Continuing to Care for Small and Mid-sized Cultural Organizations

Danielle Hall Bennett
Chair, Webinar Advisory Committee, C2C Care
Interim Head of Collections Management, Walters Art Museum
President, ARCS
Brief History of Small Institution Professional Development After Hurricane Katrina

• Heightened awareness of professional development needs to better care for collections

• Led to **Connection to Collections (2007)** – multifaceted program national conferences, reports to the nation, state-wide surveys, grants, and training, and other outreach (**funded by IMLS**)
Brief History of Small Institution Professional Development After Hurricane Katrina

• Prior to 2008, most professional development for smaller institutions primarily offered through one-to-one or in-person activities by local, state and national organizations
About 2008, things began to change

- More and more resources and services were delivered by email and website
- As the economy failed in 2008, museum workers wanted training with no travel
- It became difficult to raise monies for outreach
- HOWEVER, MORE PEOPLE IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS HAD INTERNET
Virtual or Blended Services Emerged

- Online Museum Classes ([museumclasses.org](http://museumclasses.org)) begun in 2005
- LYRISIS first offered online training in 2009
- AASLH offered webinars through StEPs 2009
- Small Museum Pro! online certification began in 2009
- Connecting to Collections Online Community 2010 (AASLH, Heritage Preservation, and IMLS)
- Canadian Conservation Institute began blended training—courses offered both in-person and via internet 2010 (Re-ORG program with ICCROM)
- American Institute for Conservation created Collections Care Network to promote preventive care 2012
Larger and Increasing Push for High-Quality, Virtual Professional Development Opportunities Designed to Reach More and More People
Test Case for Growth

Connecting to Collections (C2C) became Connecting to Collections Care (C2C Care) in 2014 as it passed from Heritage Preservation to the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC) with support from the IMLS.
Connecting to Collections Online Community 2010 – 2014

• The Online Community was one facet the larger *Connecting to Collections (C2C)* Program
• The Online Community offered 68 live *webinars* including 8 courses for 4,494 *participants*
• The Online Forum had about 200 discussion threads
Expanded Mission

The Connecting to Collections Care Online Community helps smaller cultural institutions to provide well-informed care for their valuable collections. All content in the C2C Care Community, with the exception of special courses, is provided for FREE. This service is a program of the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Artistic and Historic Works and is funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
# Governance

**FAIC Institutional Advancement Director** – Eric Pourchot  
**Coordinator** – M. Susan Barger  
**Collection Care Network**  
**C2CC Advisory Group Chair** – Rachael Perkins Arenstein

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Emily Rainwater  
John
Services Include

1. Website
   - About 900 curated **Resources** on the website
   - **Discussion Forum** has 7,210 members and 25 emerging conservator **Monitors** answer questions with 45 **Experts** for support as needed – **188 discussions with 601 replies**

2. C2CC-Announce **Announcement-only listserv** with 5,500 members
Services Include

3. 43 free Webinars since 2015 – for 13,145 participants from 38 countries including the US
4. Facebook 1,970 likes
5. Twitter
6. Formal collaborative partnerships with ARCS
7. Advisors from allied organizations – ARCS, SPNHC, CCN
8. Courses coming
Audience

• Most participants are beginners or advanced beginners when it comes to collections care
• The majority do not have specific professional training in collections care or professional museum or archives training
• Many are new to cultural institutions and find, they need specialized information to navigate their job
• Our participants are both volunteers and paid workers
• Our participants wear many hats

Participants say they want practical and cost effective guidance to solve problems on their own or they need information to find assistance they need and/or money to hire help
Institutions

• 60% are primarily museums, historic sites, or historical societies
• 13% are libraries
• 25% are archives
• About 1% have living collections

The majority do not have a staff person (paid or otherwise) specifically assigned to the care of collections.
Institutional budgets

• 15% - $15,000 or less/annum
• 15-20% <$15,000>$100,000
• 33% don’t know their institutional budget
• The remaining have larger budgets up to $1M+
Results

• Program has grown 25-30% since 2014
• 65% of participants are repeat viewers
• Our most popular webinars concentrate on specifics of collections care and management – filling a gap in training offered by other organizations
• Collaboration with ARCS has enhanced our offerings
Results

• Evaluations stress the importance of our free programs for professional development
• Interaction in the Online Community is slowly increasing
Upcoming Webinars

- Imaging on Context: Introduction to Still Image Digitization for Smaller Institutions
- Nagpra for the Local Museum: An Introduction
Keep up with the Community

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