

# Collection Care and Management Staff Titles and Responsibilities Survey

Staff responsible for the care and management of collections is a growing segment of staffing in collecting cultural heritage institutions. Continued research into preventive conservation and sustainable collection management practice has spurred development of an increasingly professional staffing element to manage physical, informational, and legal aspects of fulfilling an institution's duties of care towards collections it holds in the public trust. AIC's Collection Care Network (CCN) seeks to support and encourage collaboration among all people engaged in collection care in order to further preservation of cultural heritage.



## Why we surveyed

AIC is currently evaluating their membership designations and seeks to better understand the roles and responsibilities of collection care and management staff. To this end, they charged the CCN to undertake this survey. Respondents numbered 250. This significant decrease from the 2013 survey was intentional, as survey communications requested responses exclusively from collection care and management professionals within institutions.

## How we surveyed

AIC posted the survey on their website in April 2016. Respondents were encouraged to participate through AIC email blast, MemberFuse, sharing the link with CCN Liaisons, and through other social media feeds.

The survey was organized in three sections:

**Section 1:** Basic information about survey respondents

**Section 2:** Titles: their composition and how they reflect institutional and professional standing

**Section 3:** Responsibilities of collection management and care staff and how they perceive changes in their responsibilities over the past five years.

The survey data was analyzed during Fall and Winter 2016. The survey project team was led by Rebecca Fifield, and assisted by a committee of registrars and collection managers, including Joanna Church, Evan Cooney, Dawn Kimbrel, and Marianne Weldon. Advisement on survey design and report organization was provided by Catharine Hawks, Robert Waller, and officers of the Collection Care Network.

## How we use information from our surveys

CCN recognizes that preventive conservation is the most sustainable means of preservation of cultural heritage. In polling its practitioners, CCN uses information about their needs and challenges to develop workshops, resources, and inform advocacy for sustainable approaches to collection stewardship.

The 2016 survey builds on previous work performed by the CCN to support collection care practitioners. In 2012, the CCN performed an initial survey which attracted a diverse community of respondents including 750 respondents who in some way perform, manage, and/or train others in collection care. The Collection Care Staff Survey Report based on the 2012 survey may be found at

<http://www.conservation-us.org/docs/default-source/reports/collection-care-staff-survey-report.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.

In comparing data from the 2012 and 2016 surveys, an opportunity presented itself to create a resource that visualizes the relationship between collection care initiatives, training, and the work of the CCN and its impact as reported by institutional collection care practitioners and others. Within the 2016 survey, it was apparent that the roles of collection care practitioners are expanding to encompass institutional management responsibilities, and, as a result, there are increased desires to learn more about risk assessment, sustainable environmental management, how to prepare adequately for emergencies (especially those related to climate change), and

gain the tools to work with operations teams in the targeted application of collection risk mitigation based on need. Collection care practitioners are looking for these skills, especially as their project management skills and familiarity with operations are found applicable at the organizational level and they are being asked to take on more administrative and leadership tasks. Creating these ties between collection needs, operations, and organizational sustainability can serve both collections and practitioners well, and in the interest of preservation of heritage, the CCN desires to meet this need.

The Collection Care Network will continue to collect data to document seminal preventive conservation research, initiatives, and the challenges and training that its practitioners face. Using the survey data, AIC can examine how institutions are or are not responding to these calls for improved practice. CCN will use this information to create programming and resources that further strengthen collection management and preventive conservation practice.

## Who we surveyed

The six questions in this section asked for basic information about the respondents, their jobs, and their institutions.

### Geographic areas represented by respondents

Out of the 250 respondents to the survey, 164 answered Question 1; eight countries were represented with 150 respondents from the United States, seven from Canada and one each from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Scotland, and Trinidad and Tobago. Among the 150 respondents from the United States, 38 states were represented.

### What types of work do the survey respondents perform?

The 250 respondents to the survey provided 182 different titles; 164 of these, or 64%, were unique. This points to a lack of standardization around how institutions identify staff members in collection care and management roles, and perhaps professional identity among this group at large.

- **Eight broad categories of titles were reported by respondents:** Collection Managers, Conservators, Registrars, Curators, Museum Technicians and Specialists, Exhibit Preparators, Archivists and Librarians, and Preservation staff..
- **Approximately 25% of respondents are collection managers.** When registrars and the registrar/collections manager combination titles are added to this group, they represent nearly 50% of respondents.
- **Many respondents reported titles that combined more than one role.** The largest group of respondents with combination titles were Registrar and Collections Manager titles (37.5%), though the word order and exact phrasing varied. Differentiation between the roles of collection manager and registrar continues to be an active discussion among

collection management professionals, especially around conversations about advancement and professional standing, as evidenced by listserv discussions, such as on CS-AAM.

- **Most titles include words that further describe the role of the position.** Little standardization was evident. Some titles incorporated similar terms where the position's specific role may not be clearly defined; for example, "Collection Manager" versus "Collection Coordinator" versus "Collection Specialist."

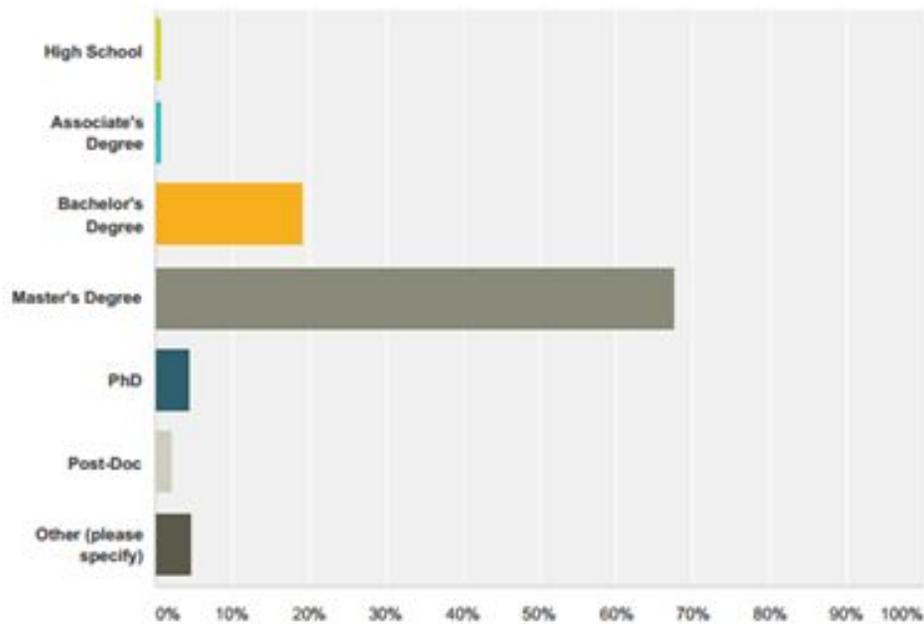
## What levels of education did respondents report?

Respondents reported high levels of education.

