our state, we urge you and the University to utilize the tremendous knowledge and resourcefulness of university staff in every program to recommend how necessary budget reductions should be carried out, without eliminating programs or substantially harming the availability of university resources to students and the larger community.

UNR Special Collections contains records of Sierra Club activities, from copies of the original newsletter, the Toiyabe Tattler, to more recent editions of the Toiyabe Trails and accounts of countless outings to the mountains and deserts of Nevada. Additional records demonstrate the Sierra Club's critical role in public lands issues, including opposition to the Sagebrush Rebellion and the MX Missile proposals, the establishment of the Great Basin National Park and Congressional designation of many Nevada wilderness areas, and the ins and outs of TROA, the Truckee River Operating Agreement, which resolved over 100 years of water litigation. The UNR Special Collections show the rich history of the Club's grassroots involvement in conservation and environmental issues which have defined our state's geography, policies, and laws.

We believe that closing the UNR Special Collections would be a tremendous loss to the university students, to researchers, and to the larger community. On the other hand, allowing access to materials without oversight by trained archivists is a prescription for disaster to these invaluable assets of the university. We intended to continue to donate Sierra Club records to Special Collections, covering the current conservation struggles over proposals to export billions of gallons of groundwater from rural Nevada to urban areas, the current controversies over the protection and management of the country's wild horses and burros, and the advent of alternative energy projects in Nevada. The current university's budget cutting proposals have put future donations on hold.

Please trust the university community to achieve necessary budget cuts while protecting the university's essential teaching mission and programs like Special Collections which are intrinsic to the quality of life of the university community, as well as to the larger Nevada community.

Sincerely,

Rose Strickland /s/

Rose Strickland
Public Lands Committee
March 30, 2011

To: The President and Provost, University of Nevada, Reno

From: Fred N. Holabird, mining, environmental and historical consultant

Re: Proposed Closure of the UNR Special Collections Library

Introduction

The UNR SC library forms an integral part of my professional life. I have regularly used the library constantly in professional research over the past thirty five years. The staff, inclusive of Bob Blesse, Karen Gash, Jacquie Sundstrand and others have provided invaluable assistance that has invariably led to new research and subsequent published or unpublished papers with far reaching consequences, particularly to the legal and environmental fields. The materials used are of the highest caliber. The results are life-changing to many that use my work and similar work of others for its fullest advantage.

Some of the projects I have worked on include exceptionally important environmental impact studies, where the only real information are the actual records, inclusive of photographs, of mining and milling operations of Nevada’s mines over the past century and a half. The subsequent study of these records has led to more complete environmental cleanups at a lower cost while minimizing public safety hazards. Other important projects involve two of the largest American treasure discoveries of the twentieth century, the SS Central America (1857) and SS Republic (1865). All of the research for these two giant projects started in the Special Collections Library.

I also donate to the library regularly – both in time, money, materials, goods and services as well as support at the highest level. I wear several hats in my job – one to preserve culture, history and information in any way possible, and another to steer the very best and most important collections to the UNR SC Library and Nevada Historical Society. The two entities form different holdings - UNR SC needs important intellectual properties, while NHS needs more historical items, often three dimensional. Among the most important collections that I have steered to UNR SC or NHS include the Gaming Industry Association records, the Grosh Brothers Letters, and countless others. My wife Robin also voluntarily participates in SC and UNR Library fund raisers inclusive of the recent over-booked and popular Misfits symposium, which she chaired.

The purpose of special collections is to retain for advanced scholarly study the records of the past, in all forms. These items can, and often are, priceless and irreplaceable. The proposed closure or even partial closure of the ASC Library will leave permanent damage from which it may be impossible to return. I have witnessed the closure and dismantling of libraries before and can assure you from a first-hand perspective that even the best intentions go awry when marshalship of an important collection of this stature is no longer done by full-time trained professionals – not student interns, volunteers or security cameras. The key items will, at first, slowly disappear. Then, as an uninterested management takes the helm, it will all go away. It will reduce the University to a second class status, nearly that of a junior college. I will present specific examples in the upcoming pages, some of which will hurt.
March 30, 2011

General Statement

When we measure our age, we measure it in years, or trips around the sun. It is a journey, and the distance we travel in life is measured by the experiences we encounter, ever increasing with age. Those encounters lead to a life experience that in turn helps us understand the actions of mankind more fully. That experience is born of trial, error, experimentation and the resultant journey – whether in life, science, literature, social infrastructure, political, or otherwise. The sum of the experienced journeys helps us plan for the next journey. Those journeys are our history. That history, defined by trial, error and experimentation that lead to successes and failures helps us understand how to take the next trip at the least possible cost - and not just in monetary terms.

