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CONSERVATION  
CENTER  
*for Art & Historic Artifacts*

# Stories From the Field

## *Mold at RPI*

October 19, 2020

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Assistant Institute Archivist

**Tammy Gobert**

Preservation and Access Archivist

Institute Archives and Special Collections, Rensselaer Libraries



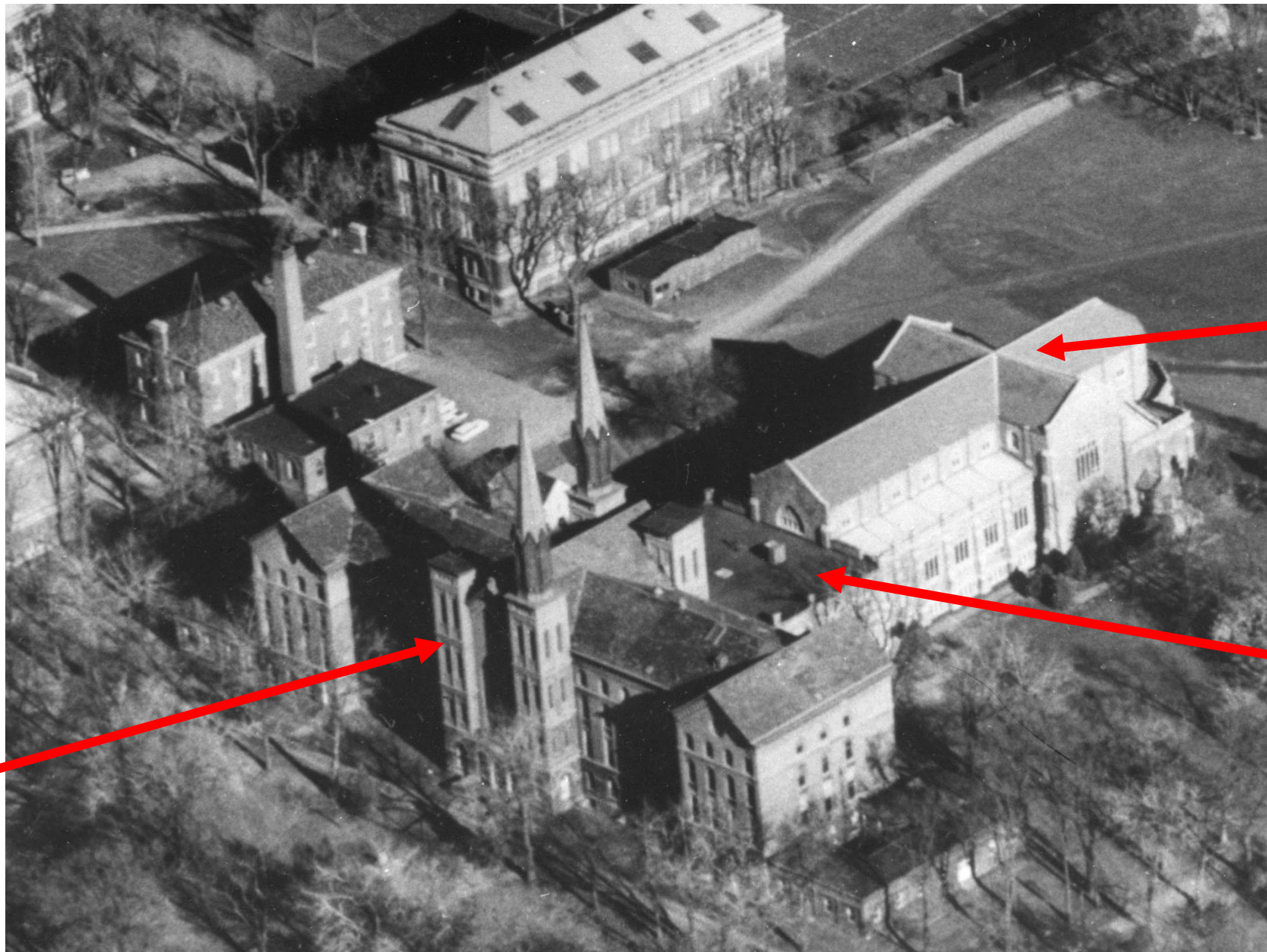


Computing  
Center

Folsom Library

Aerial view of RPI campus, circa 1980s

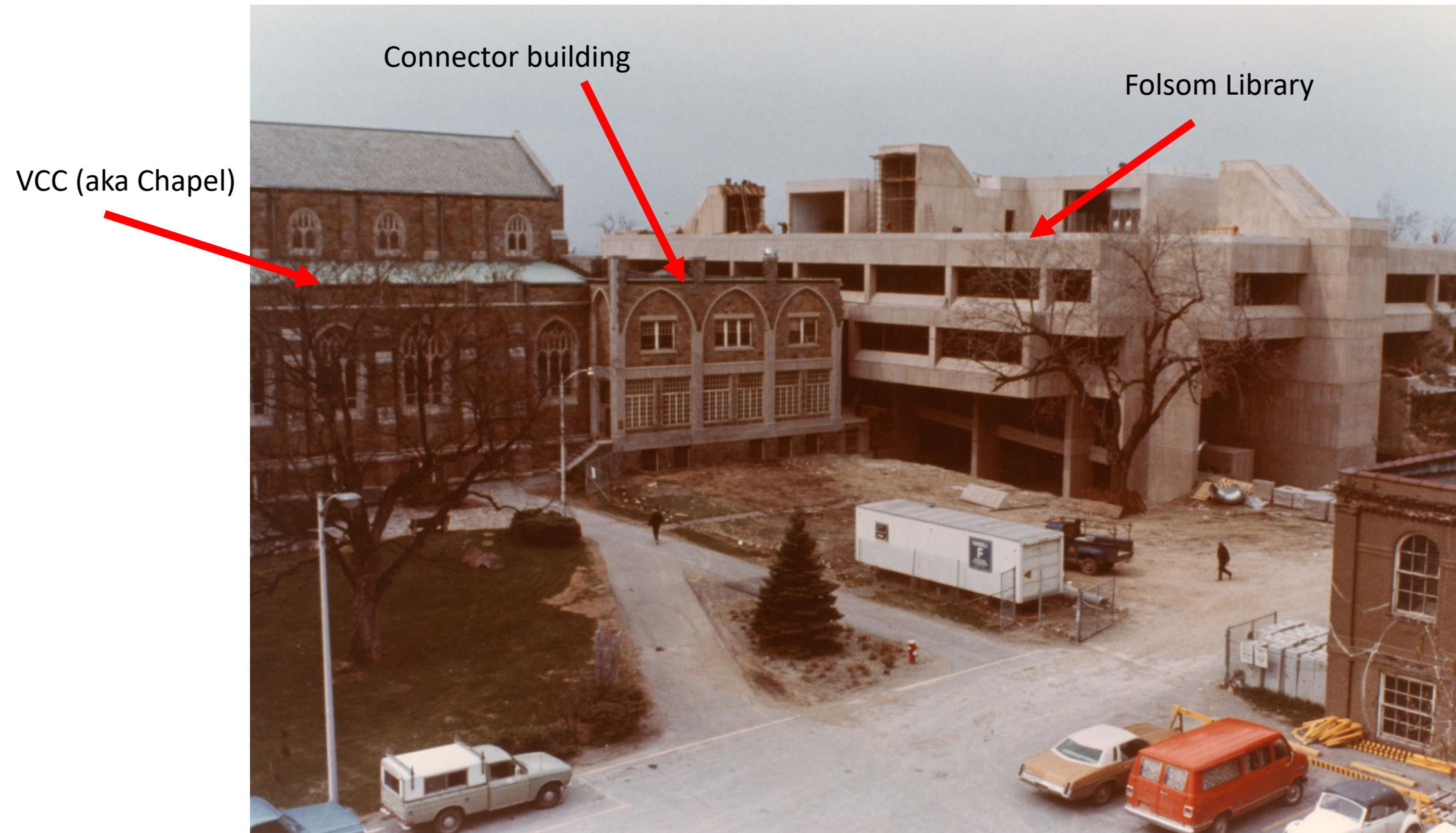
Troy University,  
current site of  
Folsom Library



