

Continued Education for Preservation Programs

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Career Goals:

My career interests in the field of preservation seem to fit within the field of

Conservation Librarian and Conservators. In an increasingly digital world, many people I've spoken to feel that the library as a conservatory for physical books is obsolete. I strongly disagree with this and think that the physical presence of books is just as crucial to the library as the Internet or the computers that patrons use to access the digital options that exist online. My interest in library science has a great deal to do with physical books, which I feel are just as important as what is written on them as well as protecting materials that are in danger of being damaged. It is an admirable goal to try and preserve the words on the page by digitizing the material into e-books or digital collections, but the physical materials also have an important element to preserve. Aside from the fact that many people prefer the physical book to reading from a screen, the physical materials are an important part of the history of the writing. The responsibilities of the job involve instructing others in the role of repairing the books and coordinating the repair efforts. The job also requires upholding quality standards and reporting conservation statistics. In addition, the conservational librarian also teaches library staff and the public how to conserve for themselves. Conservation librarians are in charge of preventive and active preservation, taking charge of situations when a crisis (such as hurricane or flood) impact the library and threaten the materials. With conservation librarians and conservators, materials have a much better chance of surviving longer and allow the public a wider

window into the past. When weeding, it is important for librarians to take every opportunity to preserve as many books as possible. Aside from reasons of incorrect or out of date information, there is little reason why a book should be thrown away. If it's a question of condition, a Conservator is a valuable asset of any kind of library.

My college background in graphic design covered a great deal about materials as well as history of materials and media. The courses (in addition to design structure) also taught a great deal about the various benefits of materials and simple care of paper materials. I would need to work toward the organic chemistry portions of the program, but I think my background will give an advantage when considering the history of the materials I'm already familiar with.

I also think that my graphic design history will be of some use. The work involved in my graphic design work has given me experience in the careful work involved in taping, gluing and cutting. It has also given me experience in maintaining high standards in all of these areas. A lot of my time working in the design program has made me familiar with working with glue and paper, as well as other parts of the construction process (trimming, cutting and taping especially). I would need experience with the materials, but I imagine that the process is relatively similar.

Other areas I would need experience in would be working with the various materials the artifacts would be made from and a better understanding of the repair supplies. I would also need to get some experience in the chemistry involved in the maintenance and repair of the paper materials. The chemistry would probably

focus mostly on reactions of skin oils to various types of book materials or how mold survives in various environments.

A lot of the preventative conservation, such as keep materials out of water and sunlight come across as fairly rudimentary. Many libraries are designed around these parameters, keeping materials safe. Planning for various disasters would be something that I would have to look into. Moving materials sounds like the easiest way, but when a crisis strikes and it can't be monitored closely, then other alternatives have to be found.

With experience, I think that the Conservation Librarian path is one of the strongest choices of the Preservation Librarian options. My background in graphic design gives me a small degree of experience in the field already. I think that the Conservator route is the best option given my experience and background in graphic design work.

Research of Programs

Of all the programs I found while searching for potential workshops or formal courses, I found a few programs that could be useful. I focused mainly on certification programs and workshops, but there were a few graduate programs that offered classes that could be useful in furthering an education in conservation. A lot of the programs I found focused primarily on the repair and care of books, in addition to disaster response and recovery, but some of the more intensive programs offer further courses in Grant Writing and other preservation duties.

When searching for programs, I tried to find programs that wouldn't require four more years of schooling, looking mainly at workshops, certification programs and internships. When I found a four-year program, some of the courses offered could be taken separately from the full program, allowing me to gain the experience without having to take a full four-year course. While searching, I found a few opportunities that would be of great benefit to someone interested in the field of Conservation in Libraries. A lot of the programs were very general when they were sited as conservation programs. A lot of these courses were designed for museums, working with sculptures or other various physical objects. Some of the courses focusing on paper conservation could be directly applied to the book conservation efforts, but the courses core classes on emergency preparedness could also be applied to the goals of a conservation librarian.

