The Museum Studies Program (MUSE) at the University of Kansas produces well-rounded graduates who are prepared for challenging careers in museums, historical agencies, and similar institutions. Drawing on the expertise of outstanding faculty in participating departments (American Studies, Anthropology, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Geology, and History), the skills of accomplished area museum professionals, and the rich resources of museums at KU and in nearby communities, the Museum Studies Program enables its students to develop advanced mastery of both an academic discipline and the issues and practices central to museums. With the rigorous interdisciplinary training provided by the Museum Studies Program, our graduates can flourish as life-long learners and leaders in the museum field.

MUSE Student Collaborates on Special Exhibition

Throughout the year, Robin Bang, KU MUSE student and Berkley Curatorial Intern for the Arts and Cultures of the Americas, has been hard at work developing a new exhibit for the Spencer Museum of Art. This exhibit, *Beaded Heritage*, is a collaborative effort among Robin Bang and Julia and Twila White Bull, seniors at Haskell Indian Nations University and accomplished bead workers. *Beaded Heritage* combines the White Bull sisters’ personal dance regalia with historic examples of beadwork from the Spencer’s collections. Because they are of both Lakota and Chippewa heritage, the two sisters experiment with the contrasting styles of both beadwork traditions to create pieces in their own artistic visions. Robin conducted historical research and, with Twila’s and Julia’s assistance, chose pieces from the Spencer’s ethnographic collection that complement the White Bulls’ contemporary beadwork. Julia and Twila shared their experiences and knowledge of different design styles, which they learned from their parents. In addition, they each contributed an artist’s statement about the importance of this artistic expression plays in their lives. Robin also consulted the two sisters on elements of style for the exhibit layout and design, as well as working with Richard Klocke, the museum’s exhibition designer.

Robin’s year-long internship at the Spencer fulfills MUSE program requirements, but also provides her with hands-on experience in a museum. Robin said of her experience, "Developing *Beaded Heritage* has been an incredible opportunity. I was able to utilize skills I acquired through Museum Studies coursework, gain experience beyond the classroom, and connect with people outside of the University community."

Robin and fellow MUSE student Rachel Harris, along with other student interns at the Spencer, have also curated an exhibit that will be on display this summer, entitled *Quilting Time and Space*. This exhibit will be open from June 8 to August 29, and will present quilting traditions across cultures.
MSO Engenders Student Camaraderie

MSO, or the Museum Students Organization, is a graduate student organization that serves as an interface between students and the Museum Studies Program administration, establishes and maintains a network between alumni and museum professionals, and encourages students to become active members of the museum community. More than that, however, MSO provides MUSE students with an opportunity to get together outside of their classes. During the past year, MSO sponsored their second annual guest lecturer, George Laughead, president of the Ford County Historical Society. He talked about how businesses and nonprofits can best take advantage of social media and the internet. In addition, Bob Keckeisen, MUSE lecturer and director of the Kansas Museum of History, also met with students to discuss what prospective employers are looking for and how to bolster their resume and interview skills. In addition, MSO members have frequent social gatherings and make fieldtrips to local museums, such as the National WWI Museum, the Kansas State Historical Society, the Steamboat Arabia Museum, and the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum. Melissa Sheinman, MSO president-elect, says, “Getting to know other students is a great pre-professional step. Building friendships and professional connections will be beneficial as we step out into our first post-graduate jobs.”

Congrats, 2010 MUSE Graduates...

Museum Professionals Discuss Civic Engagement

One Thursday evening this past April, the Museum Studies Program hosted a panel discussion in which MUSE students had the opportunity to learn about how museums can successfully interact with their communities. The panel was comprised of Rachel Pannabecker, director of the Kauffman Museum at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas; Deborah Barker, director of the Franklin County Historical Society and the Castle Museum in Ottawa, Kansas; and Gay Clemenson, director of Shawnee Town in Shawnee, Kansas. These three museum directors all have strong track records of engaging their local communities and responding positively to their audiences’ changing needs. Ms. Barker discussed how she keeps up community interest in her museum by sharing stories about its collection and promoting popular events. Ms. Clemenson explained that when running a city-owned museum, one has a responsibility to appeal to the entire community. She suggested that it is crucial to try to match your resources with the community’s needs. Though she runs a university museum, Dr. Pannabecker emphasized that the Kauffman Museum reaches beyond the university to interact with the city of Newton and the local community as well. All three panelists imparted valuable advice to their audience of future museum professionals on how to take the pulse of their communities and incorporate the public’s views into their museums’ visions.
Talia Karim

received a B.S. in Geology and a B.A. in Classics from the University of Oklahoma. She earned her Master’s degree at Oxford University on a Marshall Scholarship and her Ph.D. in Geology at the University of Iowa. Dr. Karim has worked as the collections manager for the Division of Invertebrate Paleontology at the KU Natural History Museum and Biodiversity Research Center since 2008 and currently teaches Principles & Practices of Museum Collections Management for MUSE.