St. Joseph's Chapel,  
now the Voorhees  
Computing Center

Connector Building

Aerial view of RPI campus, circa 1950s



Looking Southwest: Voorhees Computing Center and Folsom Library construction, circa 1975.



Above: Looking North - Folsom Library on the left, with entrance to Voorhees Computing Center on the right, open outdoor plaza between.

Below: Drainage grates for the outdoor plaza.

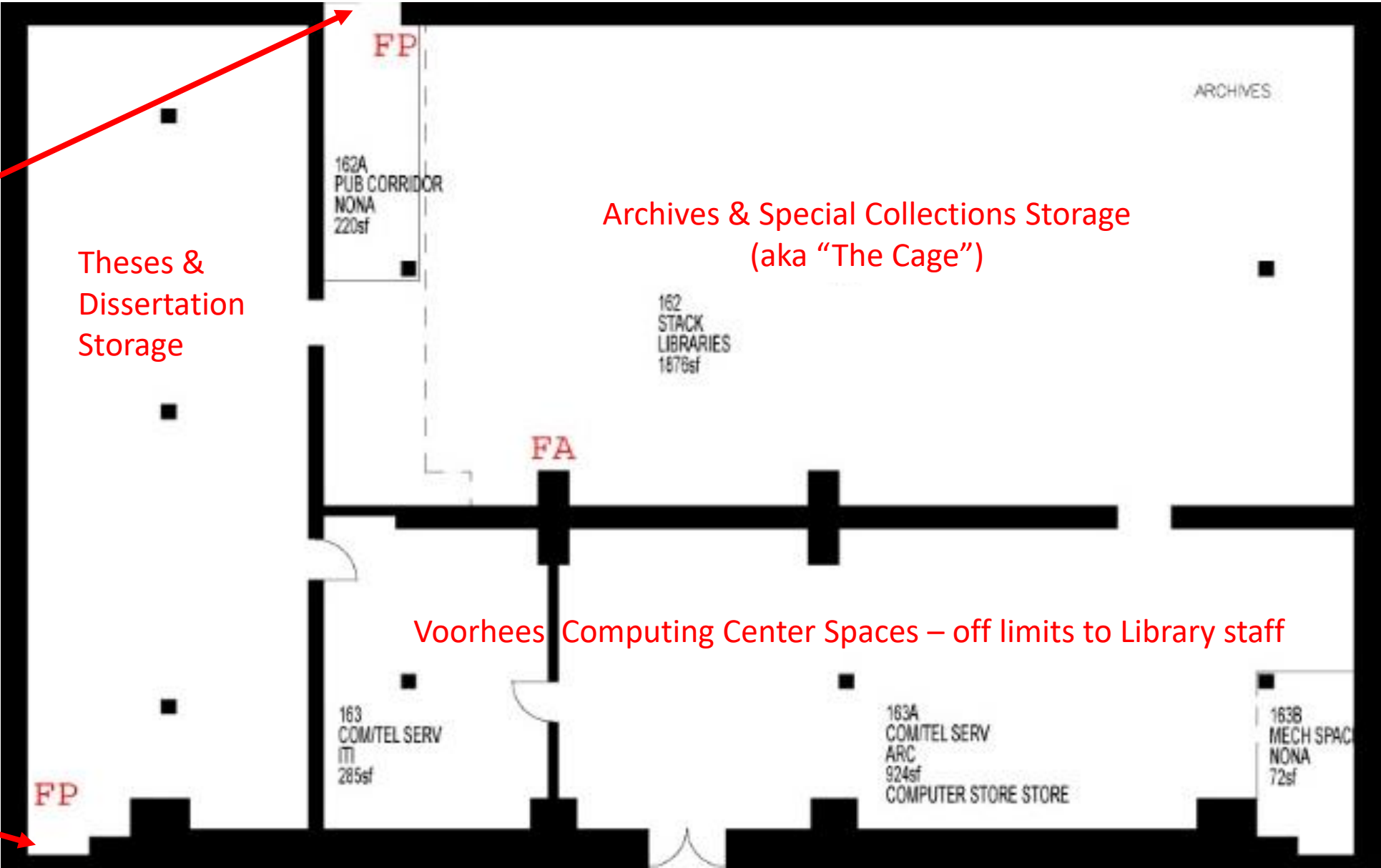


Entrance to  
storage from 1<sup>st</sup>  
floor of Folsom  
Library

Theses &  
Dissertation  
Storage

Archives & Special Collections Storage  
(aka “The Cage”)

Exit next to VCC



Storage rooms under the open plaza between Folsom Library  
and Voorhees Computing Center (aka the Chapel).



