Recruiting, Supporting, and Retaining Small Collections in Biodiversity Digitization

CollectionsWeb, iDigBio, Central Michigan University, and the Small Collections Network are pleased to co-sponsor this workshop focused on recruiting, supporting, and retaining small collections in biodiversity digitization.

The National Science Foundation has pledged to digitize at least one billion specimens from approximately 1600 U.S. non-federal natural history collections. Many of those collections are regional, smaller in size, and managed by curators and directors with limited resources. While relatively small in size, these collections constitute a significant portion of our nation's biodiversity archives, with the potential to contribute valuable specimen data to our understanding of species distributions over time and space.

Across the nation, collections have been working together to advance digitization efforts. They have done this in a variety of ways, uniting resources to develop work flows and establish portals for data delivery. Much of this effort has been funded through Thematic Collections Networks and the National Science Foundation's Advancing Digitization of Biodiversity Collections initiative. A not insignificant number of regional consortia have optimized alternative resources and developed "grass-roots" efforts to digitize. Many small collections have become involved in these digitization initiatives and seen benefits in the accessibility of their collections, visibility of their specimens, and increased resources provided by their home institutions.

Many small collections are at primarily undergraduate institutions and regional universities. This is where many future scientists get their initial exposure to research careers (relative to large universities). Most small collections rely primarily on an undergraduate workforce where students are given high order responsibilities to manage digitization efforts. Curators of small collections encounter unique obstacles related to student isolation and recruitment of underrepresented minorities, and in many cases have developed some effective strategies to combat these challenges. This early engagement of a diverse community of student scientist has the potential to increase awareness and involvement in digitization overall and sustain interest within the next generation.

We are proposing a workshop to examine the successes of and strategies for incorporating small collections and undergraduate students in the national digitization initiative, and explore ways to increase and enhance the participation of these collections and students in digitization activities. In the long term, we would like to address enfranchising the small collection community, broadening student

participation, and creating a sustainable involvement as digitization efforts move forward.

The objectives of the workshop include:
- Consolidating best practices for recruitment of small collections from the experiences of successful networks,
- Exploring successful strategies to meaningfully engage and successfully broaden participation of undergraduate students in digitization efforts in small collections,
- Outlining impediments and possible solutions for recruiting small collections to the digitization effort,
- Discussing how the broader collections community can further recruit small collections to the digitization effort and communicate with them about digitization opportunities and advantages,
- Identifying what could help promote our small collections from within the home institutions,
- Addressing sustainability of the small collection involvement in national digitization efforts.

The planning team for this workshop includes: Chris Dietrich, Anna Monfils, Gil Nelson, Karen Francl-Powers, Greg Watkins-Colwell, and Trish Weaver.

Day 1: 7 April 2014

Time	Topic	Responsible
6:30-9:00 p.m.	Welcome Reception	Alan Prather (MSU/Collections Web) Anna Monfils (CMU) Gil Nelson (FSU/iDigBio)

Day 2: 8 April 2014

Time	Topic	Responsible
6:00-8:00 a.m.	Breakfast (Catered)	
8:00-8:15 a.m.	Welcome	Dr. George Ross, President, CMU
8:15-8:30 a.m.	Goals and Potential Outcomes Introduction to SCNet	Anna Monfils/Gil Nelson
8:30-8:40 a.m.	Introduction to CollectionsWeb	Karen Powers (Radford)
8:40-8:50 a.m.	Introduction to iDigBio	Gil Nelson
8:50-9:00 a.m.	Introduction to SPNHC and its role in supporting small collections	Andy Bentley (KU)