Question: What do you do as collections manager?

Talia Karim: As a collections manager you tend to wear a lot of different hats and do a lot of different things. This morning, for example, I have been unpacking a loan that was returned to us. I am also working on a new exhibit right now for the Natural History Museum: we are redesigning the entire invertebrate paleontology case.

I have been talking with the exhibit designers this morning and reading and editing text for that exhibit. We are also working with a group of video production students on doing some interactive video content for the exhibit. I also manage our collection of nearly 900,000 invertebrate fossil specimens. This year we have been working on rehousing and databasing our general collection of brachiopods. We get a lot of email and phone inquiries from the general public. Those are some of the things I do on a daily basis.

Q: What do you like about working with the Museum Studies Program?

T: I love working with the students! I had a Museum Studies intern this semester, Amanda Millhouse, and she was fantastic to work with. It was great having someone who was interested in working with collections. Every task I gave her I knew she would use as a learning experience for future jobs. It has been the same situation with teaching the Collections Management class this semester. The students had a lot of really good questions that made me think about things in new ways. I feel like I learned a lot from them and I hope that I can teach them something in return. It has been a very beneficial relationship.

Q: What kinds of projects could students work on if they interned with you?

T: Amanda started out doing primarily databasing and database editing. She also worked on updating our disaster plan and all our floor plans and inventories. We also have a couple of big collections that we have received as gifts over the past few years that have not been fully curated and integrated into the collection and need to be rehoused. Either one of those two collections would be great projects for a student to take from start to finish - deciding how we are going to store the collection, what are the best kind of archival materials to use, how it’s going to be organized, and how it’s going to be integrated into the rest of the collections.

Q: What advice would you have for Museum Studies graduates about the kinds of experiences they should have before they go into the job market?

T: I would say any kind of practical experience is critical for being successful in the job market. That’s why I think the internship program required for the MUSE degree here is so important. When you eventually have a job, you will know exactly what to do and you will have those experiences to draw on.
Mary Madden, MUSE instructor & director of Education & Outreach for the Kansas State Historical Society, leads class discussion during Introduction to Museum Public Education.

Larry Brow presented “Game Design and the Museum” at the Kansas Museums Association Conference in November 2009. This February, Larry was hired as a Program Assistant in the Processing Department of the Spencer Research Library. His job description includes training student assistants, processing incoming manuscript collections, and conducting an inventory of Special Collections.

Ann Dominguez gave two presentations on her analysis of artifacts from a proto-Wichita storage/trash pit to the volunteers of the Kansas State Historical Society and at a meeting of the Kansas Anthropological Association, both in January 2010. These presentations are based on an article she is writing, which will be published in an upcoming issue of Kansas Anthropology.

Terry Wickstrum was part of a panel entitled “Visitor Experience, Expectations, and Evaluations” at the Missouri Museums Association Conference in April 2010, in which she presented her research on worksheet evaluations.

Internships

For MUSE students, internships are practical learning experiences in which they have the opportunity to apply the skills acquired in their classes. Students in KU’s Museum Studies Program have worked at internships on campus, across the country, and around the world. Read on to find out more about what current MUSE students are up to...

Summer Internships:

- John will be continuing his work in the R.L. McGregor Herbarium, part of the KU Natural History Museum and Biodiversity Institute.
- Sara will intern at the Archaeological Research Center, which is also affiliated with the KU Natural History Museum and Biodiversity Institute.
- Rebekah will be returning to California to work at the Pacifica Historical Society.
- Amanda has accepted a position at the Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historic Park in Nebraska.
- Kristine and Kay will be working at the Dole Institute for Politics at KU.
- Melissa will continue to work as a curatorial assistant at the Tonganoxie Community Historical Society in Kansas.
- Ben will begin work for the Kansas State Historical Society at the First Territorial Capitol State Historic Site.
- Ruth will be working at the Fort Scott National Historic Site in Kansas.
MUSE Students Share Their Internship Experiences:

John - R.L. McGregor Herbarium, Natural History Museum & Biodiversity Institute, University of Kansas

I prepare plant specimens so that they can be databased and then added to the Herbarium's collections. I take specimens that have been collected in the field and I mount them to archival paper using a combination of glue, thread, and linen tape. These "mounted" specimens are then organized and barcoded. The work appeals to me because it is very detail-oriented, an essential part of the Herbarium's mission, and it allows me to work inside of a large and well-managed collections space.