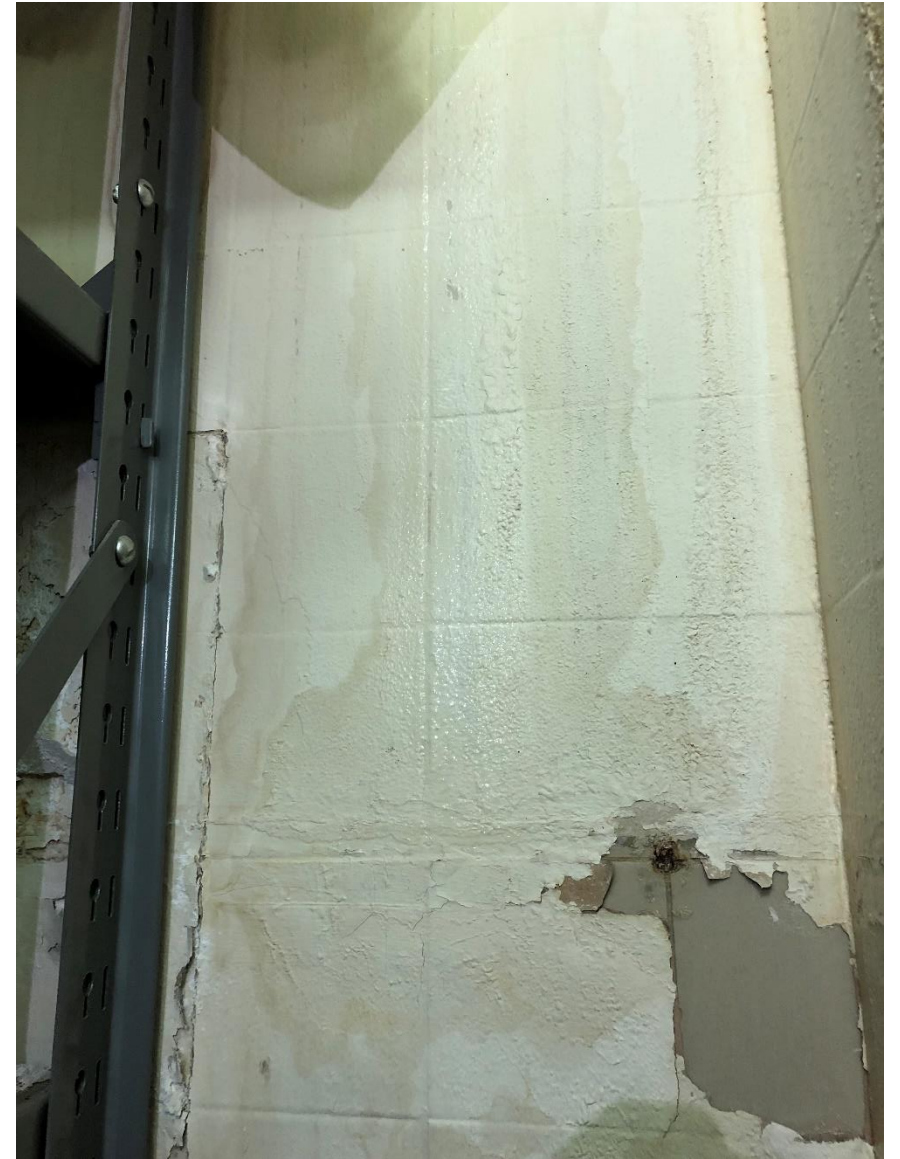
Left: Thesis and dissertation storage room.

Above: Institute Archives and Special Collections, "The Cage" storage area.

# Early issues



Water infiltration from below...



... and from above!

# Mitigation Efforts



Plastic sheeting used for protection from an HVAC leak.



Sealed plaza grate



Pressure valve in Cage floor

# Ongoing Problems



Rusted plaza drainage pipe that leaked into the Cage.



Water damage in the Archives art and artifacts section.

# Predecessor for the Libraries' Disaster Preparedness Plan

## Safety & Security Manual

*Rensselaer Research Libraries*

Folsom Library

### Emergency Phone Number

In the event of an emergency, immediately call Campus Public Safety at **x6611**.

Safety Escort: x6656

## Contents

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Rensselaer Libraries staff meeting, 2017

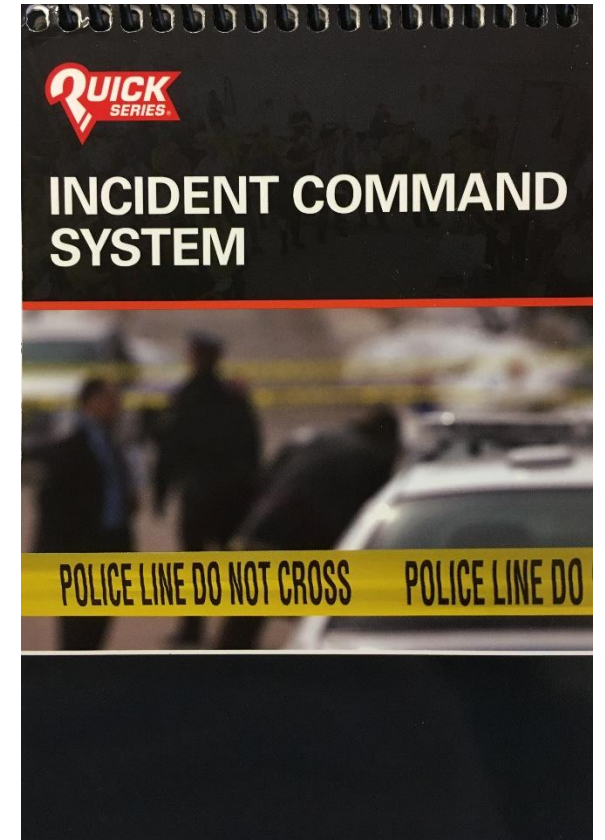


Brings cultural heritage and emergency management professionals together at the local level.

- Encourage institutions to complete disaster plans and train for emergencies;
- Create cooperative disaster assistance networks;
- Raise awareness about cultural heritage in communities;
- Influence official emergency policies and plans.

