



Peabody Museum

of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University

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Peabody Museum Staff Roles

This document provides a brief introduction to museum staff roles. As a general representation it may be applied to many museums, but in its specific structure this list is unique to the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, located within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) at Harvard University and a member of the Harvard Museums of Science and Culture (HMSC).

Bullet points capture the major responsibilities of staff roles, but do not encompass the full range of work done by each staff member. They further do not adequately capture the interdepartmental nature of each role, nor the professional commitments and contributions of museum staff to their respective fields as scholars and practitioners.

This list was developed to accompany the Discussion Guide InVisible Museum Work.

Administration

Responsible for the oversight of the museum, including personnel and database management, financial planning, and institutional strategic planning.

Director and Senior Management

Responsible for organizational functioning and goal-setting for the Museum.

- Devises, develops, and implements practical and intellectual vision for Museum, including strategic and tactical plans
- Coordinates interdepartmental projects
- Makes final decisions around operations of the Museum
- Manages institution-level relationships with University administration and University partners (University deans, other museums, libraries, HMSC, etc.)

Finance and Administration

Responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Museum.

- Oversees Museum finances, including budgeting, accounting, and purchasing
- Manages Human Resources
- Liaises with University HR and management around budget and HR issues

Information Technology

Responsible for maintaining operation of Museum's technology systems.

- Installs, updates, and integrates Museum software, and resolves staff problems with the same
- Maintains operation of Museum website, Collections Online, and internal collections management database
- Customizes program services, and coordinates additional support from Harvard University IT

Collections Division

Responsible for the care and handling, movement, and preservation of the collections, including engagement with heritage stakeholders and researchers external to Harvard.

Archives

Responsible for long-term and day-to-day physical care and use of archival collections, primarily papers and photographs.

- Provides access to archival collections for researchers, including descendant communities, faculty, students, and the general public
- Provides access to archival collections for internal staff needs, including Museum exhibitions, repatriation research, and publications
- Arranges, describes, and digitizes collections with consideration for appropriate language and access concerns, making images and information available to the public via Collections Online and Hollis for Archival Discovery
- Monitors and maintains wellbeing of storage spaces and collections

Collections Management

Responsible for the physical care, movement, and use of all Museum collections.

- Catalogues, inventories, photographs, rehouses, and tracks physical location of collections
- Facilitates all movement of collections
- Monitors and maintains wellbeing of storage spaces
- Manages and customizes internal collections database, and maintains collections information data
- Provides access to collections for non-Harvard affiliates, and improves information within internal database and available to the public via Collections Online
- Approves security and risk-management plans for public and private spaces in the Museum building

Conservation

Responsible for the direct physical care, technical study, and conservation of collections.

- Provides item-level and collection-level condition assessments and performs conservation treatments based on priority need in the support of in-house exhibits, loans, research, and teaching initiatives
- Conducts technical analysis of materials and manufacturing processes of collection items in collaboration with scientists, curators, community members, and other stakeholders
- Oversees integrated pest management and environmental monitoring of collections, and advises on safe exhibition methods and sustainable storage strategies
- Consults on Museum's emergency response plan
- Participates in the education of future conservators, supervising graduate student internships

Osteology & Paleoanthropology

Responsible for care of osteology and paleoanthropology collections, providing access for research and teaching, and supporting implementation of NAGPRA.

- Catalogues, inventories, photographs, and tracks physical location of collections
- Monitors and maintains condition of storage spaces
- Facilitates physical and digital access to collections for university-level classes and research
- Collaborates with Repatriation Department in the implementation of NAGPRA processes, including inventory, documentation and research, consultation, and care and handling considerations

Registration & Permissions

Responsible for the movement of collections in and out of the Museum, as well as use rights and reproductions.

- Confirms provenance, compliance with relevant legislation, item condition, etc., of all potential acquisitions, and works with Museum's Collections Review Committee to establish whether potential acquisitions would enhance existing collections
- Produces legally-binding paperwork such as Deeds of Gift, bills of sale, and copyright transfer documents
- Arranges for packing and shipping of collections
- Creates accession and catalog records and initiates pest management protocols for new acquisitions
- Manages requests for collections loans, negotiates loan requirements, generates loan agreements, determines insurance values, documents condition of collections, ensures government issuance of wildlife and cultural property permits, couriers collections and oversees installation at exhibition venue
- Generates and maintains records effecting deaccessions
- Receives and processes research requests involving analytical sampling, and tracks those collections approved
- Handles rights and reproduction requests, including licensing of materials and/or creating new media for publication use

- Researches copyright status of individual items

Curatorial Division

Responsible for research, university teaching, and exhibition of collections, including engaging with heritage stakeholders and informing the Museum's intellectual vision.