- **Most respondents (77.6%) have obtained a Master's degree or higher.** This includes 3.2% of respondents who reported having advanced studies beyond the Master's degree in the "Other" category.
- **Collection management staff may be seeking graduate education in order to enter the field at higher rates than in the past.** Respondents reported higher levels of education than in the 2012 survey. This percentage represents an 11.6% increase of staff who reported having advanced degrees or higher compared to the responses in the 2012 Collection Care Staff Survey Report. The percentage of conservators responding to the 2012 and 2016 surveys dropped from 25% to 18.4%, yet Master's degrees were reported by 11% more respondents in the 2016 survey than in 2013. A smaller number of collection care staff (22.4%) have earned a Bachelor's, Associate's, or High School degree. This percentage includes 1.2% of respondents who reported an educational background that combines some college with apprenticeships and onsite training in the "Other" category.
- **PhDs are more common among collection management staff where parity is sought among other staff who are likely to hold PhDs.** Of those holding a PhD. (6.8%), the majority work in Natural History, Science, or College/University Museums.

### Q3 Education Level

Answered: 250 Skipped: 0

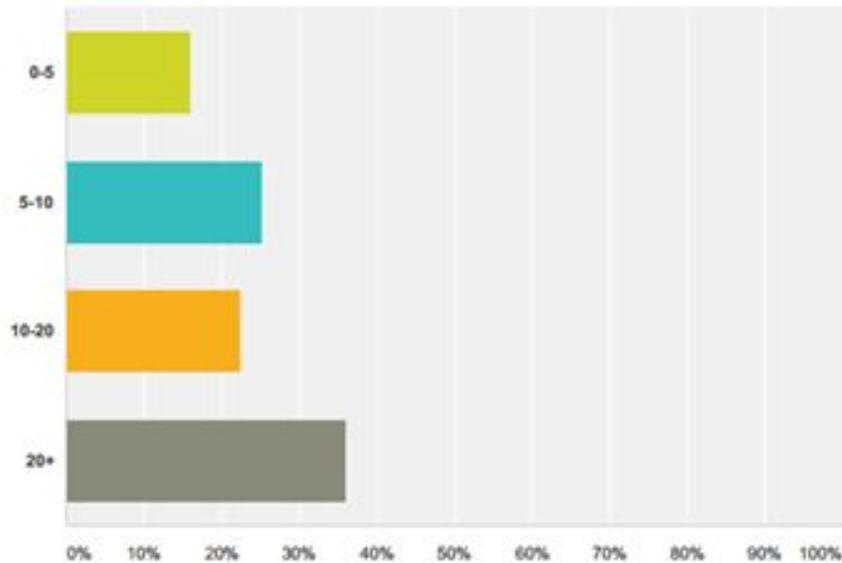


### How many years of experience did respondents report?

The distribution of years of experience is relatively even. Forty (16.06%) individuals reported 0-5 years of experience, sixty-three (25.30%) reported 5-10 years of experience, and fifty-six (22.49%) reported 10-20 years of experience. Ninety (36.14%) reported over 20 years of experience. Almost 84% of respondents to this question were more advanced than entry level, and almost 60% had over 10 years experience.

## Q4 Years of Experience

Answered: 249 Skipped: 1



## Where do our respondents work?

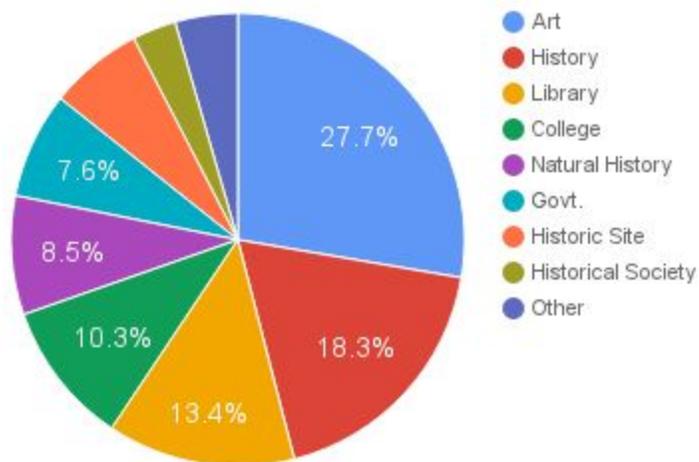
The survey intended primarily to collect titles of collection management and care based at institutions, though some private-practice staff did respond to the survey. Staff from 139 institutions responded to the survey. Thirteen institutions had more than one respondent; one institution had six staff members respond.

The largest group of respondents were from Art (24%) and History (17%) institutions.

Two tribal museum staff, 15 staff members of general museums (housing more than one type of collection), and one staff member from a zoo responded. These controlled choices were not available for respondents.

**Over 50% of respondents were from institutions with budgets over \$1,000,000USD, potentially indicating that larger institutions are in a position to hire a greater diversity of staff positions.** This question was answered by 219 out of 250 respondents. The largest response was from collection care and management staff from institutions with budgets over \$20,000,000USD, representing almost 29% of respondents.

## Type of Institution



## What titles do collection care staff have and how does that reflect duties?

We asked respondents to think critically about their assigned titles and the types of words found within titles that are used to describe the respondents' roles and responsibilities. The goal for this question was to examine how institutions are structuring the titles of collection care and management staff to meet needs. Specifically, we were interested in how lack of standardization and use of some types of terms lead to confusion among applicants and colleagues, or may contribute to lower professionalism in these roles. For example, How are terms like collection, preservation, and stewardship reflected in collection care and management staff titles?

Of 250 respondents, 143 titles included one of 23 role terms. Four terms: "collections," "museum," "preservation," and "conservation" were used in potentially overlapping or indistinguishable ways.

### "Collections"

Of the twenty-three role terms accounted for in the survey, the two most prevalent terms were "collections" (25%) and "museum" (19%). While the terms "collections" and "museum" may differentiate one role from another similar role within the same institution (Museum Specialist vs. Library Specialist), these general terms neither indicate a level of professionalism within the field nor do they specify tasks performed. For example, a review of the term "collections" within titles

results in roles ranging from Collections Care Specialist and Collections Documentation Specialist to Book Conservator for Special Collections, Collections Manager, and Director of Collections.

## “Preservation”

## “Conservation”

## “Preventive Conservation”

## “Collection Care”

A significant percentage of respondent titles include the terms “preservation” (13%) and “conservation” (11%). Similar terms “preventive conservation” (2%) and “collections care” (2%) were reported at lower rates. Inconsistency in use in these terms has infiltrated staff titles, though no actual differentiation is apparent. For example, it is unclear how a Preventive Conservation Manager’s role differs from that of a Preservation Services Manager. These terms could be better distinguished and used more consistently across the profession and communicated to our allied colleagues.

