

Small Collection Perspective: What Made Me Commit to Digitization?

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Initiative



Outline

- Why wouldn't I digitize?
- Michigan Small Herbaria Initiative
- Barriers to digitization that I have encountered (and the types of people who face them)
- How can we remove those barriers?

Why wouldn't I digitize?

- Wanted to “digitize” herbarium for many years
 - Specify
 - Excel
 - Digital camera
- So what kept me from proceeding?

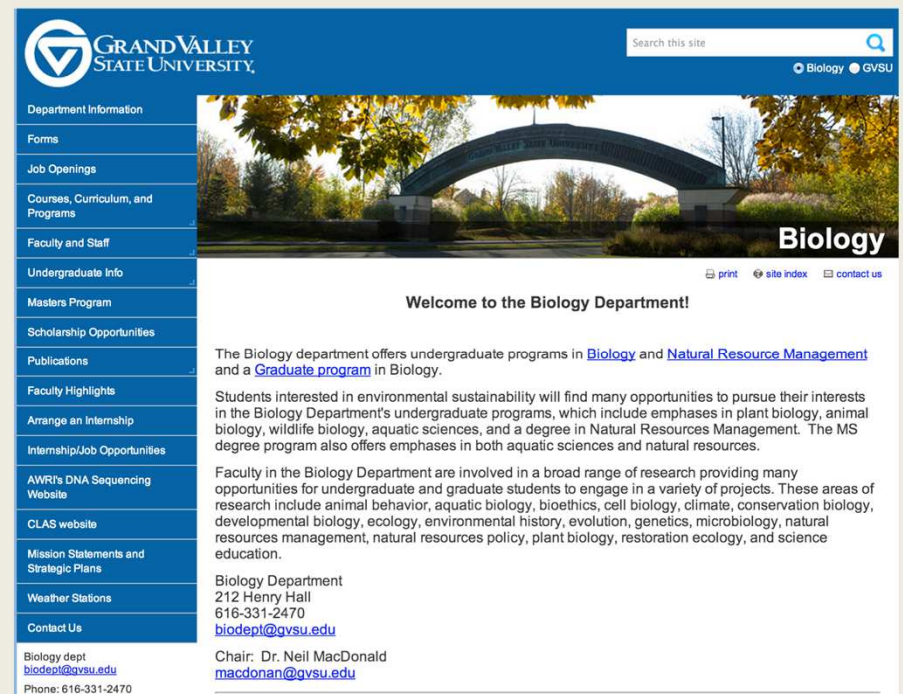
GVSU Position Announcement

Plant Systematist, Grand Valley State University, MI

The Biology Department at Grand Valley State University is seeking a Plant Systematist for a tenure-track position at the assistant professor level to start in the Fall 2008. A Ph.D. in Botany or Biology with expertise in systematics or fields that use the tools of systematics (such as biogeography, etc.) and excellent communication skills are required; teaching and postdoctoral experience are desired. **Teaching responsibilities** will include undergraduate systematic botany, introductory biology, and other botany offerings such as ethnobotany and organismal and graduate courses. The successful candidate will be expected to **maintain active scholarship; research involving undergraduates** is encouraged. Grand Valley State University is primarily an undergraduate teaching institution whose faculty members are expected to **advise students and participate in the academic governance** of the department, college and university. Apply online at <<http://www.gvsujobs.org/>>. Include a cover letter, CV, statements of teaching philosophy and research interests, references, and scanned copies of your transcripts. The online application system will allow you to attach these documents electronically. If you have questions or need assistance, call Human Resources at 616-331-2215. Send three letters of reference to: Chair; Plant Systematist Search Committee; Biology Department; Grand Valley State University; Allendale, MI 49401-9403 <<http://gvsu.edu/biology/index.cfm?id=19EC1641-E853-4271-D56BA953F8F5AD21>>. Review of applications begins 19 November 2007. Grand Valley State University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

My Position at GVSU

- Teaching
- Maintain active scholarship
 - With undergrads
- Service (advising students, faculty governance)
- No mention of herbarium
- **Focus on herbarium curation would not have landed me my current job**
 - Herbarium has historically been undervalued



The screenshot shows the website for the Biology Department at Grand Valley State University. The header features the GVSU logo and a search bar. A navigation menu on the left lists various departmental links. The main content area includes a welcome message, a description of undergraduate programs, information about research opportunities, and contact details for the department chair, Dr. Neil MacDonal.

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

Search this site

● Biology ● GVSU

Department Information

Forms

Job Openings

Courses, Curriculum, and Programs

Faculty and Staff

Undergraduate Info

Masters Program

Scholarship Opportunities

Publications

Faculty Highlights

Arrange an Internship

Internship/Job Opportunities

AWR's DNA Sequencing Website

CLAS website

Mission Statements and Strategic Plans

Weather Stations

Contact Us

Biology

Welcome to the Biology Department!

The Biology department offers undergraduate programs in [Biology](#) and [Natural Resource Management](#) and a [Graduate program](#) in Biology.

Students interested in environmental sustainability will find many opportunities to pursue their interests in the Biology Department's undergraduate programs, which include emphases in plant biology, animal biology, wildlife biology, aquatic sciences, and a degree in Natural Resources Management. The MS degree program also offers emphases in both aquatic sciences and natural resources.

Faculty in the Biology Department are involved in a broad range of research providing many opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to engage in a variety of projects. These areas of research include animal behavior, aquatic biology, bioethics, cell biology, climate, conservation biology, developmental biology, ecology, environmental history, evolution, genetics, microbiology, natural resources management, natural resources policy, plant biology, restoration ecology, and science education.

