Message from the Chair

In 1985, sixteen special collections banded together under the broad umbrella of wishing to care for old books and manuscripts. In 1993, that hearty band incorporated as the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries, Inc., (PACSCL). With part-time staff and support from a small board, PACSCL published a print newsletter for its members, and created its first exhibit, *Legacies of Genius.*

Current membership in PACSCL consists of 34 diverse special collections that run the gamut from the German Historical Society to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. PACSCL, through its institutional members, represents over 250 special collections workers whose contributions have included the incubation of 17 grants that have brought over $9,000,000 to the special collections community in Philadelphia.

Today, PACSCL is governed by an active board and both standing and ad hoc committees whose work ensures PACSCL’s sustainability and growth. PACSCL projects are built with creativity and designed to be extensible. [The Philadelphia Area Archives Research Portal](https://www.library.upenn.edu/philadelphia-archives-research-portal) provides access to 5,000 collections from approximately 200 libraries, archives, historic sites, and historical societies in the greater Philadelphia region. Grant-funded projects such as [Biblioteca Philadelphiensis](https://www.library.upenn.edu/philadelphia-archives-research-portal), [In Her Own Right](https://www.library.upenn.edu/philadelphia-archives-research-portal), [Chronicling Resistance](https://www.library.upenn.edu/philadelphia-archives-research-portal), [For the Health of the New Nation](https://www.library.upenn.edu/philadelphia-archives-research-portal) and the [COVID-19 Web-Archiving Project](https://www.library.upenn.edu/philadelphia-archives-research-portal) not only showcase the integration of individual special collections in story and truth telling, but also the dedication of the community to the role of rare books and manuscripts in public life.
The strategic planning process for 2021-2024, the first undertaken since 2015, has allowed us to re-examine our priorities, assess our strengths, and look squarely at our challenges. PACSCL recognizes the uncertainty and danger created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the political climate that has endangered marginalized and oppressed groups including but not limited to people who identify as BIPOC and/or LGBTQIA+, people impacted by ableism, as well as people within religious minorities. These uncertainties will drive us to secure PACSCL’s longevity as well as to ensure that PACSCL, and its members, heed the silenced voices within our collections and among our members and patrons.

Will Noel, Chair

Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries

John T. Maltsberger III ’55
Associate University Librarian for Special Collections
Princeton University
Mission, Vision & Values

In 2019, while planning for the transition from a part-time to a full-time Managing Director, PACSCL reassessed its mission and vision statements, and tied both to four key challenges for its future.

Mission

PACSCL members collaborate to make their collections broadly available. PACSCL supports joint projects, promotes professional standards, and fosters the Philadelphia-area special collections community.

Vision

PACSCL and its member institutions are recognized globally for the depth and broad accessibility of their unique materials and make the Greater Philadelphia area a preeminent center for engagement with special collections.
**Four Key Challenges**

1) Through sustainable consortial initiatives, strengthen members’ ability to preserve and provide access to an internationally significant body of collections.

2) Strengthen the PACSCL community and foster collegiality through improved member communication and access to information on member activities, training opportunities, best practices, etc.

https://bibliophilly.library.upenn.edu/viewer.php?id=19#page/6/mode/2up
Antiphonal, c. 1500. The Library Company of Philadelphia
3) Reach out to the worldwide community of scholars (in the broadest sense, from senior researchers through K-12 students, area residents, and lifelong learners) to provide increased awareness of PACSCL and PACSCL member collections and programs.

4) Strengthen PACSCL’s organizational structure and funding in order to sustain project outputs and provide appropriate technological infrastructure.

http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/pacscl/index.html
Core Values

During the strategic planning process, members of the planning committee as well as members of the larger PACSCL community were asked to define what value statements can be made about the organization within the framework of PACSCL’s mission and vision statements.

Committee responses framed those strengths of PACSCL that will sustain it going forward. Those values include collaboration, accessibility, engagement, and community.

Responses from the larger community centered on collaboration, collegiality, inclusion, and collective action.
Statement of Intent

Supported by its mission and vision, and inspired by the core values of its community, PACSCL commits to the following for the next three years: PACSCL will sustain the cultural and intellectual life of the Philadelphia area by fostering collaboration; by promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion as members engage in joint projects; and by enriching the professional lives of special collections staff.