## “Services”

Interestingly, the most often used action term, “services,” indicated that the collection management staff provided cross-disciplinary support rather than representing a central institutional element, such as a curatorial department. In using “services”, professional titles were also avoided at higher rates by the institution (such as using “Registrar Services” versus “Registrar”). Examples of these titles within the survey include “Team Leader, Collection Services,” “Head, Collection & Exhibition Services,” and “Director of Preservation Services.” The use of “services” in titles was reported more often by respondents from libraries.

## Collection information management responsibilities

Respondents with collection information and archival responsibilities reported a smattering of different titles, including “records management,” “rights and reproduction,” “archive,” “collection information manager,” “documentation,” “digital production,” “registration,” and “processing”. Sometimes these terms appear in dual role titles such as “Registrar / Rights & Reproduction Manager,” “Special Materials Cataloger and Processing Archivist” or in defining a specific role within an area, such as “Assistant Registrar, Records Management”.

## Dual titles

The prevalence of combined or dual titles is also of note. Nearly 18% of titles (45 of 252) include “and”, “&”, or “/”. These titles could have evolved as a response to budget cutbacks, assignment of additional roles, perceived benefit to demonstrating a range of responsibilities within a position, or an individual’s ability to contribute skills that cross traditional department

boundaries. Of the total combined titles, “Collections Manager and Registrar” occurs most frequently (9). Other examples include: “Curator and Programs Manager,” “Director of Collections and Senior Painting Conservator,” and “Registrar/Exhibitions Coordinator.”

## What types of discipline words are used in collection care titles?

Words that conveyed discipline of the collection managed by the individual were often included in reported titles. Fifty-nine (24%) respondents’ titles included words that indicated specialization within a particular discipline. These words most likely represent institutional differentiation among staff with similar titles, but may also provide some indication of professional identity among colleagues. Different skill sets are expected to be found between a “Collections Manager Art & Artifacts” and a “Collection Manager: Science.” Thirty-nine different discipline words used in the respondents titles were included. Fifteen (38%) of these words indicated science fields. This may indicate stronger specificity in training and skill required of collection management staff in natural science institutions.

## What types of grade-level words are present in collection care titles?

Assistant	27 (10.8%)
Senior	22 (8.8%)
Director	21 (8.4%)
Specialist	21 (8.4%)
Manager*	15 (6%)
Technician	13 (5.2%)
Associate	12 (4.8%)
Head	7 (2.8%)
Coordinator	6 (2.4%)
Chief	4 (1.6%)
(Other Grade Number)	4 (1.6%)
Officer	3 (1.2%)
Administrator	2 (0.8%)

Principal	2 (0.8%)
Team Leader, Supervisor, Contractor, Trainee, Liaison, Advisor, Lecturer (each)	1 (0.4%)

*\*not including "Collection(s) Manager"*

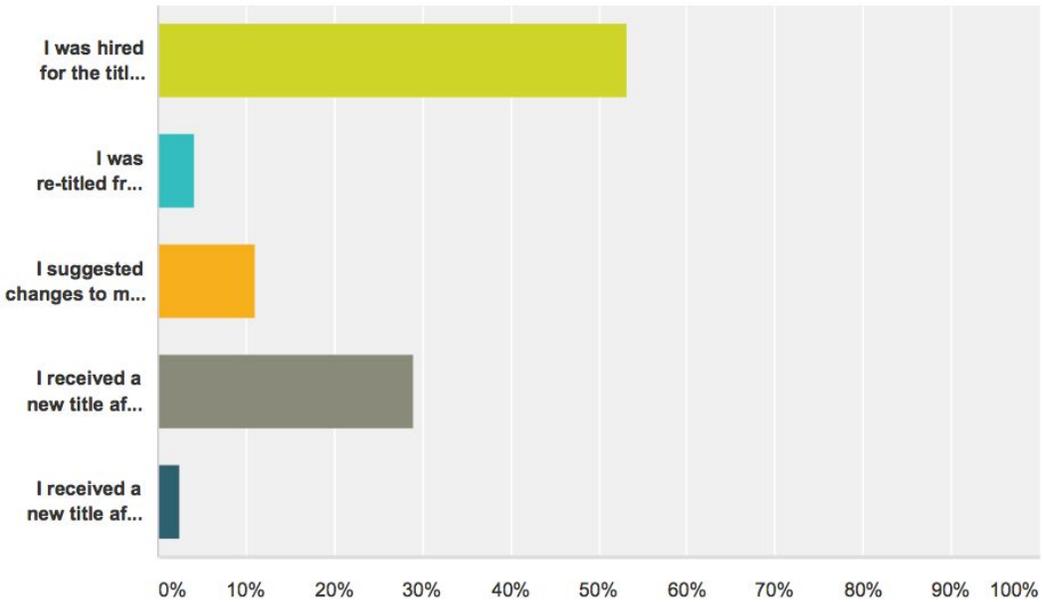
**Approximately 65% of titles (out of 250 total responses) contain an indication of level or grade.** As is common in many different industries, these types of titles may overlap or be unclear in their distinction (such as the difference between Chief, Administrator, Principal, Supervisor, etc).

**"Manager" posed a specific issue for the respondents.** "Collection Manager" often denotes management of collections, but not necessarily management of people. These titles were not included in the grade-level term analysis.

**Some respondents indicated a disconnect between their title, responsibilities, and position within the organization.** One person stated, "Title is set by Civil Service rules, [I] answered about actual duties", and the other, "No, in practice these titles mean nothing in relation to job duties and salary compensation. When the title changes occur there is no salary increase."

## Are respondents' titles evolving to better match their roles and responsibilities, and in what ways?

**Just slightly over 50% of respondents had maintained the same title for which they were hired.** Almost 30% reported that they were assigned a new title when they had taken on new responsibilities. Fifteen percent of respondents indicated that their title had changed, either with or without their input. This high rate in change of titles reflects a high rate of advancement, acceptance of additional responsibilities, and need to recalibrate titles for collection care and management staff for a variety of reasons.