# Alliance for Response Webinar Series

- “Working with Volunteers”
  - Chandra Fox, Region 10 President, International Association of Emergency Managers
- “Exercise Without Leaving Your Seat: Practicing the Incident Command System at the Institutional Level”
  - David Carmicheal, State Archivist, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- “Crisis Communications”
  - Mike Smith, Chair and Associate Professor of Communication, LaSalle University



## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Use the following form to track your progress. Please bring a copy to Part 2 in-person workshop to turn into the instructor, along with your completed Pocket Response Plan for Collections (PRoP).

Institution: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Prepared by: Tammy Gobert & Jenifer Monger Date: 11/7/2016

### Overarching Disaster Planning Goals

- ☒ Establish authority for disaster planning
- ☐ Form Disaster Team & distribute responsibilities
- ☐ IP Purchase disaster response supplies/equipment
- ☐ Educate & train staff

### Disaster Plan Content

*Required components of a plan*

- ☐ IP Pocket Response Plan for Collections (PRoP)
- ☐ IP Immediate Emergency Response (Handout 2)
- ☐ IP Facilities: Locations of Emergency Systems (Handout 3) – key to building floor plans
- ☐ Disaster Response Team (Handout 4)
- ☐ IP Insurance Coverage (Handout 5)
- ☐ IP Salvage Priorities (Handout 8)

### Institutional Attachments

*Add as appropriate to support your plan*

- ☒ Staff emergency & evacuation procedures
- ☒ Building floor plans – key to Handout 3
- ☐ Risk assessment: location & facility
- ☐ Emergency event history
- ☐ IP Insurance policy or self-insurance plan
- ☐ IP Recovery services contract
- ☐ Locations/staff with the Disaster Plan – for updating
- ☐ Other:
- ☐ Other:

#### KEY

✓ – Task Complete  
IP – Task In Progress  
Date – Target initiation date

### • Disaster Planning Goals

- Establish authority
- Form a team
- Purchase supplies
- Educate & Train

### • Disaster Plan Content

- Pocket Plan
- Immediate Response
- Locations of Emergency Systems
- Insurance information
- Collections salvage priorities list

### • Institutional Attachments

- Emergency and evacuation procedures
- Floor Plans
- Risk Assessment contacts
- Contracts with recovery services

**Folsom Library Emergency Supplies Checklist**      Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Greg McNall or Tammy Gobert to order emergency supplies!!**

Item	Amount – size	Comments
Absorbent dry cleaning sponge	1 - 1.75 x 3.75 x 7"	Can be cut into small pieces
Aprons	25	
Bamboo Hake brushes	1 – 6 shafts each	
Binder clips	4 large, 4 medium	
Blotter Paper	25 – 30" x 40"	Map Case C, Dr. 17 – Archives Cage
Bucket with lid	1 – 5 gal.	
Caution tape	1 – 3" x 1000"	
Clothesline (nylon)	1 – 100'	
Clothespins (plastic)	24	
Extension cord (heavy duty)	1 – 50'	
Folding tables	2 – 30' x 72" x 29' H	Staff Lounge closet only
Freezer paper	1 roll	
Garbage can with lid	1 – 32 gal.	
Gloves (nitrile)	100	
Hardhat	1	
Labels (waterproof)	100	
Micro-spatula (stainless steel)	1	
Milk crate (plastic)	1 – 10.5 x 13.5 x 18.5"	
N95 respirator	15	
Newsprint paper (white)	24" x 35"	
Paper towels	600	
Pens (waterproof)	2	
Plastic sheeting (rolled) OR Plastic sheeting (folded)	1 – 10' x 100', 6 MIL Misc. sizes	
Rags (white cotton)	4 lbs.	
Scissors	1	
Sponge (easy grip)	1 – jumbo size	
Trash bags	10+ – 33 gal.	
Utility knife (retractable)	1	
Utility knife blades	3	

# Emergency Supplies



# Disaster Response and Recovery: A Hands-on Intensive (DHPSNY Workshop, 2017)



Practicing the Incident Command System and best practices for salvaging wet materials.