The library is just such a journey. It records life’s journeys of all of the players. It is from these players that we learn our past in order to prepare for the future. The stored records of time come in many forms – written and pictorial stories of millenniums past, originally recorded pictorially or in now-dead written linguistic forms; written records of life and business from centuries past involving daily life, business, pleasure, science and politics. These records take the physical form of books, diaries, business records, maps, photographs, art, literature, texts inclusive of ancient texts. They make up the historical record. This record is critical in its regular upkeep and use by scholars of today, who use it daily to teach our young and from which we elders use the lessons of past history to prevent mistakes, or to better understand the environment in which we live and plan a better future. It is a critical spoke in the wheel of life, that if broken, will offset the educational process immensely, and set it back decades or more. Humanity has already seen this – the millennia between the great religious awakenings from the time of Christ’s birth to the burning of the library at Alexandria about 650AD, and the ensuing immense gap of time when the human intellect was crushed by those trying to destroy all forms of human intelligence to be replaced by a system of rule powered by fear and ignorance that crossed all religious boundaries. We lost a thousand years of human intellectual growth through that era, ended by the Renaissance, when the lid of alchemic power was finally blown off, holding back the human intellect no more.

Proposed Closure of Special Collections

The proposed closure of SC has and will have catastrophic results.

a. Loss of research information and tools
b. Closes access to all advanced study at the graduate and professional levels. This cannot be handled by regular library staff.
c. Assumes the material held by SC has no value, historically or as a financial asset.
d. Ignores the fact that as Nevada’s oldest university is, and has been, the State’s holding tank for scholarly research materials at the highest levels for more than a century.
e. Students will soon discover that there is no trained, experienced marshal governing the collection. Expensive materials will soon disappear, until at last it is all gone.

These words do not come lightly. Let’s look at my own experience. I have written, published, and presented hundreds of professional papers around the United States, on topics generally related to mining. In my own career, I managed two open pit gold mines (Flowery, Gold Bar); was responsible for
the ultimate discovery and production of four such mines (Flowery, Gold Bar, Bruner, Lake Valley); was brought in to manage four major environmental cleanups (Dayton, America’s first mercury cleanup; a Cyanide polluted aquifer, again the first of its kind; Pb-Zn-As mill tailings cleanup at Black Hawk, Colorado; and now working on an arsenic cleanup at Randsburg, Cal.) I also have had the extreme pleasure to have worked on some of the most important historical projects of the twentieth century, mostly surrounding gold. These include the $200 million SS Central America treasure, the SS Republic treasure, Mel Fisher’s Atocha, the Union Bank of California Archive, the Pacific Coast Borax Archive, the Gaming Industry Association Archive and hundreds more. Each and every one of these projects required advanced research at the University of Nevada Special Collections Library or associated collections.

These projects, while world class, wither in responsibility and impact when compared to the papers that I and others prepare for lawyers and law firms around the country on current environmental matters. The very records stored, and deemed worthless by current management, allow professionals such as myself to unravel the specifics of mining mill sites – to understand the processes used at specific sites, and thus predict what potential public dangers may be present, and thus how to mitigate or solve these potentially serious environmental problems. The university’s rare photograph collection alone can often prove specific conditions at certain sites at certain times. The resultant public protection is severely compromised if Special Collections is closed. The new resulting system would require a recreation of the data wheel, undertaken only at great expense, generally to the taxpayer.

Need another example? Mercury use and production on the Comstock is a constant topic of discussion in the media. The real data sits in the annual reports of mining companies and in the production data of the mines and mills. This data is only available at major holding facilities such as SC. Without this valuable data, the public is easily misled which allows for serious public problems, unnecessary expense of public monies and worse yet- the wrongful misinterpretation of data. Here’s such an example: the mercury spill at a local school several years ago. The school was shut down after a thermometer was broken, and the men in white suits came out, did their survey, left, and proclaimed it safe after the expenditure of reportedly more than $250,000. Had they have done their homework at the University (or called the proper professors) they would have learned that metallic mercury is not harmful. Methyl and dimethyl mercury is harmful. The research shows this clearly. But the public doesn’t hear the “methyl” or “dimethyl” part, only the “mercury” part. This is where education is headed if we close the doors to research. Back into the dark ages.