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
I was hired for the title I have now.	53.28%	130
I was re-titled from my original title without my input.	4.10%	10
I suggested changes to my title to be in line with the field.	11.07%	27
I received a new title after I took on new responsibilities.	29.10%	71
I received a new title after I received additional training/degree.	2.46%	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>244</b>

## How accurate are collection care staff titles?

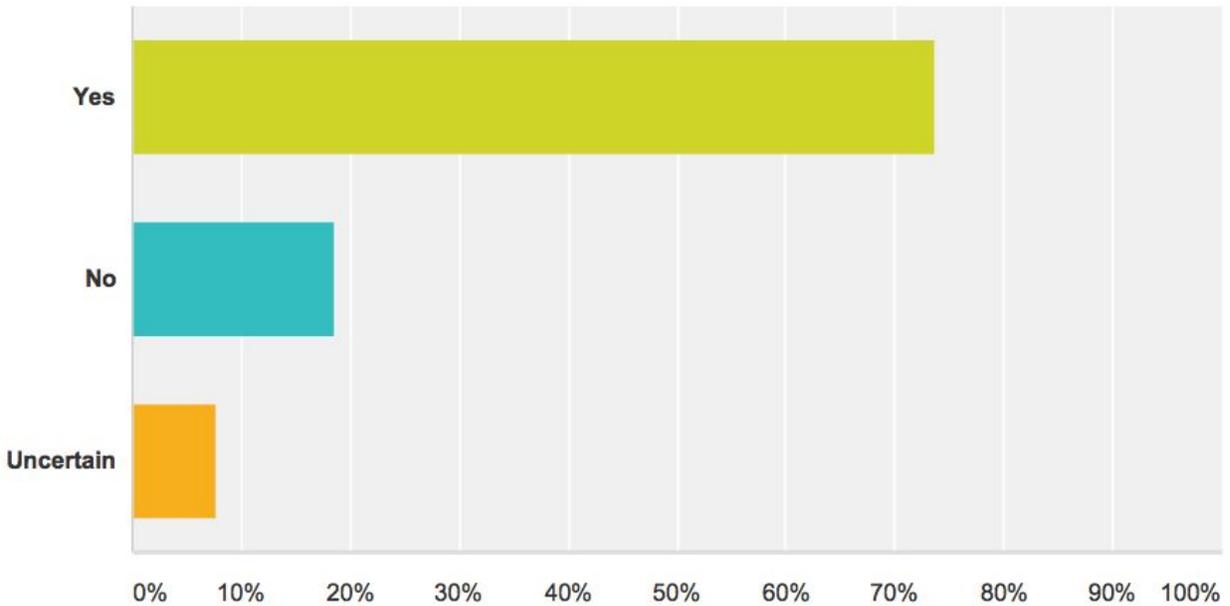
**Nearly 25% of respondents thought their title was not reflective of their work.** An additional 12% were uncertain. Responses to this question demonstrated the lack of clarity in the professional identity of collection care and management professionals.

Approximately the same amount of respondents (27%, 67 respondents) provided additional information about how their titles confused other colleagues or was inaccurate given their assignments:

- “Exhibitions Preparator doesn’t reflect the storage-based projects that account for half of my time”
- “It’s a weird catch-all that is vague and leads to confusion in and outside the organization.”
- “I feel my responsibilities are greater than what my title encompasses.”
- “It was an empty name change after a restructure”

- “To me, it seems correct, but most people outside museum work have no idea what it means.”
- “People outside the museum field presume I am a debt collector or a business director.”

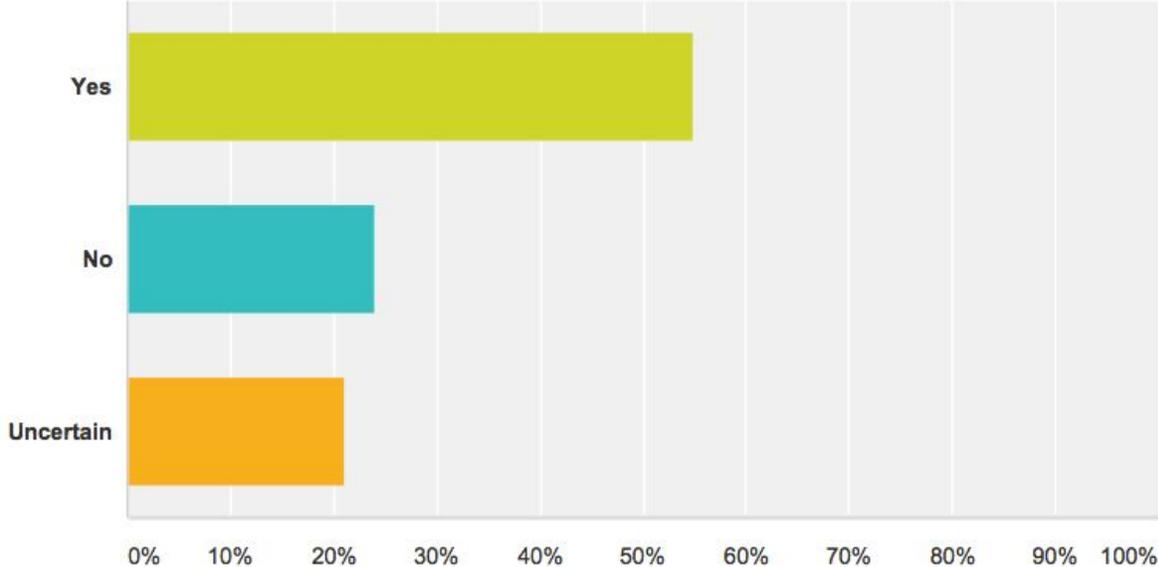
Do collection care staff think their titles reflect their experience and education?



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	73.68%	182
No	18.62%	46
Uncertain	7.69%	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>247</b>

**Nearly 75% of respondents (247) felt that their title appropriately reflected their education and experience.**

Do collection care staff titles consider their titles comparable in parity to those of institutional colleagues?



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	54.96% 133
No	23.97% 58
Uncertain	21.07% 51
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>

**Only 55% (of 242 respondents) indicated that they perceived their titles to be on par with other professionals in their institutions.** Almost 45% did not think or were unsure if their positions were titled comparably with those in other departments with similar levels of responsibility.

**Several respondents indicated that they perceived that their function was not afforded the same types of titles compared to similar positions in the institution:**

- “My responsibilities are covered by managers in other sections.”
- “Curatorial staff are graded more highly.”

**A comparable number of respondents highlighted inconsistency in their institution’s assignment of titles:**

- “I’m the only dept. head without director in title.”
- “other managers manage people, I manage collections.”

While the majority of respondents felt their titles accurately represented their institutional role and education, the majority was sometimes slim. Slightly over 60% of respondents indicated their titles reflected their roles, just over 70% of respondents indicated their titles reflected their education and experience, and barely over 50% of respondents indicated their titles were comparable in representation to colleagues in other departments. The high level of uniqueness among respondent titles, use of descriptive words rather than professional terms, and lack of parity with colleagues in other fields can indicate a lack of consistency in staffing and carrying out collection management and preservation goals, and perhaps lesser commitment to the work overall.

## Responsibilities of Collection Management and Care Staff

Eight question groups gauged respondents' involvement in different areas of collection management practice. For each area, respondents were asked to indicate:

- how frequently they execute each task: daily, weekly, monthly, annually, or over multiple years
- at what level respondent is involved (do they work under direction, do they supervise),
- whether the respondent's involvement in that task has increased, decreased, or stayed the same over time.