Rachel - Ethnographic Collection, Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas

Interning at Spencer Art Museum in the ethnographic collection has given me invaluable experience working in a museum. I’ve learned a great deal about artifact handling and storage, databases, and collection management practices. I also feel that I have been able to make an impact on the care of the collections through making storage mounts and updating object records.

Amanda - Division of Invertebrate Paleontology, Natural History Museum & Biodiversity Institute, University of Kansas

I really enjoy the time I spend interning with the Division of Invertebrate Paleontology. I work with the collections, databasing, organizing, and handling the specimens. I’ve gained valuable experience in collection management, also picking up helpful hints on how to handle pest management, cataloging, fossil conservation, and storage issues.

Ben - Historic Resources Survey Intern, Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, Lawrence, Kansas

My Internship with the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area has enabled me to gain practical knowledge and experience while surveying local historic sites.
Faculty News:

- Welcome to Dr. Talia Karim, Division of Invertebrate Paleontology collections manager, who has joined MUSE as the instructor of Principles and Practices of Museum Collections Management. She is also helping to develop a new exhibit, along with the exhibits department at the Natural History Museum, that will explore invertebrate evolution and diversity and illustrate what trilobites can teach us about evolution.

- Bruce Scherting, exhibits director at the Natural History Museum and MUSE instructor for Introduction to Museum Exhibits, is currently working on several projects in collaboration with other artists. These include The Waiting Room (http://waitingroom.weebly.com/), a traveling mixed media installation that uses the scene of a waiting room to explore issues related to women’s health; The COLLECT(iv)e at Grinnell College and the Drake Community Library in Grinnell, Iowa (Grinnell People’s Museum on Facebook), which investigates the relationships between objects and people and the reasons behind collecting; and Floating World: A Tent City for Displaced Human & Bird Song (http://waitingroom.weebly.com/), which is an interactive sculptural sound installation in San José, California.

Alumni News:

- Robert Elder (2007) has served as registrar for the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas for one year now. The new George H.W. Bush Gallery at his museum is now open, featuring computer interactives, map tables, multi-media presentations, oral history kiosks, and many other displays. The next major project will involve the move of approximately 45,000 artifacts, books, and archives into the new building.

- Emily Hughes Dominick (2004) has been working as associate archivist at Providence Archives in Seattle since September of 2007. She has also served on the steering committee of the Seattle Area Archivists for the past two years.

- Jamin (Dreasher) Landavazo (2008) continues to serve as the chief curator and site director of the Reno County Museum and the chief curator of the Kansas Underground Salt Museum, both in Hutchinson, Kansas. She has just completed a move of approximately two tons’ worth of artifacts out of collections storage at the Reno County Museum to an offsite storage location and also staged two exhibits, including one on their most prolific donor, who has given over 1700 items to the museum in her lifetime.


- Bertram Lyons (2009) was hired as a folklife specialist/digital asset manager at the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress in August 2009. He reviewed the book What are Archives? for the spring 2010 edition of Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals. Bert also published an article, “Sharing Resources, Sharing Responsibility: Archives in the Digital Age,” in the journal of the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA). He has given two presentations based on this article: at the IASA annual conference in Athens, Greece, and as a brownbag lunch at the American Folklife Center.

- Megan Richards (2009) recently accepted a position at the Santa Barbara Zoo as their coordinator of adult volunteers.

- John Simmons (1988) started his own consulting company, Museologica, for which he does collections-related work all over the world. He is also currently working as a visiting professor at the Universidad Nacional in Bogota, Colombia.

- Lisa Simmons (2005) has recently accepted a position at the Baltimore Museum of Art as a curatorial assistant of Asian Art in the department of the Arts of Africa, Ancient America and the Pacific Islands.

- Matthew Thompson (2009) is working as a museum technician at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene, Kansas.
Terry Wickstrum is originally from Chesapeake, Virginia, and she received her B.A. in Anthropology from Longwood University, with minors in history and art history. She is graduating from the Museum Studies Program with honors this year.