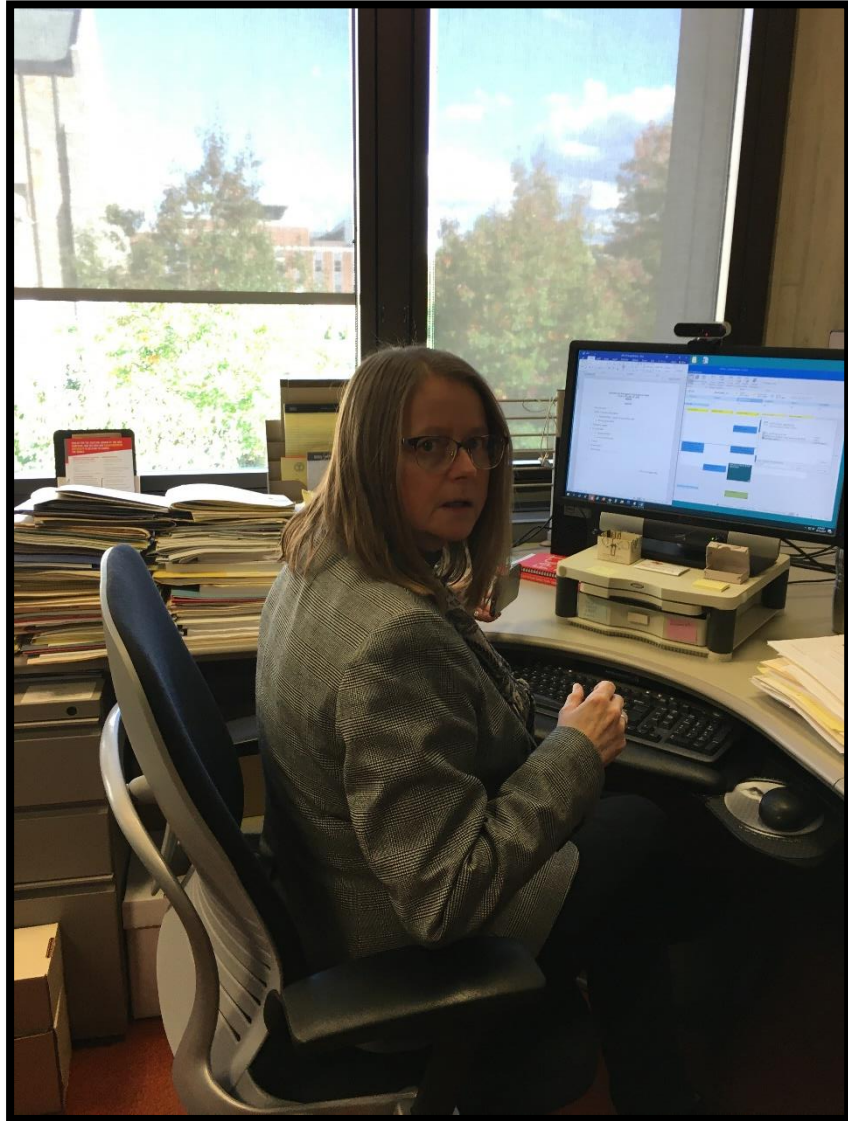
# Remaining Plans

- Finalize documents based on the AFR templates
- Establish a permanent disaster preparedness committee
- Make the plan accessible to the rest of the staff
- Organize and participate in additional staff training
- And set up a review process to regularly update the plan

# Competing Priorities

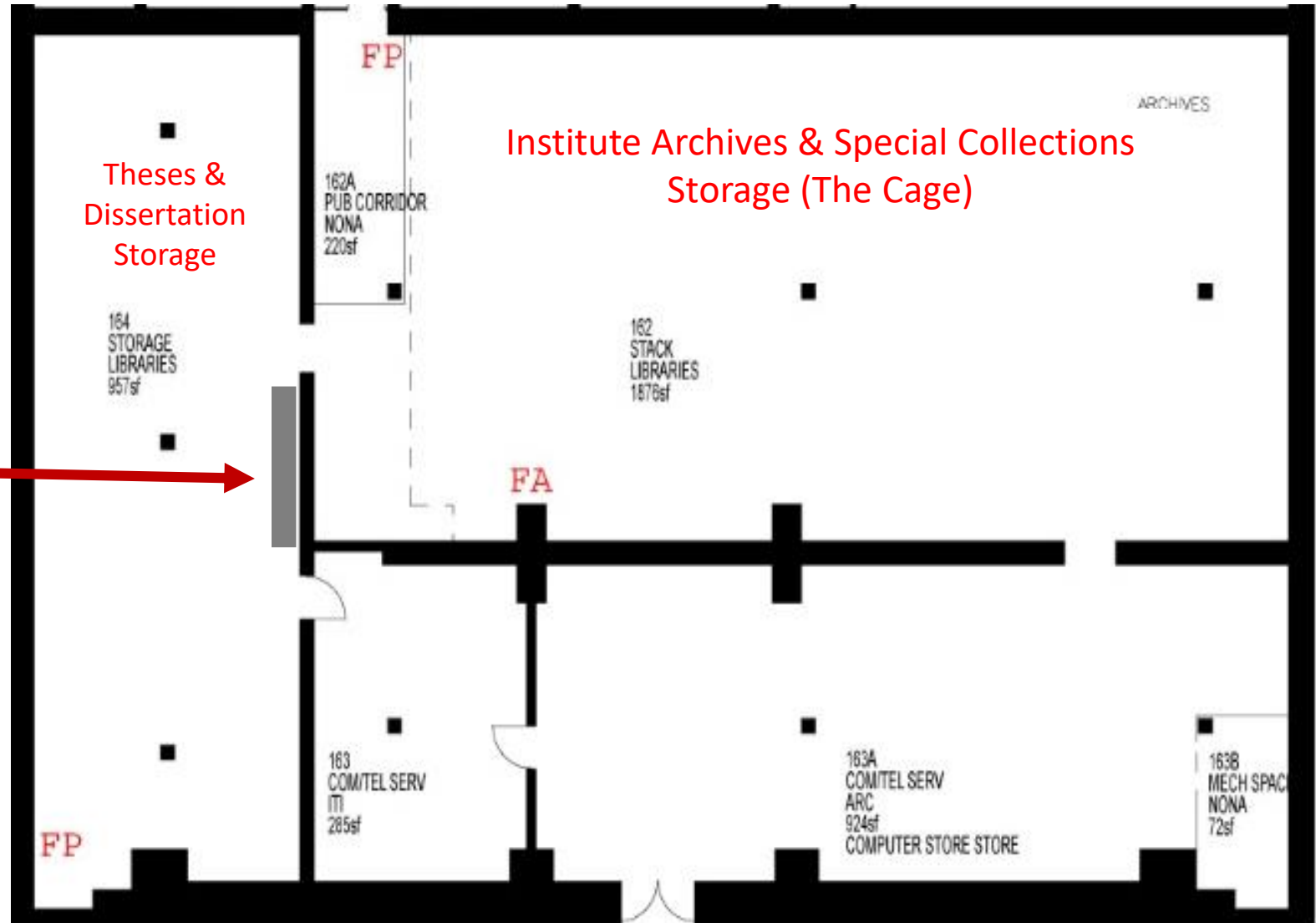


Friday, August 25, 2018 - 3:00 p.m.





Cracked pipe area above shelves



Theses & Dissertation Storage

Institute Archives & Special Collections Storage (The Cage)



Bound volumes on compact shelving after removal from affected shelving in storage area.



Mold growth on inside covers and spine of a thesis.



Additional mold found on volumes on the affected shelving in storage area.



Affected shelving area in thesis storage.

# Fun Facts About Mold...

[Mold: Prevention, Detection, and Response](#) - Gillian Marcus, Preservation Specialist, DHPSNY

- Mold disseminates large numbers of conidia which travel through air, land on surfaces and germinate
- Mold loves cultural heritage materials!
- Mold sensitivities can develop very suddenly and can be severe

## **NEDCC, 3.8 Emergency Salvage of Moldy Books and Paper**

- While it is actively growing and reproducing, mold excretes digestive enzymes that alter, weaken, and stain paper, cloth, or leather.
- Factors that will contribute to mold growth in the presence of moisture are high temperatures, stagnant air, and the location of storage.

