The Barnes Foundation: Always Complicated
Hello!

I’m Amanda McKnight
Associate Archivist and Librarian
1. Barnes Foundation background
   In a teeny tiny abridged nutshell…
America’s $6,000,000 Shrine For All the Craziest “Art”
How a Pennsylvania Millionaire Is Spending a Fortune to Prove the Futurists and Cubists NOT Insane and Teach Us to Admire Their Strange Work as He Does
“The purpose for which the corporation is formed is to promote the advancement of education and the appreciation of fine arts; …for the study and for the encouragement of arboriculture and forestry…”

“It is that plain, ordinary person, with little schooling, whom we want to teach to use the qualities of mind, heart, and soul, with which he has been endowed by nature, in such a way that he will be able to understand what the thinkers have done and what the artists have done. That is the main idea of the Foundation.”

Albert C. Barnes to Leopold Stokowski, 1925
Barnes Foundation

✗ Three campuses:
  ✓ Merion
  ✓ Parkway
  ✓ Ker-Feal
The art collection is a **TEACHING TOOL**

Barnes felt that education was **the great democratizer**

“...all we hope to do at the Foundation is to help people learn to see not only pictures but every other object and situation in life.”

Letter, Dr. Barnes to Edward Rothman, Sept. 27, 1943
2. Department History

Here we go…
Pre-Parkway, before 2012…

× 1990s
  × Volunteer

× 2001
  × Mellon Grant
  × Collections Assessment
    Project staff

× Pew Charitable Trust
  Grant
  × CCAHA visit
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3.
Changes / The Learning Curve
Restructure effects…
CHALLENGES

- Unhappy constituents
- Major changes in access
- Misunderstandings about the purpose of the space
- Expectations are not communicated or unrealistically remain the same

“I am always optimistic concerning things that most people think can’t be done.”

Letter, Dr. Barnes to Alfred Henry Maurer, July 19, 1912
A picture is worth a thousand words
4. Pay it Forward / Advice

AKA coping mechanisms for major change…
Be flexible. Try different, out of the box approaches

Don’t take it personally

Think big picture
Opportunity
THE MOST ORGANIZED

✗ Monthly reports
✗ Annual reports
✗ Document, document, document
✗ Connected and informed
  ✓ Attend every meeting
  ✓ Be a presence
✗ LibInsight
  ✓ Datasets that keep track of statistics
In May 2016, restructurings occurred in the art library. In October 2016, the archives and special collections moved from the Macion campus to the Parkway. This document outlines changes made to Art Library Statistics spreadsheet.

Beginning in 2016, the following columns were deleted because they were either deemed unnecessary or were redundant due to statistics kept by the archives:
- Directional
- Barnes Related
- Archival
- In-house films viewed
- Visitors

Books Cataloged & Edited and New Books Purchased
- Is now New Materials Cataloged and separately Books Purchased
- New Books Gifts & Rights/Reproductions
- Is now Donations
- Individual Instruction and Group Instruction
- Is now Database Instruction

The following columns were added:
- Artist Registrants
- Artist Sessions

- Password cheat sheet
- Running the desk cheat sheets
- Circulation in my absence
- History of locations, processes, changes and alterations
Thanks!

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