The areas of practice include:

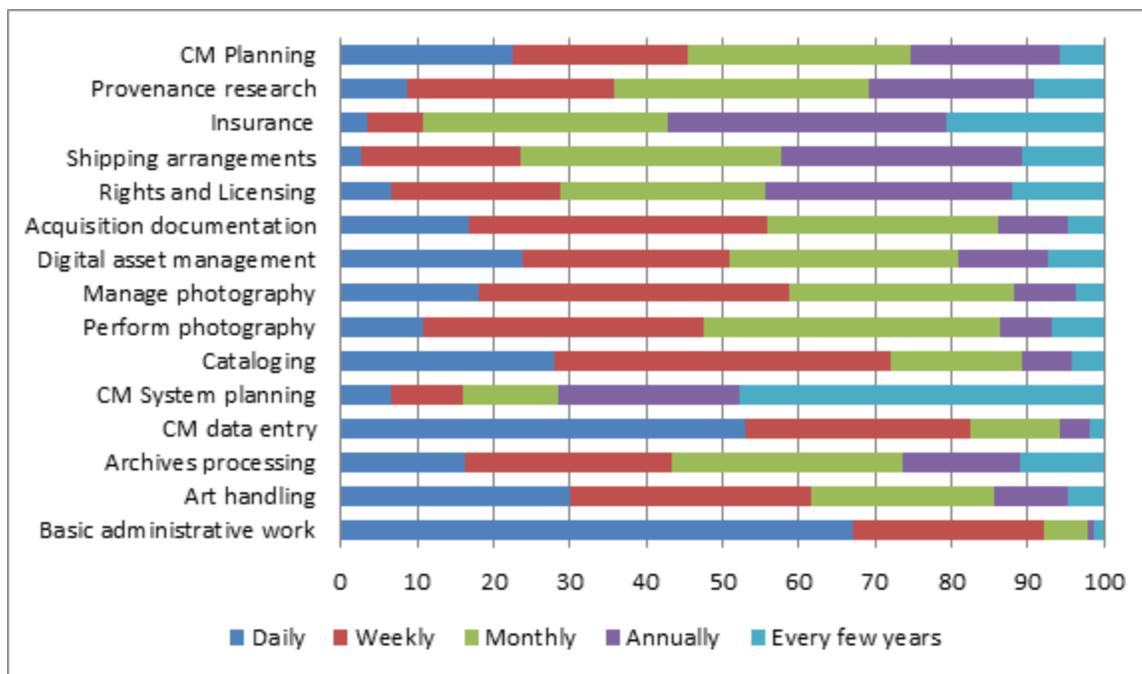
- Collection Management and Registration
- Collection Project Management (i.e. Exhibitions)
- Conservation
- Preservation
- Outreach and Programming
- Professional Activities Involvement
- Management and Development
- Other roles and responsibilities

## Collection Management and Registration

Questions 14-16 asked respondents to describe their involvement in a range of different collection management and registration activities. All portions of this question group had a high response rate, at 94%. The list was not meant to be exhaustive, but instead to explore involvement in a variety of activities:

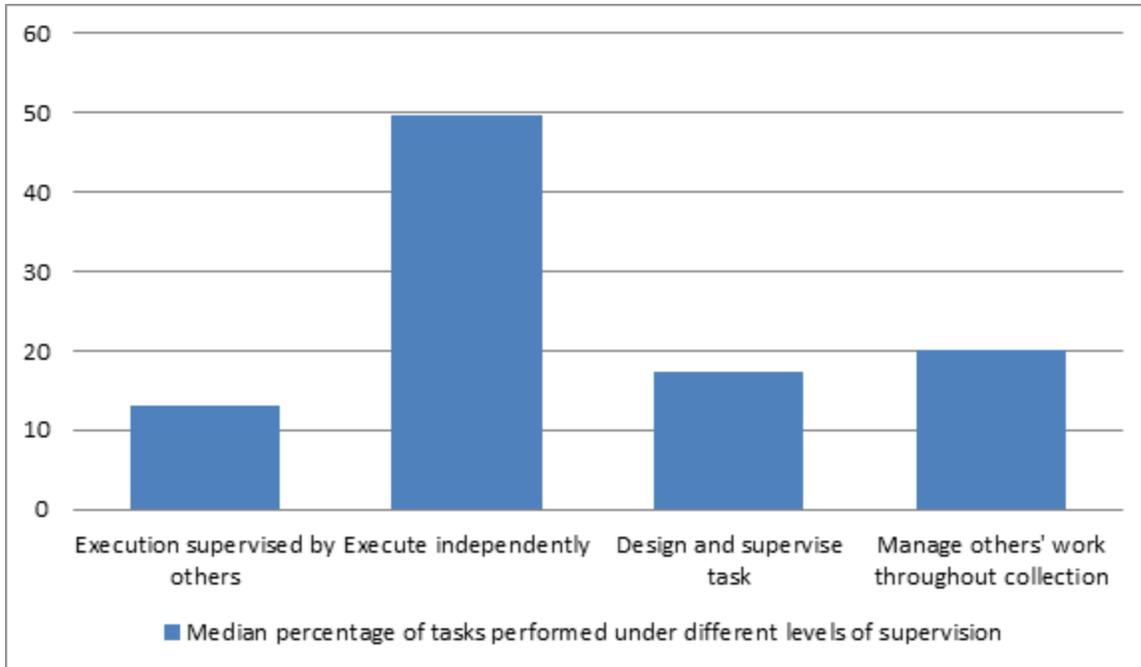
**Most respondents reported high rates of involvement across the entire range of collection management and registration activities on a weekly and monthly basis.**

Logically, larger scale projects such as collection management system planning was performed on a longer timeframe by almost 50% of respondents. Respondents are drawing on a wide range of skills over time to perform these tasks that protect institutions as responsible stewards of cultural heritage collections.



**Percentage of respondents reporting frequency of engagement in a selection of collection management and registration tasks.**

**Across all these tasks, respondents indicated that most often they executed them independently.** Low reported rates of doing these tasks under supervision indicates that the respondents were largely a professional staff. It is possible that that the survey did not reach more entry-level collection management staff, or that interns or volunteers that serve in the absence of professional entry-level collection management staff. However, lower reported rates of supervising and managing others in these tasks either indicates that lower levels of advancement had been attained, or perhaps are not available around these responsibilities or more collection management staff are working by themselves, and not directing others in completing tasks. Few of the respondents claimed to be supervised or managed in these activities. It is possible that that the survey did not reach more entry-level collection management staff, or that interns or volunteers that serve in the absence of professional entry-level collection management staff.



Respondents indicated that their involvement had increased across all areas by 28-57%, with the greatest increases being reported in basic administrative work (54%) identifying needs and setting collection management goals (57%), and digital asset management (57%). While the need for administrative work continues to increase, it is a promising sign that respondents are involved in greater rates in planning for collection management.

Very few respondents reported a decrease in involvement of any significance across the tasks (3-18%).