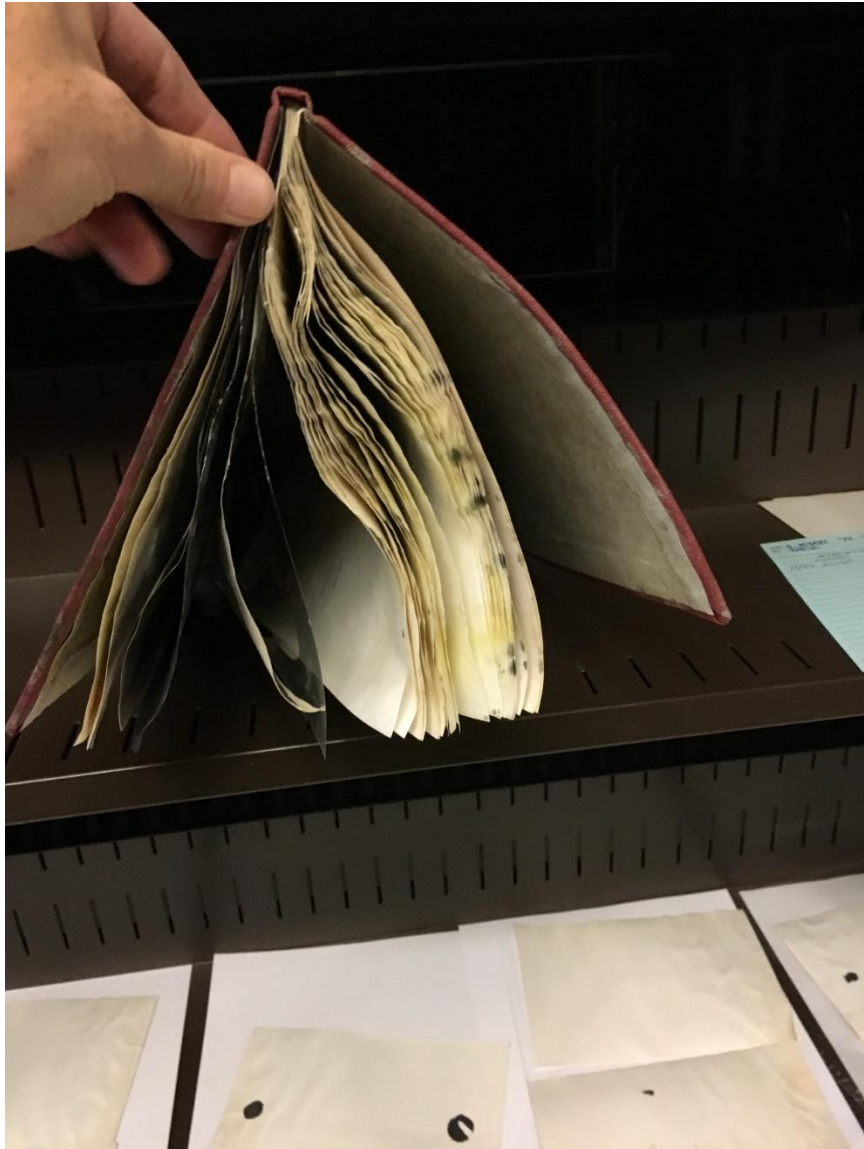




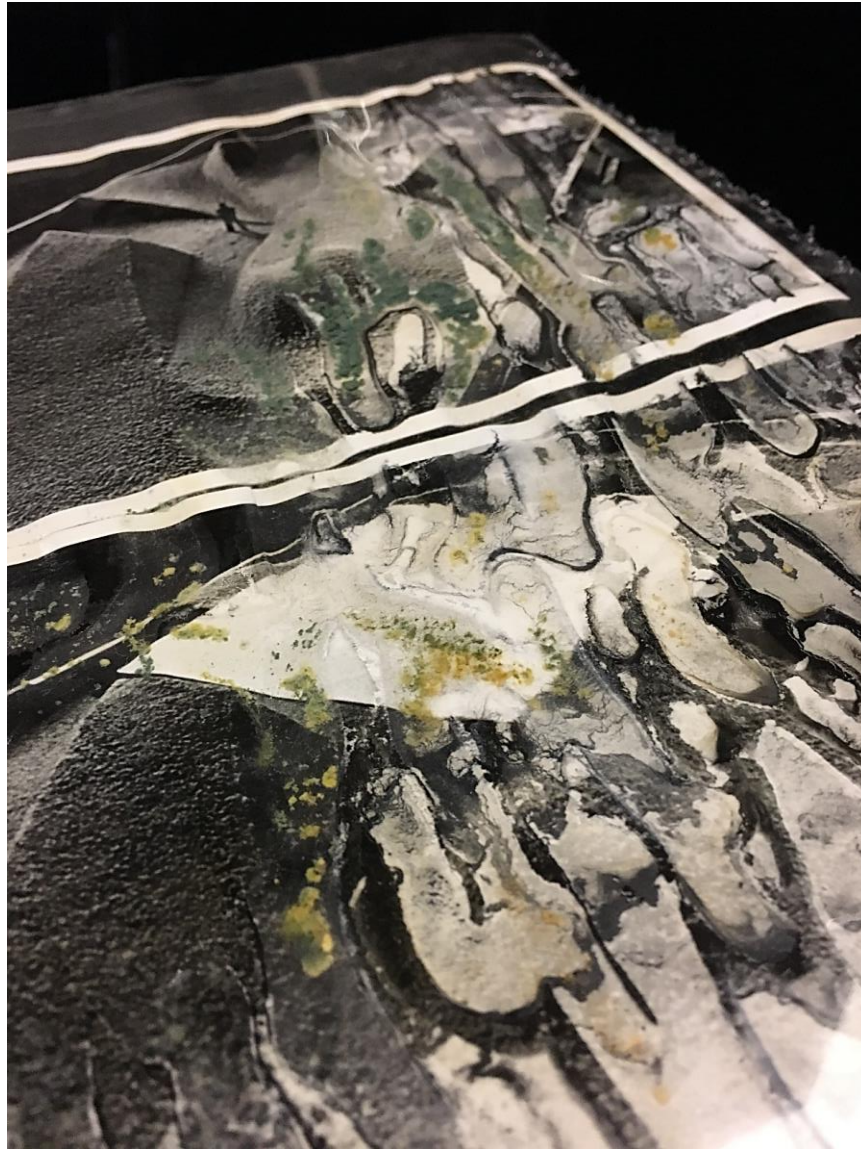
Colleagues from the New York State Archives assisting with discovery and assessment.



