The Tiegs Zoology Museum, School of Bio Sciences

Student/Volunteer Position Guide

Position Title: Collection Management – Catalogue Assistant

Supervisor: Dr David Young – Director, Tiegs Zoology Museum
Rohan Long – Technical Officer, School of BioScience; Collection Manager, Tiegs Zoology Museum
Helen Arnoldi, Cultural Collections Projects Coordinator

Position Goal: The primary goal of this position will be to expand the collection catalogue for objects on display within the Tiegs Zoology Museum. This project will involve reviewing, updating and expanding upon existing catalogue records and where necessary, in collaboration with the Director creating catalogue entries for specimens not previously documented. Once fully catalogued, these new or updated catalogue records will be added to an electronic database which will aid in the management, accessibility, long-term preservation and appreciation of the collection.

Background: The Tiegs Zoology Museum of the University of Melbourne was established in the late 1880s and is Australia’s oldest university museum of zoology. The collection, accumulated over 120 years, has specimens contributed by the first Professor of the department, Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer. It has an extensive collection of specimens representing the whole animal kingdom, ranging from small invertebrates to prepared whole-mounts and skeletons of vertebrates including an African lion, and a moa (an extinct emu-like bird from New Zealand). A comprehensive range of Australian animals comprises the skulls of many marsupials and others of increasing significance as the species becomes endangered. The collection also includes eleven ‘type’ specimens of marine invertebrates; these are the original specimens used to describe new species. There is also an extensive collection of microscope slides, with contributions from Professor Spencer and other former researchers in the department, and a large number of reprints and other historical documents of cultural significance. Further information on the museum can be found at http://biosciences.unimelb.edu.au/engage/tiegs-museum

Responsibilities: Working under the guidance of Tiegs Zoology Museum staff, the students/volunteers will be assigned a selection of collection items and be required to review existing catalogue information before expanding on these records in fields such as acquisition details (where known), condition, inscriptions and other gaps within the catalogue. If no catalogue record exists, in collaboration with the Director, they will need to create a catalogue entry for the item. Additional related tasks may include: the labelling/numbering of the object and the taking of digital images to be added to the catalogue. Other tasks may include the collating of support/research files on collection items and the documenting of this information within the catalogue. Where appropriate the
student/volunteer may be required to rehouse objects to meet museum standards. The catalogue information will be incorporated onto the museum’s collection database.

**Qualifications:**
A basic understanding of collection management principles specific to the documentation of museum objects (progress towards the completion of a degree in Art Curatorship/Museum Studies/Conservation and/or previous volunteer experience with an Archive, Museum or Historical Society is desirable).

Knowledge of the correct procedures for the safe handling of objects is required as this position requires the handling and close inspection of museum objects.

An interest in zoology would be beneficial.

A methodical, prudent approach with a keen eye for detail is required.

**Training and Supervision:**
On-the-job training specific to the requirements of the position will be given.

Occasional meetings with the Cultural Collections Projects Coordinator to review how the project is progressing and discuss any ideas or problems encountered.

**Benefits:**
Opportunity to work at close hand with one of the University of Melbourne’s extensive cultural collections.

The opportunity for professional development through experience gained in collection management procedures and practice.

Satisfaction in working closely with the Tiegs Zoology Museum’s significant holdings and seeing the collection more fully catalogued and documented. The application of collection management principles to the University’s cultural collections is necessary to enhance our long term understanding, management and appreciation of the collections.

For more information on this position please contact:
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