**Question:** Did you know that you wanted to do education when you came to this program, or did you decide after you had taken some courses?

**Terry:** I had more experience in registrar and collections management positions; I had really limited experience with presentations and putting together tours, so I knew that I wanted to look into that more. I took the [Intro to Museum Public Education] class that had me get a little more involved in projects. I did some observations at KU’s Natural History Museum as part of that class, and I just got along with the people who worked in the education department there. I talked to them more about what their philosophy was and I really liked it, so I decided I’d get started there.

**Q:** What do you do in your internship in the education department at the Natural History Museum?

**T:** I assist the lead instructors who give the presentations and I interact with the kids. I help hand things out and I go around and answer questions as people are doing different activities.

**Q:** Since your background is in anthropology and history, did you find it challenging to switch over to science?

**T:** A little bit. The instructors are very good about letting me know, “Ok, these are the things that you need to consider when you’re doing this project that you might not already be aware of.” And I’ve gotten used to the situation, so when I get started and I know there are things that I’m supposed to take into consideration, I go ask. And research is research; it’s pretty simple to go ahead and get on with that.

**Q:** You have also been doing a special project on evaluations for your internship. Will you tell me a little bit about that?

**T:** The exhibit services of the Natural History Museum had put together some scavenger hunts that were pretty standard - fill in the blank, go around and identify things - and the education department was working with them to create some options that were a little more engaging and based on some different educational philosophies. So they had started to revise [the scavenger hunts], and I got to take the revisions they had just done and test them with visitors and then survey visitors and observe them using [the revised scavenger hunts]. I also did a literature review about using worksheets in museums and what’s recommended for how to set up worksheets. I also worked with the Kansas Museum of History in Topeka; I wrote gallery guides for them and tested those with visitors and did evaluations there.

**Q:** You are the vice-president of MSO (Museum Students Organization): what do you think it contributes to the grad school experience?

**T:** I think it’s a really good way to get everyone together, especially if you’re coming from out of town. It gives you a way to meet some people that you might not necessarily be in class with yet. You have them there as a resource to vent to if you’re having problems, or to go on fieldtrips with, or to even just ask how to get around the town. Anything you need, you just already have that set of people there, so it’s really nice.

“You have [MSO] there as a resource… Anything you need, you just already have that set of people there, so it’s really nice.”

Terry assists with activities at the Natural History Museum’s Body Science summer camp. Photo courtesy of the Natural History Museum.
For the second year in a row, new recruits to the Museum Studies Program gathered at the Spencer Research Library on Wednesday, August 19, 2009 for an orientation and tour, followed by a presentation from the keynote speaker. Fourteen first-year Museum Studies students mingled in the lobby, enjoying refreshments, before attending a talk given by Prof. Marjorie Swann, director of the Museum Studies Program, on graduate school expectations and how to succeed. Rachel Harris, president of the Museum Students Organization (MSO), also welcomed the new students and invited them to attend MSO’s meetings. She explained that MSO creates a sense of camaraderie among first- and second-year students and provides opportunities for networking and professional development through visits to area museums and conference attendance. Afterwards, the students got a chance to take a behind-the-scenes tour of the Spencer Research Library. The gracious staff of the library gave the fledgling MUSE students a glimpse into the inner workings of the Special Collections and University Archives and explained the resources that are available to them.

The keynote speaker at the orientation was Erin Wolfram, Assistant Director of Internships for KU's University Career Center. She gave the students an invaluable presentation on professional etiquette and how to behave during interviews and internships, which are tips that every pre-professional student will need. Following the orientation, the new students had the opportunity to meet returning students and the program’s faculty and staff at a reception at Prof. Swann’s house. This reception was also attended by Prof. Greg Simpson, Interim Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS); Prof. Ann Cudd, Associate Dean for the Humanities in CLAS; and Prof. William Tsutsui, Associate Dean for International Studies in CLAS. The orientation was an excellent way for the new graduate students to become acquainted with each other and the program before classes began!

Please support the Museum Studies Program! We appreciate the tremendous amount of assistance you have given us in the past, but we still need your help!

By giving to Museum Studies, you will be contributing to the continued success of the program and assisting future graduates by providing them with opportunities to participate in activities that enrich their experience. You can send donations by going to our website:

http://museumstudies.ku.edu/

and clicking on the link, “Support Museum Studies at KU.” Thank you!