Shelving in affected area - bound volumes had been sitting in pools of water.



This photograph speaks for itself!



Mold growing under a plastic sleeve with a black & white photograph.



Photographs drying inside the plastic sleeves...sort of!



Volumes on compact shelving - fanning, drying, separating, and reassessing each volume in unique ways.





Volumes on the affected shelves - fuzzy white and dark colored mold on the undersides. These remained on shelving until a professional remediation contractor could handle them.



# Renewed Momentum

- Establish a formal committee – The Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Team (DEPTeam)
- Finalize an emergency and preparedness plan
- Identify salvage priorities
- Share information with our colleagues
- Create and distribute Pocket Response Plans (PReP)





# Remediation: Preparation

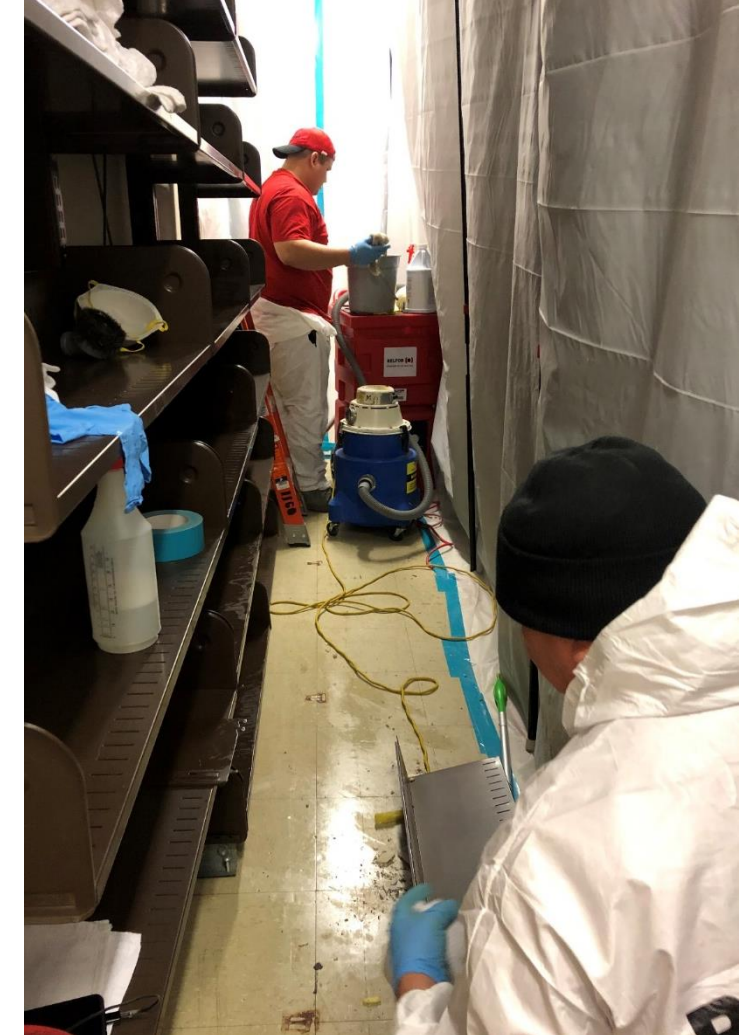
- Respiratory Protection Program training
- Research mold specialists
- Assessment and plan of work developed by an industrial hygienist
- Get bids for abatement
- Select a contractor and get approval from Procurement
- Coordinate with library & risk management staff
- Decide what to do with severely damaged items
- Schedule abatement



# Remediation: The Process



The containment chamber



Sanitizing within the chamber

# Remediation: The Process



Cleaning and sanitizing *every* surface



Post-remediation air quality testing unit used by the industrial hygienist



Testing within the airlock chamber

# Safety and Emergency Manual

Rensselaer Libraries

Revision schedule: Quarterly

Last edited on: October 1, 2019

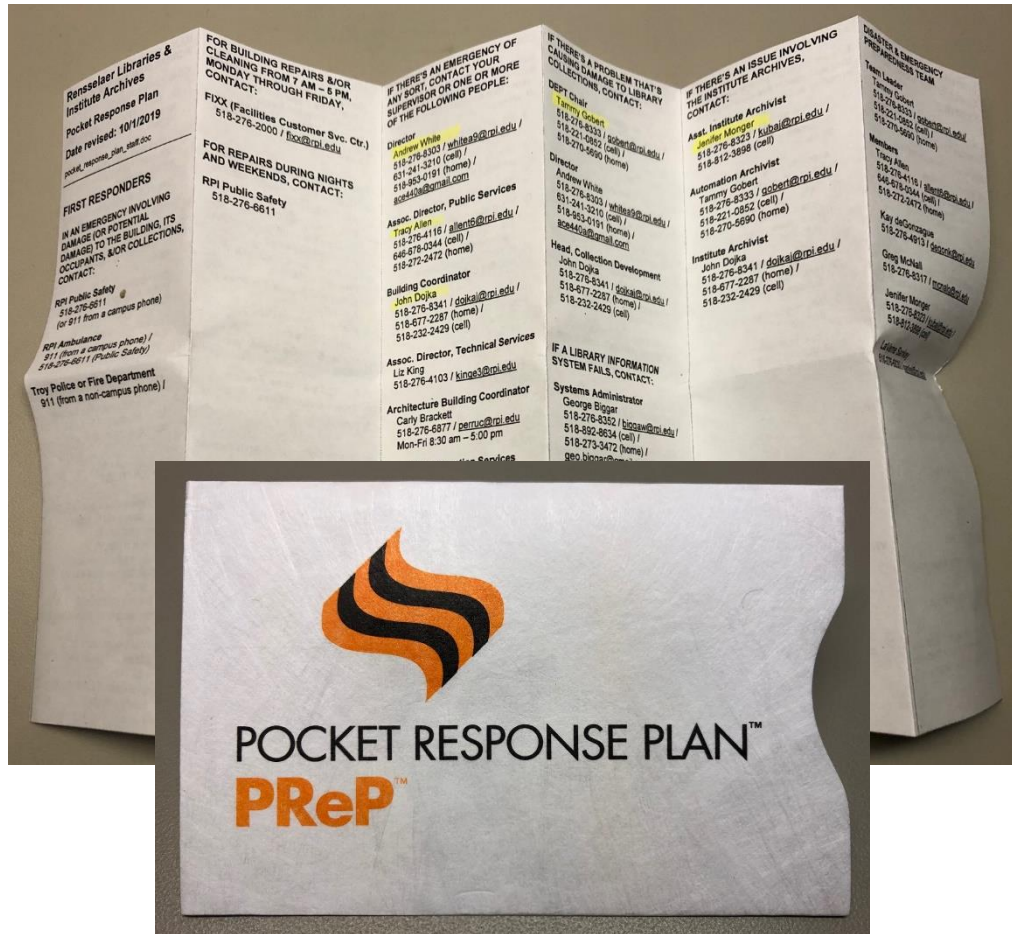
S&E\_Manual\_2019-10-01.docx

# Disaster Plan, 2019

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# Post-Remediation Follow-ups