Biology Department
212 Henry Hall
616-331-2470
biodept@gvsu.edu

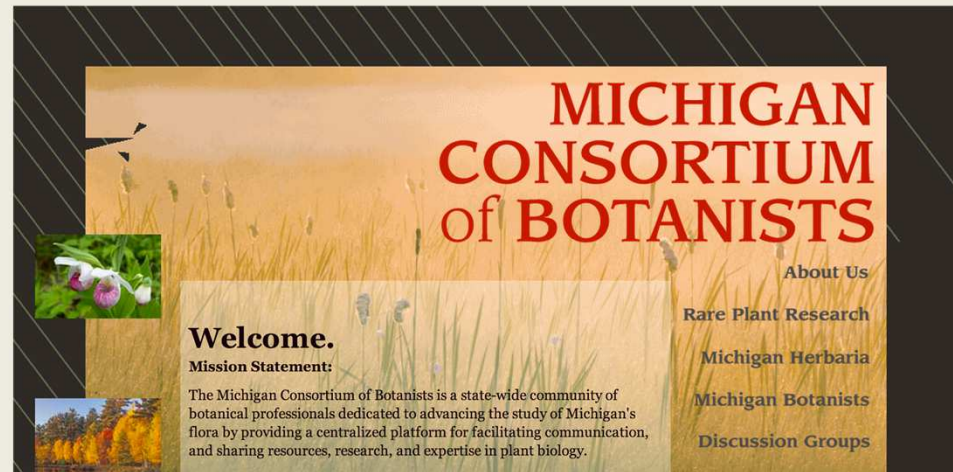
Chair: Dr. Neil MacDonal
macdonan@gvsu.edu

Biology dept
biodept@gvsu.edu
Phone: 616-331-2470



Michigan Small Herbaria Initiative

- Pre-2011
 - Anna Monfils and Rich Rabeler
- 2011
 - Project emerged as MiCOB initiative
 - Two initial goals:
 - Seek funding
 - Recruit participants



Workshop

Michigan Small Herbaria
Digitization Effort

Digitization Resources

MICOB.org

A strategic plan for establishing a Network of Biocollections Alliance (NIBA) has been developed to facilitate digitization and mobilize information associated with natural history collections. The goal is to record and archive biodiversity across the United States.

This website is intended to assist with consolidating resources and facilitating digitization efforts for small collections in Michigan and across the Great Lakes



Michigan Small Herbaria Initiative

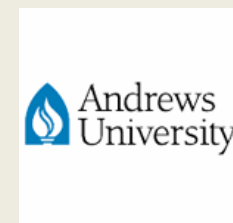
- Funding from the Hanes Trust
 - Mobile imaging unit
 - Server space (CMU)
 - Barcode labels
 - Licensing/assistance through SilverBiology





Michigan Small Herbaria Initiative

- GVSC (6,500 specimens)
- CALVIN (8,000 specimens)
- HCHM (8,900 specimens)
- ALBC (14,000 specimens)
- EMC (25,000 specimens)
- WMU (6,000 specimens)
- HLSD (5,000 specimens)
- AUB (15,000 specimens)
- Seney (400 specimens)
- TOTAL: 88,800





MSHI: Why Has It Worked?

- Funding (Thanks Hanes Trust!!)
- Willing collaborators
- Support from administrators
 - Student labor
 - Herbarium supplies
- Removal of specific barriers led to successful recruitment & implementation

Barriers to Digitization

- It just never occurred to me
- I don't understand what it is
 - Databasing label info?
 - Imaging specimens?
- I don't know how to do it
 - Do YOU know what a Darwin Core Archive is??
- I lack time and equipment
- My collection is not worthy of digitization
 - Too small, student collection, etc.
- Digitization will not advance my stature at my home institution
 - Pursuit of tenure, etc.
- I am opposed to digitization as a matter of principle

How Do We Remove Barriers?

Four types of people in the world:

- Want to digitize, have background/resources to do so
- Want to digitize, but have no idea where to begin
 - This was me
- Do not want to digitize
 - Does not contribute to their professional/personal goals
- Do not want to digitize
 - Opposed to it in principle

How Do We Remove Barriers?

Want to digitize, have background/resources to do so

- Actions:
 - No significant action needed
 - May serve to motivate and recruit others

How Do We Remove Barriers?

Want to digitize, but have no idea where to begin

- Actions:
 - Contact them **and their peers**
 - Individual invitations
 - Meet them where they are at
 - Help find funding

How Do We Remove Barriers?

Do not want to digitize, Doesn't contribute to goals

- Actions:
 - Initial discussion as part of another organization (i.e. MiCOB)
 - Demonstrate value of digitization
 - increase value of collection, bring in funding, new avenues of research/publication, etc.
 - Provide approaches for convincing administration of value
 - "Ride the train or be left at the station" argument

How Do We Remove Barriers?

Do not want to digitize, fundamentally opposed to digitization

- Actions:
 - Same actions as above, or:
 - Wait patiently for death or retirement

Barrier	Action
Want to digitize, have resources	No significant action needed
	May serve to recruit others
Want to digitize, don't know how	Contact them <u>and their peers</u>
	Meet them where they are at
	Help find funding
	Commercial approach (i.e. SilverBiology)
Do not want to digitize, doesn't meet professional goals	Initial discussion as part of another organization (i.e. MiCOB)
	Demonstrate value of digitization (increase value of collection, bring in funding, potential for new avenues of research/publication, etc.)
	Provide approaches for convincing administration of value
	"Ride the train or be left at the station" argument
Do not want to digitize, fundamentally opposed	Same actions as above, or:
	Wait patiently for death or retirement

Factors for Successful Recruitment: Summary

- Plant idea in alternative venue (“bait and switch”)
- Convince people of value of digitization
- Address obstacles head-on
 - We sometimes don’t like to admit that we have those obstacles
- Remove specific barriers
- Convince people that the train is about to leave the station

Thank You!