Academic Partnerships

Responsible for engagement with university-level courses and for support of Harvard-based research.

- Enables university-level class visits to collections, within and beyond Harvard, including developing and delivering content, collections-based activities, or other curriculum support
- Provides collections access and research support to Harvard-affiliates
- Produces pedagogical resources for university audiences, and encourages approaches specifically mindful of the cultural concerns and ethical considerations required of teaching and learning from anthropology collections

Curators

Responsible for researching and interpreting Museum collections through a variety of formats to a variety of audiences, and for advising other Museum departments on areas of collections care and access.

- Research collections and prepare content for public dissemination (e.g. exhibits, publications, talks, website content, etc.)
- Work with community stakeholders to develop partnerships and projects that benefit community needs and priorities, and that develop the Museum's knowledge of collections toward their appropriate care and representation
- Respond to internal and external inquiries
- Coordinate with designers, conservators, and other staff members to confirm presentations of collections appropriately communicate intended message and meaning

Peabody Museum Press

Responsible for publishing works that make Museum collections and research better known and more widely available.

- Publishes monographs, archaeological research reports, and other publications related to Museum collections and scholarly activities
- Publishes exhibition catalogues
- Publishes work of Robert Gardner Photography Fellows
- Publishes *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions* series

Repatriation

Responsible for reviewing and seeing through all requests for repatriation by descendant communities and others; responsible specifically for the implementation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

- Consults with Tribal Nations
- Performs research related to NAGPRA-associated collections
- Serves as reference for non-NAGPRA repatriation claims
- Performs physical transfer or co-stewardship of collections in coordination with other areas of Museum activity, especially collections management
- Updates Museum catalogue records to reflect information shared by Tribal members during consultation visits, and verifies that all collections care instructions have been implemented
- Aligns Museum's teaching and research activities with all of the above

Research Programs, Projects, and Laboratories

Responsible for fulfilling the mandate of specific programs, projects or lab work.

These include: Anthropological Literature; Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions Program; Gordon R. Willey Laboratory for Mesoamerican Studies; Moses Mesoamerican Archive; Zooarchaeology Laboratory and Harappa Project

- Research, build, and maintain collections related to program, projects, or lab
- Disseminate new research through publications and public events
- Collaborate with descendant communities through fieldwork and research
- Instruct classes and mentor student hires
- Advise on and contribute to Peabody Museum exhibitions, research, and loan requests

Harvard Museums of Science and Culture

Responsible for external engagements with the public and the extended Harvard community, sharing the research of its member museums and the collections in their care through exhibitions, public programming, K-12 education, and other visitor experiences.

Exhibits

Responsible for the development, design, and installation of public exhibitions.

- Coordinates progression of exhibits from initial concept to installation, including all aspects of scheduling, interpretive development, and production
- Works with curators to build themes, concepts, and interpretation to carry the curatorial vision, ensuring they are tailored to intended audiences and are matched to gallery layout, case and graphic design, and exhibit signage
- Works with curators to create interpretive media for exhibits, including labels and audio-visual elements
- Confirms consistency of design and tone throughout exhibit space and in all signage
- Builds exhibit mounts and assists with exhibit props

- Installs, maintains, and de-installs exhibits, including security elements, in collaboration with Collections Management and Conservation staff

Communications and Marketing

Responsible for external relations, marketing, and communications with media outlets and press.

- Issues press releases, communicates with media outlets, and responds to inquiries
- Produces print and digital media marketing and promotional materials
- Promotes public events organized by HMSC's department of Public Programs

K-12 Education

Responsible for K-12 school visits and family programming.

- Hosts classes for K-12 students in gallery spaces, in Education rooms, and online
- Creates materials (lesson plans, kits, worksheets, 3D experiences) for this audience built around collections at the Peabody Museum
- Provides teacher training workshops
- Develops and helps run family events
- Liaises with Peabody staff and HMSC Exhibit staff around exhibit initiatives

Public Programs

Responsible for public programs (lectures, panel discussions, film screenings and special events) aimed at age 18+ audiences.

- Plans showcase speakers from Harvard University and external organizations whose work expands the public's understanding of content areas aligned with HMSC museums
- Creates and implements programs, managing all logistics to ensure events meet highest levels of quality and excellence

Visitor Services

Responsible for creating welcoming in-person experience for all Museum visitors.

- Staffs admissions desk and gift shop
- Answers all visitor questions and directs visitors toward further Museum resources

Faculty of Arts and Sciences and Harvard University

Some standard museum roles and operations are administered by FAS or Harvard instead of by the Peabody or HMSC. Areas of responsibility include:

Building Maintenance (FAS)

Security (FAS)

Endowment Management

Payroll/Financial Support

General Council

Labor and Union Relations

Additional HR and IT Support