Within this intent, PACSCL will focus activity over the next three years within four specific areas:

• Sustainability of PACSCL as an entity and as a community, ensuring its ability to serve the needs of special collections.
• Fostering meaningful collaboration between PACSCL members.
• Placing diversity, equity, and inclusion at the heart of PACSCL.
• Supporting professional development for special collections workers.

Jordan Rothschild, Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text & Image at the Penn Libraries, checks digitized images from Free Library of Philadelphia Lewis MS E160 against the manuscript. *Bibliothecha Philadelphiensis*
**Sustainability**

Successful sustainability is multi-faceted and supports PACSCL as an entity while ensuring the continuity of community relationships. Fiscal sustainability will be addressed through the creation of an endowment, which will provide additional operating funds.

PACSCL will seek to diversify membership not only by expanding board representation, but also by considering ways to encourage membership by smaller, community-based institutions. PACSCL will institute effective methods of communicating its value by establishing and making publicly available metrics to assess the success of programming and projects.

**Collaboration**

PACSCL’s greatest asset is the creativity, dedication, and knowledge inherent in the staff at member institutions. The strategic plan seeks to leverage that asset through collaboration in significant events, including the upcoming 30th anniversary of PACSCL in 2023 and the sestercentennial of the United States in 2026.

Collaboration will be evident in the gathering and sharing of best practices that are at the core of PACSCL projects, demonstrating PACSCL’s leadership in advancing professional standards in special collections.

Last, but never least, are the social ties that bind the community, nurture friendships, and sustain professional networks. We look forward to the first face to face holiday celebration and the first in-person annual meeting post pandemic.
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Recognizing that our collections do not speak to history with equity, and cognizant of the fact that diversity strengthens our community, PACSCL will work to enable members to implement anti-racist policies and practices within their institutions. PACSCL will add to the gathering of best practices by documenting and making available DEI initiatives undertaken by our members. PACSCL will extend our community to include underserved or underrepresented communities and persons within our profession through membership, collaboration, and programming.

Professional Development

As we collectively long for the day when Zoom is an added value to face to face events, PACSCL plans to engage its membership through small group and community wide professional development activities. PACSCL will work to foster anti-racist and DEI training opportunities for members of the extended community. PACSCL will fund internships to engage those underrepresented in the profession, beginning with undergraduate internships to promote special collections work as a profession.
The Strategic Planning Committee

In October 2020, a Strategic Planning Committee was convened to craft a strategic plan for the years 2021-2024 as well as annual planning templates for the same period of time.

Members of the committee include:

- Sara Borden, Rowan University
- Evan Boyd, United Lutheran Seminary
- Lois Fischer Black, Lehigh University
- Sarah Horowitz, Haverford College
- Marge Huang, Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Will Noel, PACSCL Chair, Princeton University
- Leslie O’Neill, Catholic Historical Research Center
- Eric Pumroy, Bryn Mawr College
- Katy Rawdon, Temple University
PACSCL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee
William G. Noel, Chair     Princeton University
Celia Caust-Ellenbogen, Vice Chair     Swarthmore College
Lois Fischer Black, Secretary     Lehigh University
Margaret Graham, Treasurer     Drexel University College of Medicine
Margaret Huang     Philadelphia Museum of Art
John Anderies, Chair, Nominations & Governance Committee, ex officio     William Way LGBT Community Center
Lynn Dorwaldt, Chair, Finance Committee, ex officio     Wagner Free Institute of Science

At-Large Directors
Sarah Horowitz, Haverford College
Josué Hurtado, Temple University
Hillary Kativa, Science History Institute
Holly Mengel, University of Pennsylvania Libraries
Heather Willever-Farr, La Salle University
Community-Based Directors

Community Based Directors
Linda Manfredonia, Glenmede Trust Company, N.A.

The Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries
PO Box 1321
Doylestown, Pennsylvania 18901
501-295-4215

https://pacscl.org/

Copyright 2021