9:00-9:20 a.m.	Small collection perspective: What made me to commit to digitization	Tim Evans (GVSU)
9:20-9:40 a.m.	Successfully curating small collections: what has and hasn't changed in ten years	Neil Snow (Pittsburg State)
9:40-10:00 a.m.	Coffee break	
10:00-11:00 a.m. (5 minutes each)	LIghtning rounds Challenges to small collections recruitment and retention	Richard Carter (GA Consortium) Tiffany Adrain (Iowa) Cindy Opitz (Iowa) Karen Powers (Radford) David Cicimurri (SCSU) Gil Nelson (TTRS) Ranessa Cooper (Hillsdale) Chris Marshall (Oregon State) Brian Sidlauskas (Oregon State) Kurt Galbraith (NMU)
11:00 a.m.-Noon (5 minutes each)	Challenges for large collections reaching out to small collections	Greg Watkins-Colwell (Vert) Rich Rabeler (MSHI) Lucinda McDade (CCH) Wayne Elisens (TORCH) Chris Dietrich (INHS) Gabriella Hogue (NCMNS) Kim Watson (NYBG) Katja Seltmann (AMNH; ECN) Austin Mast (FSU)
Noon-12:45 p.m.	Lunch (Catered in hotel)	
12:45-1:45 p.m.	Administrator panel: {up to 4 panelist selected from deans, dept heads, other to discuss issues associated with supporting collections from the admin perspective}	Anna Monfils, moderator Steve Roberts (CMU) Jane Matty (CMU) Dave Matty (Weber State) Bob Gannon (VSU) Dixie Smith (Pittsburg State)
1:45 - 2:15	Small Natural History Collections and Professional Productivity	Lucinda McDade (RSA)

2:15 -3:00 p.m.	Breakouts within room Discussion regarding administrative support. {breakouts randomly assigned, using numbers on name badges A1, B3, C5, etc. leaders assigned; use asterisk to denote group leader; 8 groups, 3-4 per group}	
3:00-3:15 p.m.	Coffee break	
3:15-4:00 p.m.	Discussion session elaborating lessons of the day, to include: ● challenges of reaching out to small collections, ● strategies for recruiting small collections to digitization, ● challenges of administering small collections, ● strategies for initiating digitization, Discussion notes will be captured within a collaborative document. {4 breakouts 8 groups on 4 topics}	
4:00-4:30 p.m.	Reports from breakouts	
4:30-5:00 p.m.	Daily wrap up	Gil Nelson
6:00 p.m.	Dinner (on your own with the group)	

Day 3: 9 April 2014

Time	Topic	Responsible
6:00-8:00 a.m.	Breakfast (Catered)	
8:00-8:10 a.m.	Orientation to the day	Anna Monfils/Gil Nelson

	Lingering issues from previous day	
8:10-8:30 a.m.	The Future of Funding for the Curation and Digitization of Small Collections	Roland Roberts (NSF) Judy Skog (NSF)
8:30-9:00 a.m.	Q&A	
9:00-9:40 a.m.	Alternative funding discoveries	Anna Monfils Kari Harris (Arkansas State) Chris Marshall (Oregon State) Richard Carter (VSU) Laurie Hannah (UCSB)
9:40-10:00 a.m.	Alternative funding discussion	
10:00-10:15 a.m.	Coffee break	
10:15-10:35 a.m.	Natural History Collections: Impacts on student learning and career goals	Anna Monfils Shari Ellis (UF/iDigBio)
10:35-10:45 a.m.	AIM-UP!	Kurt Galbreath (N. Mich U)
10:45-11:15 a.m.	What are students learning in collections? - Lightning rounds	Kari Harris Abigail Hollingsworth (CMU) Sacha Seide Erica Krimmel (Sagehen Creek) Ingrid Rochon (NMNH) Hillary Karbowski (CMU)
11:15-11:45 a.m.	Broadening Participation	Gabriela Hogue (NCMNS) Gil Nelson
11:45 a.m.-12:15 noon	Managing volunteers in collections Q&A	Trish Weaver (NCMNS) Austin Mast
12:15-1:15 p.m.	Lunch	
1:15-2:15 p.m.	General discussion regarding: Staffing Sustainable budgets Facilitating engagement Mentoring students Recruiting volunteers	
2:15-2:45 p.m.	Substantive discussion about	Katja Seltmann (AMNH)

	SCNet and what it can become	Chris Marshall Anna Monfils Gil Nelson
2:45-3:00 p.m.	Coffee Break	
3:00-4:00 p.m.	Determine 4-5 topics from workshop discussion and create breakouts around these topics. Topics to be generated in Google collaborative docs. Materials that would assist with recruitment, retention and sustainability - What can we make available to help "grass root efforts" Groups of 3-4 participants each.	
4:00-4:30	Reports from breakouts - Summary statement of perceived needs Action Items	
4:30-5:00	Daily wrap up	
6:00 p.m.	Dinner (on your own with the group)	