Current management sees the Special Collections Library as a liability. It costs money to operate. At a university or place of higher education, the payoff is not supposed to be a bottom line on a financial statement. It is in the net result of what the students learned and what they did with that knowledge. In today’s society, however, political appointments are made, and the wrong inexperienced people can be and often are put at the helms of University departments, or may be placed in charge of the entire university itself. This parallels the business world nearly perfectly. When a political appointee is placed in charge of a major company, they generally fail. It is a form of musical chairs in which a Board feels “safe” when they appoint an unqualified person to head a company or division as a political appointment or favor for a “job well done” elsewhere. Examples of this abound at both the university level and corporate world. In my world, mining, we can see this directly in the case of the Homestake...
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Mining Company, Phelps Dodge and others, each of which collapsed in one form or another after a misguided Board of Directors promoted a non-mining person to hold the reins.

The Library as an Asset

Nobody wants to talk about a library as an asset, especially any Special Collections Library. But at some point it must be discussed. The Special Collections Library is both an intellectual asset at the highest level, and also a financial asset. Most universities, however, generally ignore the financial asset part of the equation because of the possibility that accounting people may take control and order the sale of the asset. All too often this simplistic approach is heralded by an uninformed Board of Regents or university management who look for money instead of the real prize – intellectual growth. This is an example of the wrong people making the decisions. This can include librarians, since they are not classically financially trained, and lack that background. American society, however, has placed the burden of intellectual value far above the financial value. The entire reason for a university to exist is advanced learning. Stifling that process by the removal of keystone ingredients such as the SC library render a university no more than a parochial school.

There are many examples of library special collections assets being liquidated to the detriment of a University as a whole, both financially and intellectually. Let’s look at a few real examples, and finish them with our own University.

a. Harvard Business Library
b. University of Arizona Special Collections Library
c. American Institute of Mining Engineers
d. Upsala College.

Approximately twenty years ago, the Harvard Business Library merged with the main library. It placed the unwanted books outside the library door in a large box, each volume priced cheaply to make them “go away.” Students quickly bought up the books, took them to local booksellers, and the news quickly reached the collecting fraternity, including me. I purchased a number of x-Harvard books for a pittance of their value, including my copy of the Bullfrog Mining District Atlas, worth approximately $1,000-1,400 at that time. The loss to Harvard was huge – arguably over $100,000.

About three decades ago, the University of Arizona in Tucson divested itself of its rare book department. It brought out the books to the square in the middle of campus and announced a book sale. Some of the rarest books in print, in both literature and science, were sold by university personnel. Local book dealers were the recipients, and I was a consultant to Butterfield’s at the time, negotiating with these dealers to acquire the rarities. They kept the Arizona historical material. Based on what we acquired, it is fair to say they sold the books for ten cents on the dollar. This was a potential million dollar loss in income for the university because of the lack of understanding of the mechanisms involved in the sale of rare books. It also stripped advanced students of the possibility of using these items in scholarly study.
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The American Institute of Mining Engineers started their library about 1875. They acquired many of the libraries of the great nineteenth century geologists and mining engineers. Located in New York, it became problematic for mining professionals to visit. Instead of relocating the library to the association’s modern home in Colorado, a more centrally located place for American mining professionals, they opted to discard the library. It was taken to a recycler. I purchased more than 100 rare volumes, with the covers stripped, ready for processing in the recycling plant. As a long term member of the AIME, I was outraged. I called the president, who put me in touch with the person in charge of the disposal, who said she was advised the library had no value. I told her I paid thousands of dollars (over twenty) for the volumes I purchased without covers, all with the association’s stamps on the title pages. The library was worth millions, and makes it difficult, at best, to consider giving them money in the future for their “educational” fund. Had they had sold it professionally, they would have reaped the reward, cash. Better yet, maintain the complete library in Colorado, or transfer it to an institution of higher learning. Too late.

Upsala College closed in 1995 from “financial problems.” They sold their rare books to a rare book dealer for approximately $5 per volume. He has made a handsome living off these books ever since, and retired last year. I purchased more than $10,000 in rare mining books from him a decade ago that fit in a shopping bag.

The University of Nevada. Most of the examples here are individual librarian decisions, not a campus-wide “corporate” style decisions with the kind of major impact that the current proposed closure of SC has. I use them only as an example of how money is lost. These happen at every university from time to time. They can be avoided, and we can stop this now, before it happens on a much grander scale.