## Collection Project Management Work

Eighty-seven percent of respondents answered questions about their involvement in access-based projects that use or directly affect the collections, including:

- Construction project management
- Exhibition fabrication
- Managing collection projects
- Exhibition mount making
- Planning for and managing exhibition development
- Preparation and installation of both two- and three-dimensional objects
- Preparation for photography

Projects involving the collections generally include a range of activities, from high-level planning tasks to technical hands-on tasks. Respondents to the survey seemed to all participate in the full range of tasks. Higher numbers of respondents indicated that they had a management role for collection-related projects. Very few respondents indicated that they performed technical tasks on a daily (2-11%) or weekly (7-24%) basis, but did engage in activities like preparation for installation, photography, exhibition fabrication, or mount making once a month (28-40%), or at least once annually (15-36%).

	Daily	Monthly	Annually	Every few years
Construction project management			40.91%	
Exhibition fabrication			35.96%	
Managing collection projects	39.9%			
Mountmaking			24.49%	
Planning/managing exhibition development				29%
Preparation/installation of objects		41.57%		
Prep for photography	40.24%			

**Highest number of respondents for each task by frequency at which task was routinely performed. For example, 39.9% of respondents reported managing collection projects on a daily basis.**

**Forty-one percent of respondents reported managing collection projects independently.** For more complex institutional projects, respondents reported being supervised by others (39%) or working independently (28%) more frequently, than supervising the task (17%).

**Respondents reported a wide array of other project management tasks, some of which overlapped with collection management and outreach projects.** Responses indicated involvement in outreach brochures, preparation of online exhibits, management of time-based media, large-scale collection moves, writing blogs and managing social media streams, and a variety of digitization projects.

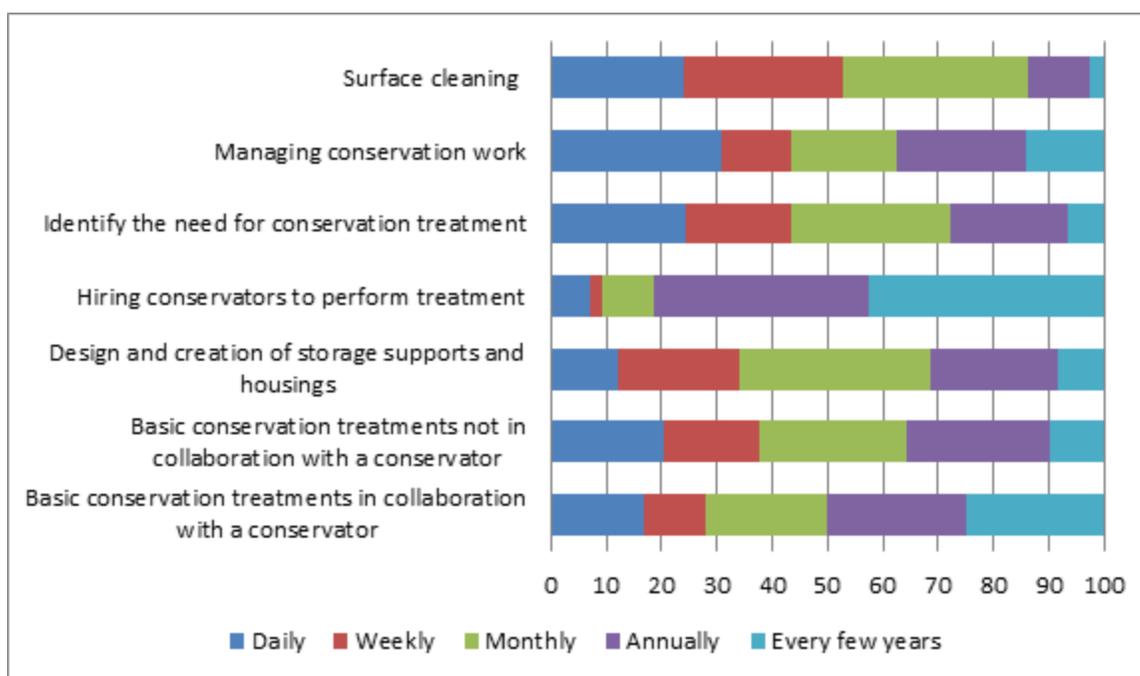
Respondents indicated that their involvement across collection project management tasks had either stayed the same (31-49%) or had increased (36-63%), rather than decreased (3-19%). Respondents reported an increase in activity related to collection projects of all types (63% reported an increase) and construction project management (53%), which ideally indicates

higher levels of proactive involvement in the design of new collection spaces, as well as working with collection staff to protect collections during construction.

## Conservation

The survey asked respondents to discuss how, in their role as collection management and care staff, they were involved in conservation. It did not target conservators' involvement in conservation, though several conservators responded to the survey. Tasks respondents were asked to evaluate include:

- Basic conservation treatments in collaboration with a conservator
- Basic conservation treatments not in collaboration with a conservator
- Design and creation of storage supports and housings
- Hiring conservators to perform treatment
- Identifying the need for conservation treatment
- Managing conservation work
- Surface cleaning (for example, brush and vacuum)

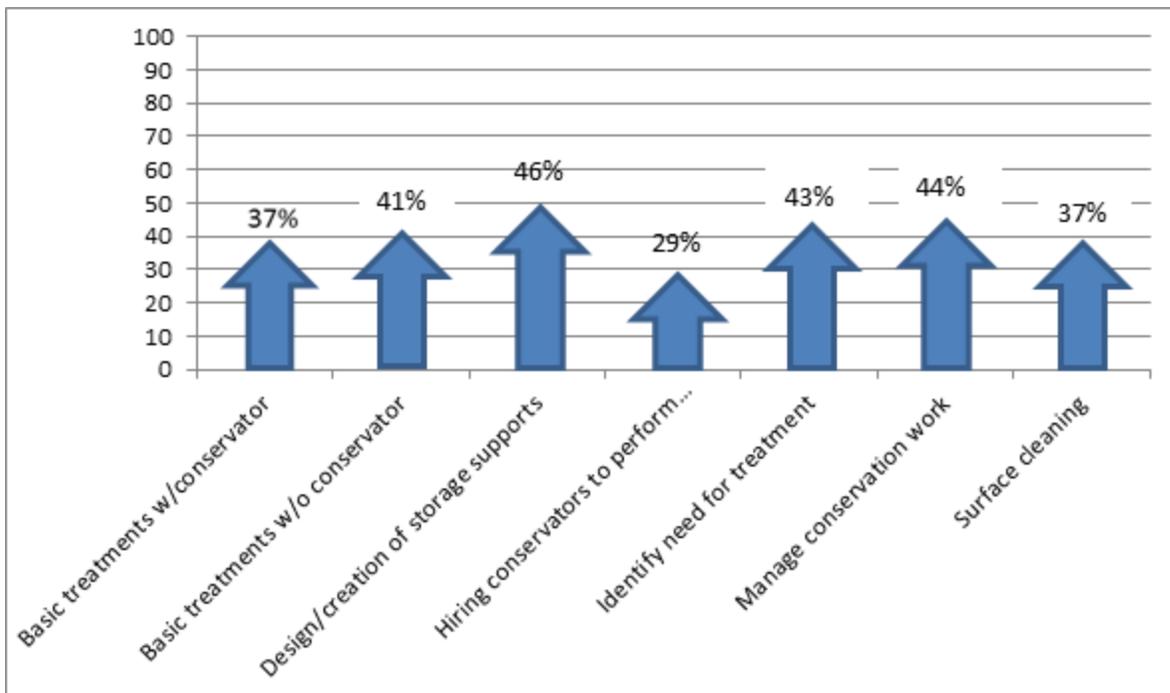


### Percentage of respondents reported frequency of engagement in conservation-related tasks.

The respondents reported significant involvement in conservation-related activities. The rate of response to these tasks was highest where collection management staff were most likely to be

involved including identifying needs, planning for, contracting, and managing conservation activity:

- 84% reported identifying the need for conservation treatment.
- 52% indicated that they were involved in the hiring of conservators to perform treatment. Approximately one-third of these reported acting in a managerial or supervisory capacity in hiring.
- But 84% reported managing conservation activity. If respondents were accurate in their responses, this indicates that the respondents may be detached from the conservation hiring process. Of the 60% of respondents who manage conservation work, 30% indicated they managed it on a daily basis.
- 82% percent reported design and creation of storage housings.
- 60-75% reported some type of involvement in surface cleaning or basic treatments under the direction of a conservator, or without the direction of a conservator.
- On average across the selected conservation tasks, 20% of respondents reported managing others' work.



**Increase in involvement in conservation-related tasks over last five years reported by respondents.**

**Respondents indicated that their involvement in conservation tasks either remained constant or increased.**

- The greatest increases have been reported for the design and creation of storage and housing, the management of conservation work, and the act of identifying conservation needs.

- There is a trend noted in the data that indicates a significant increase in basic conservation treatments performed with and without a conservator as well as surface cleaning (37-41% of respondents). This combined with a decreased involvement in hiring of conservators (16% reported their involvement had decreased) may suggest there is a perception among respondents that they are doing more conservation activities but working with conservators less. One respondent noted that “lack of funds has resulted in a 15-year lack of conservator assistance, with staff continuing to follow guidance received in 1999.”

## Preservation

Ninety percent of survey participants responded to questions about preservation activities, including:

- Managing art handling
- Cleaning of storerooms
- Cleaning of galleries (excluding artwork on display)
- Cleaning of artworks on display (such as brush and vacuuming of dust)
- Integrated Pest Management
- Environmental Monitoring
- Liaising with facilities staff to achieve environmental goals
- Risk assessment and mitigation planning
- Long-term preservation planning
- Developing training and training staff and volunteers in preservation practices
- Testing and selection of cleaning products
- Materials testing
- Emergency management planning
- Identifying needs and setting preservation goals

**The highest engagement with preservation tasks reported by respondents appears to reflect recent initiatives to boost more engaged environmental monitoring, integrated pest management, risk assessment, and active planning for preventive care.** These activities also correlate to AIC best practices in collections care, the core documents required by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) for accreditation, and many grant program requirements. Still, engagement with those activities was less than 50% in almost all cases. Respondents reported the highest rates of engagement on a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, and multi-year frequency for the following activities:

- **Daily:** 35.96% of respondents reported handling collections on a daily basis.
- **Weekly:** 25.42% reported environmental monitoring on a weekly basis, in support of the highest reported activity on a monthly basis, environmental monitoring.
- **Monthly:** 45.71% of respondents indicated they coordinated with building staff to accomplish environmental goals on a monthly basis, and 45% engaged in integrated pest management activities.

- **Annually:** 50.30% of respondents devoted time to emergency management planning on an annual basis, followed by 47% of respondents engaging in long-term preservation planning.
- **Every few years:** Respondents reported engaging in materials testing, as needed, over multiple years (43.93%).

Overall, the least engagement was reported for cleaning activities:

- In storerooms, highest engagement was 36% on a monthly basis
- In galleries, 26% on a weekly basis
- Surface cleaning objects on open display at 31% on a monthly basis

Approximately 36% of respondents indicated that their involvement in preservation activities has increased over the past five years. An increase of 40.35% in liaising with buildings staff to accomplish environmental goals reflects greater collaboration around collection environment management.

A significant number of respondents manage, design, or execute preservation activities and 82.39% of respondents indicated their leadership role in developing preservation training programs for staff and volunteers.

## Outreach and Programming Involvement

As cultural heritage organizations focus outward toward their constituents, staff responsible for collections have been challenged to bring their stories of caring for collections to the public. A slightly lower response rate, 83-86% for this group of questions may indicate that some respondents' work does not have an outreach component, but the level of involvement is still very high. Respondents were queried about their involvement in the following outreach activities:

- Working with researchers to access collections and collection information
- Public tours or other programming
- Digital media, website, blog, or app content
- Lectures (outside of professional activities)
- Teaching

Respondents to the survey reported significantly high rates of engagement in outreach activities: 52-76% across the range of activities:

- **Providing access:** 76% reported providing access to collections and collection information. Respondents reported doing this frequently, with 25% providing access on a weekly basis and 33% providing access on a monthly basis.
- **Tours and programming:** 70% were involved in public tours and programming, with 44% reported doing it at least on a monthly basis.

- **Production of digital media, website, blog, and app content** was reported by 62% of respondents. Approximately a third of these respondents were involved in this activity on a monthly basis.
- **Lectures:** 60% of respondents indicated that they gave lectures (apart from professional activities); most of the respondents indicated this was an activity that happened annually (47%) or every few years (26%).
- **Teaching:** A lesser number of respondents indicated that they were involved in teaching (52%); those involved in this activity indicated that this usually happened for them on an annual basis (37%) or every few years (31%).

Respondents reported significant increases in these activities in the last five years, including creation of digital media, website, blog, and app content (+65.43%), public tours or other programming (+48.62%), working with researchers to access collections (+47.89%), teaching (+36.92%), and lectures (+36.42%). One respondent noted an increase in the number of individual questions answered by phone or email. An area for future exploration may be the impact on collection management and care staff providing access to collections prompted by greater availability of collection databases and other online features.

Overall, increased demand for information and experience based in the collections prompts increased engagement in outreach and programming activities not just for those staff traditionally filling those roles, but also those engaged in preservation and collection care.

## Professional Activities

Up to 95% of respondents reported engaging in some type of professional activity, including:

- Publishing in scholarly journals
- Delivering talks at conferences
- Engaging in professional development and training
- Belonging to professional organizations
- Serving as a leader in professional organizations

While a very high number of respondents participated in professional development/training activities (83.84%) and membership in professional organizations (93.16%), giving talks (43.05%), writing for scholarly journals (23.61%), and participating in professional organization leadership roles (34.10%) were reported at lesser rates. Most respondents noted marked increases in engaging in training (45.95%), belonging to professional organizations (33.77%), delivering talks at conferences (25.75%), and leadership (24.86%), with only a slightly lesser increase in writing for scholarly journals (17.03%).