The first program is the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies Certification Program. The certification offers a variety of Core Courses in general conservation efforts, including Emergency Preparedness, Grant Writing and introduction to Organic and Inorganic Materials. In the certification program, students can specialize in certain areas of conservation. One of the specialties is in Books and Paper. The course work consists of Collection Keeping as well as Book Collection Maintenance and Repair. The certification offers hands on training in various specializations for conservators, particularly in the field of book conservation and repair. This appears to be a very positive possibility for

options of certification programs (and one of the few I managed to find that pertained specifically to Library Conservation).

(<http://www.campbellcenter.org/pages/certificate.html>)

Another program I found was the Conservation Program at New York University through their Institute of Fine Arts. A lot of the material in the master's course covers a variety of art mediums (objects, paintings and photographs). The course also offers a specialization in paper conservation. This specialization encourages students to follow their interests in advanced projects, offering work with books and manuscripts, which is an important part of the program.

(<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/fineart/conservation/program.htm>)

The next program is sponsored by the American Academy of Bookbinding. The program is based in Telluride, Colorado. The program teaches students the fundamentals and more advanced techniques of leather and lace binding. This program will be useful in understanding repairs or completely rebinding books. The program also offers more advanced courses in binding and decorative leatherwork. The most valuable course in the program would be the programs for binding to aid in better understanding the process behind leatherwork so that repairs could be done more easily. (<http://bookbindingacademy.org>)

Amigos Library Services offers a variety of courses that can be taken face-to-face or online. The courses offered through this group include book repair, collection maintenance and other courses, including sections in Grant Writing and Protection of Materials. The program offers a wide variety of opportunities for

furthering education in various fields of library science, many in the areas of preservation and conservation. (<http://www.amigos.org>)

The Library of Congress offers an internship in Advanced Preventive Conservation. This internship deals less with repairs of damaged materials and more about preventing materials from needing repair. The internship responsibilities also include housing collections and moving of collections. This internship also works with decision making when choosing which materials can be saved and which ones should not even be considered for repair for reasons of weeding or irreparability. (http://www.loc.gov/preservation/outreach/intern/int_prev.html)

Choosing Two Programs from the available options

All of these programs offer different strengths and weaknesses. Each program offered stand-alone courses that could be of great benefit to the perspective student in furthering their education, but many programs were four year degrees or workshops focusing on only one section of library conservation. Some of these weaknesses are geographic or financial, but ignoring those factors and focusing only on the information offered by the course material, two of the programs seem to stand out stronger than the rest.

The first of these programs is the Certification Program offered by the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies. This program seemed more complete than the others, especially pertaining to the preventive and active measures of the conservation process. This program runs for 3 years and the courses offered can be tailored to the specialization (connecting the core courses to the specialized

programs needed for book preservation). The certification program covers preventive conservation, such as disaster response, environmental conditions and damage prevention of delicate material. Also covered is the active side of conservation efforts, including various levels of book repair and maintaining of collections. In my research, I found this to be one of the most comprehensive and well-constructed programs available.

The other program I've found that would be useful in my research would be an internship made available through the Library of Congress. The internship focuses on the various levels of prevention as well as some experience in active conservation. The internship offers a variety of responsibilities that would be good experience that could be transferred into other parts of the position. The Library of Congress internship gives those involved a full experience in a variety of responsibilities involved in the Conservation Program.

These two programs would be very useful for someone interested in the field of Conservation Library and Conservators. I also think, like any other job, more experience would make the job easier. The certification program is a good start, giving students the knowledge that they would need in order to fully understand the job that they were going into. However, I feel like the internship is possibly more valuable. While it does require more initial knowledge, the experience in a real conservator position would give students real scenarios that might not present itself in another position.

Conclusion:

I feel, that of the various positions available, Conservation Librarian would be a good match for my personality and previous skills. The skill set involved would be comparable to my current career goals and techniques I've gained through my experience in graphic design. The programs that I've found would be useful to gain certification or partake in the internship that would give an individual the skills that would be required for the position of Conservation Librarian.

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