Let’s look at a home example, the Mackay School of Mines Library. When the library was housed in the basement of the old buildings in the mid-1970’s, the librarian began to weed out the books, discarding fourth and more copies (retaining three copies) by placing them at the front door, priced at $10 and less for students. It was a process, not a completed project, such that the supply was fairly constant for a few years, not unlike other libraries who regularly weed out materials. Most of the books were bought by students and subsequently sold into the rare book market, of which I was a buyer. However, part of the process involved some rather large donations, and one in specific comes to mind, the entire basement full of foreign and domestic fossil publications, which were mostly nineteenth century. It was put to bid to a few book dealers (even me, though I was not a dealer), and sold to an Oregon dealer for about $600, intact. Thousands of volumes for $600! Fossil publications are among the most collected, and an auction would have resulted in adding several zeros to the money received. Another important part of the Collection were the corporate prospectuses and annual reports. There were many shelf feet of these publications, dating from the early days of the Comstock to the present from important mining companies around the globe. That collection disappeared when the mines library moved to the basement of the former Getchell Library building about 2 decades ago. When I inquired, I was told they were in storage in Stead. I was vocal about them, because I had used many of these in the research I had done and in papers I had published early in my career. They contain priceless information not accessible elsewhere. After the new library was constructed and opened last year, and the Stead warehouse was
emptied out, they were nowhere to be found. I was told that perhaps they were thrown out. Again a disastrous decision by the wrong people.

In later years, I was paid to go through, inventory and organize the papers of the Mackay School of Mines Museum. What I had the pleasure of seeing, were the original donation papers of many items from the founding fathers of Nevada – the original Comstock families, inclusive of Penrod, McLaughlin and Yerington. The Yerington family donated the original solid silver hammerhead that was used for the last spike for the V & T RR, appropriately engraved. Where is it now? Long gone, due to an administration that didn’t care, leaving the collection accessible to students and others who could permanently remove whatever they wanted. Thank goodness that most of the key documents were not removed, as few students or public knew of their immense value. They are now under lock and key.

What will happen if the Special Collections Library is closed? It will be dismantled by the students through time. Short term thinking about marshalship of the Special Collections by the main library is unrealistic, and in the end, is well proven through time by example after example to be a serious mistake. I know of no examples where this system has worked. The University will lose an asset of the highest intellectual caliber, and also of the highest financial value, which will dissipate into nothing before anyone notices. As soon as the administration says “we don’t care” and tries to take that to the next step and assume “no one cares”, the system will have come to complete and utter failure. The loser in the battle is the educational process, the potential to enrich minds at the highest level, and the university system as a whole financially, because the dollar value they currently do not see will cease to exist forever. Two generations from now, the University administrators will meet and discuss the tragedy that befell the University in 2011 and start over, because at some point, the advancement of the human intellect must continue.
Other letters of support on file in Special Collections:

Lawrence Berkove – Emeritus Professor of English, University of Michigan, Dearborn
Robert Blesse – The Black Rock Press, University of Nevada, Reno
Patricia Cafferata – Author and donor
Sarah Cowie – Dept. of Anthropology, Miami University, incoming UNR faculty member
Roger Diez – Sheep Dip President,
Mark Giambastini – Archaeologist, ASM Affiliates, Reno
Carrie Gregory – Statistical Research, Inc.
Kelvin Guy – Gareth Hughes Museum, Wales
Jack Harpster – Author
Eugene Hattori – University of Nevada, Reno alumnus and archaeologist
Kim Henrick – Historic Reno Preservation Society
Betty Hulse – Great Basin Basketmakers Board Member
Ron James – Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, adjunct UNR faculty, donor
Robert R. Kautz – Kautz Environmental Consultants and donor
Tom King, Professor Emeritus, Oral History
Susan Lindstrom – Consulting archaeologist
Beverly McBride – University of Nevada, Reno alumna
Mel Melvin – JRP Historical Consulting
Robert Morrill – University of Nevada, Reno alumnus
Tina Nappe – Donor, Gus Bundy photographs and Sierra Club records
Guy Rocha – Former State Archivist
Penny Rucks – Rucks Ethnographic Services and UNR alumna
David Ruhl – Sheep Dip Past President
Doug Southerland – Nevada State Museum, prospective donor
Kevin Stevens – History Department, University of Nevada, Reno
Tim Thornes – Linguist, University of Central Arkansas
David Valentine – Archaeologist