A greater number participating in membership and training is to be expected as part of maintaining professional standing, but it does require overall less time and resources than preparing talks, writing articles, and serving in leadership roles, as in any industry.

That a significant increase of professional involvement was reported by respondents over the last five years may indicate increasing professionalism within the collection management field, as well as greater opportunities that are emerging for these practitioners. The arrival of AIC’s Collection Care Network, the Association of Registrars and Collection Specialists, and professional activities derived from social media may account for the large increase over the last 5 years.

## Management and Development

A significantly high amount - up to 89% - indicated management and development responsibilities. Engagement in these activities varies widely, from less perceived involvement in fundraising, to very high involvement in development of policy and procedures, strategic planning, and committee participation.

Activity	Percentage Reporting Involvement
Development of procedures	89%
Policy development	78%
Committee/Task Force participation	71%
Strategic planning	71%
Budget management	66%
Staff supervision, 1-5 people	61%
Grant writing	49%
Donor relations	46%
Fundraising	25%
Staff supervision, 6-10 people	16%
Staff supervision, 11+ people	10%

**Percentage of involvement among respondents in queried management and development activities.**

**Fundraising and grant-writing:** Interestingly, while 109 respondents stated that they participated in grant-writing, and 102 in donor relations, only 56 considered themselves to

participate in fundraising. This may reflect more a sense of job silos than of reality, as those who are engaged in writing grants and meeting donors should recognize the role they play in crafting stories about cultural heritage preservation for fundraising efforts.

**Policy, procedure development, Committee participation:** Responsible stewardship of collections is based on collection management policies. Much of this work is collaborative in nature, hence the naturally high engagement of collection care and management staff. Involvement was reported at no less than 70% for these activities.

**Staff supervision:** A total of 175 respondents indicated that they supervise staff. Of these, 126 supervise a small staff of 1-5 individuals, with 30 having 5-10 individuals and 19 supervising more than 10 individuals. Write-in responses indicate that a significant portion of these numbers may also be derived from interns, volunteers, and contractors, rather than full-time employees. Interestingly, those who supervise larger staffs are more likely to be supervised themselves, perhaps a reflection that larger museums have more tiers of management, so it is less likely that a relatively high-ranking collection staff member is the top of their branch of the organizational chart.

Respondents reported that these activities increased broadly across all activities in the last five years. This may point to increasing professional development of the respondents, as well as greater understanding of proactive approaches to involving collection management staff in planning.

## What other responsibilities do you have?

Fifty-six respondents, or 22% of the total respondents to the survey, listed other responsibilities in their position. These responsibilities are wide ranging.

Some reported responsibilities were more specific to the respondent's field than general collection management, but are central to the role of a collection manager in that field:

- "Conducts collection condition and preservation needs surveys; management of commercial binding; management of mass deacidification;"

Some reported responsibility for tasks in which they might be a well-informed user, but are likely not a professional expert:

- "Colleagues look to me for health and safety advice and oversight in dealing with potentially hazardous materials and situations (such as mold, chemicals, pests, etc.)."

Other responsibilities that were reported that largely relate to collection management staff responsibilities and provided a greater level of specification include:

- "Deaccessioning, accessions, and loans."

- “Implementing and researching environmental monitoring program, beyond simply monitoring.”
- “Liaison with external security company; develop security policies; curatorial research and writing”
- “Database Design/Management, Digital File Wrangler/Digital Asset Management (both increasing and mainly Manage others' work throughout collection but curator has some oversight)”

Other responsibilities listed by respondents catalog the array of capabilities that may be required of all staff of smaller institutions:

- “Graphic design. Educational programming. Event management.”
- “Label/Didactic production, security training”
- “Liaison with external security company; develop security policies; curatorial research and writing”
- “Exhibition planning, coordination”
- “Manager on Duty for museum operations.”
- “school children educational programming, social media manager, volunteer manager”

## Conclusion

As a fairly recent addition to the cadre of cultural heritage collection professionals, the titles and responsibilities and the high rate of change in involvement in activities discovered through this survey indicates that collection management and care staff are evolving to meet changing institutional needs. Whereas their titles often indicate a collection-related identity, collection management and care staff have also become increasingly involved in organizational management.

As indicated by the demographic questions, these positions are found throughout the United States and abroad, but yet have little “brand recognition” among their titles or the roles they play within institutions. While training to become a curator or conservator may be more strictly defined in order to attain professional status, the path is somewhat less clear for those wishing to be involved in legal, ethical, and physical management of collections. Curatorial programs do not cover these topics, nor do conservation programs provide training in legal and ethical issues to the extent a registrar must apply them in limiting an institution’s risk and liability. Museum Studies programs have arisen to meet this need yet their programs can vastly differ and may not address collection management, depending on their focus.

Cultural institutions, or the people within them, have not yet decreed and educated why prescribed courses of study are key to sustaining collections over time. This is partly indicative of the value placed on building and maintaining excellence and resilience around collection stewardship in institutions. Investing in a professional collection management staff can be akin

to fixing the roof and mechanical systems on an optimal schedule. Both reduce the risk to organizational sustainability, but collecting organizations often delay these investments, exposing organizations to risk.

Given the increasing involvement of the survey respondents, especially in areas of management and planning, perhaps what is desired within the respondents is their ability to manage large complex projects that integrate many perspectives across institutions. By managing projects that are individually unique - for example, a one-time collection move, or the establishment of a collection management policy or emergency management program - collection management staff demonstrate their ability to coordinate with institutional partners outside collection-centered departments as part of their work. It may be this slightly outsider advantage that positions collection management staff to demonstrate aptitude in more varied ways than peers with more standardized training and traditional organizational roles.

And yet, even if the aptitudes are valued to involve a professional collection management staff at increasingly higher levels, the role they play within museum organizations should be appropriately recognized. These team members provide a crucial link between goals of collection staff in preserving the collection, meshing it with organizational goals of sustainability, reduction in risk, and smart, prioritized use of resources.

## About the Collection Care Network of the American Institute of Conservation

This survey is a project of AIC's Collection Care Network (CCN). The CCN was formed in January 2012 when the AIC Board of Directors presented it with the following charge:

- Create awareness of preventive care
- Identify and develop standards and best practices, training, and other projects to advance preventive care in institutions of all types and sizes, locally, nationally, and globally
- Provide resources to support collection care and conservation professionals
- Work with related groups to reach and support key collection care constituents

In support of expanding the impact of preventive conservation, the CCN has engaged in projects to understand the training and professional development needs of collection care and management professionals. Collection management that is informed by preventive conservation meets a shared goal of conservators, collection managers, curators, administrators, and other cultural heritage stakeholders. It focuses on the sustainable continuum of care to protect access to collections over time.