# March 15, 2020: RPI Announced *Work From Home* Mandate

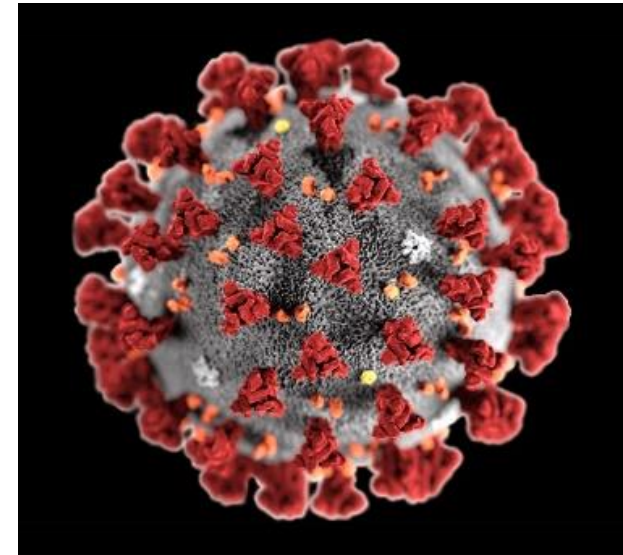
## Expanded Social Distancing: Working Remotely

MARCH 15, 2020

From: Curtis N. Powell, Vice President for Human Resources

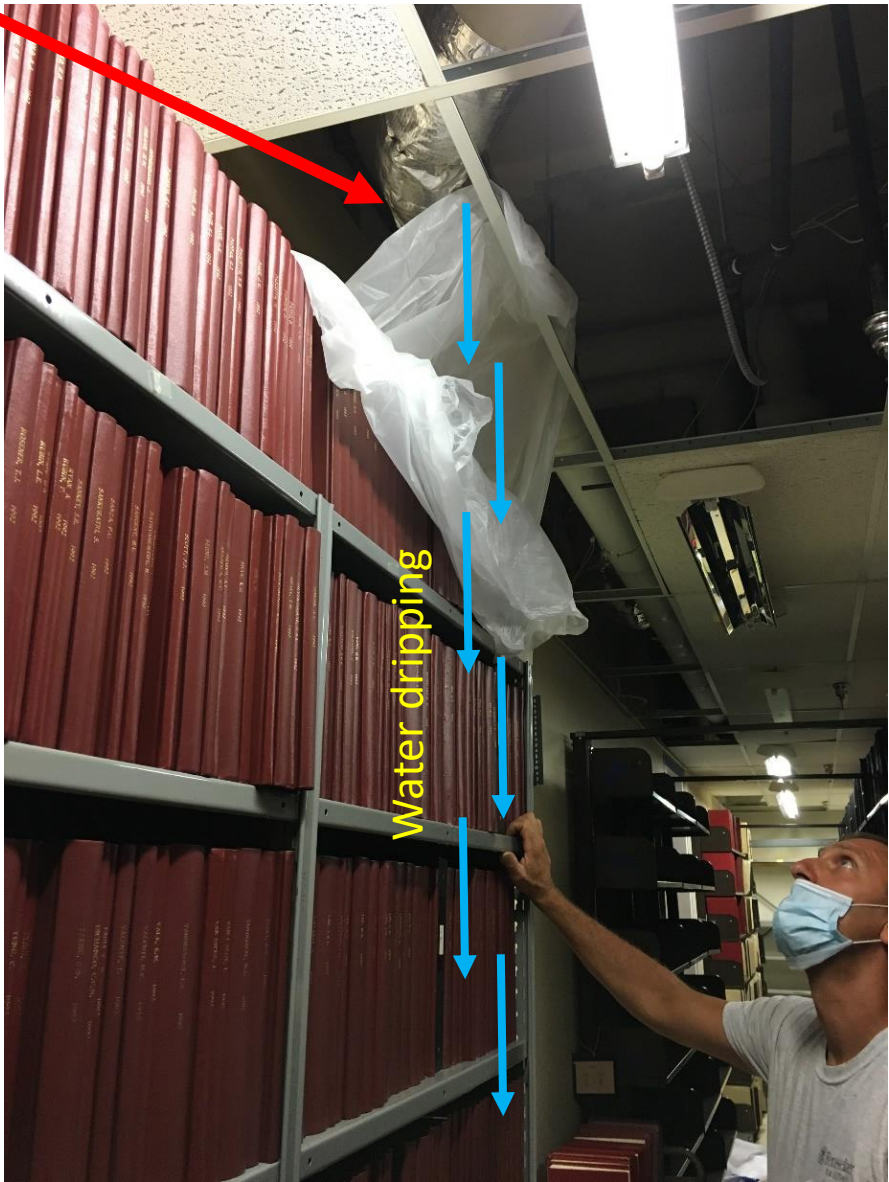
This past week, due to the growing public health crisis, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a pandemic; the President of the United States declared a national emergency; and the Governor of the State of New York declared a state of emergency.

Effective Wednesday, March 18 through Tuesday, March 31, only faculty and staff whose work is deemed “essential” to current operations will be expected to report to work on campus. Faculty and staff who have not been designated as “essential” are not required to report to campus. These individuals will work remotely, with the expectation of fulfilling all assigned duties and responsibilities, on their assigned work schedule. Portfolio leaders will inform faculty and staff members if they must report to campus, and will provide further information regarding work assignments.



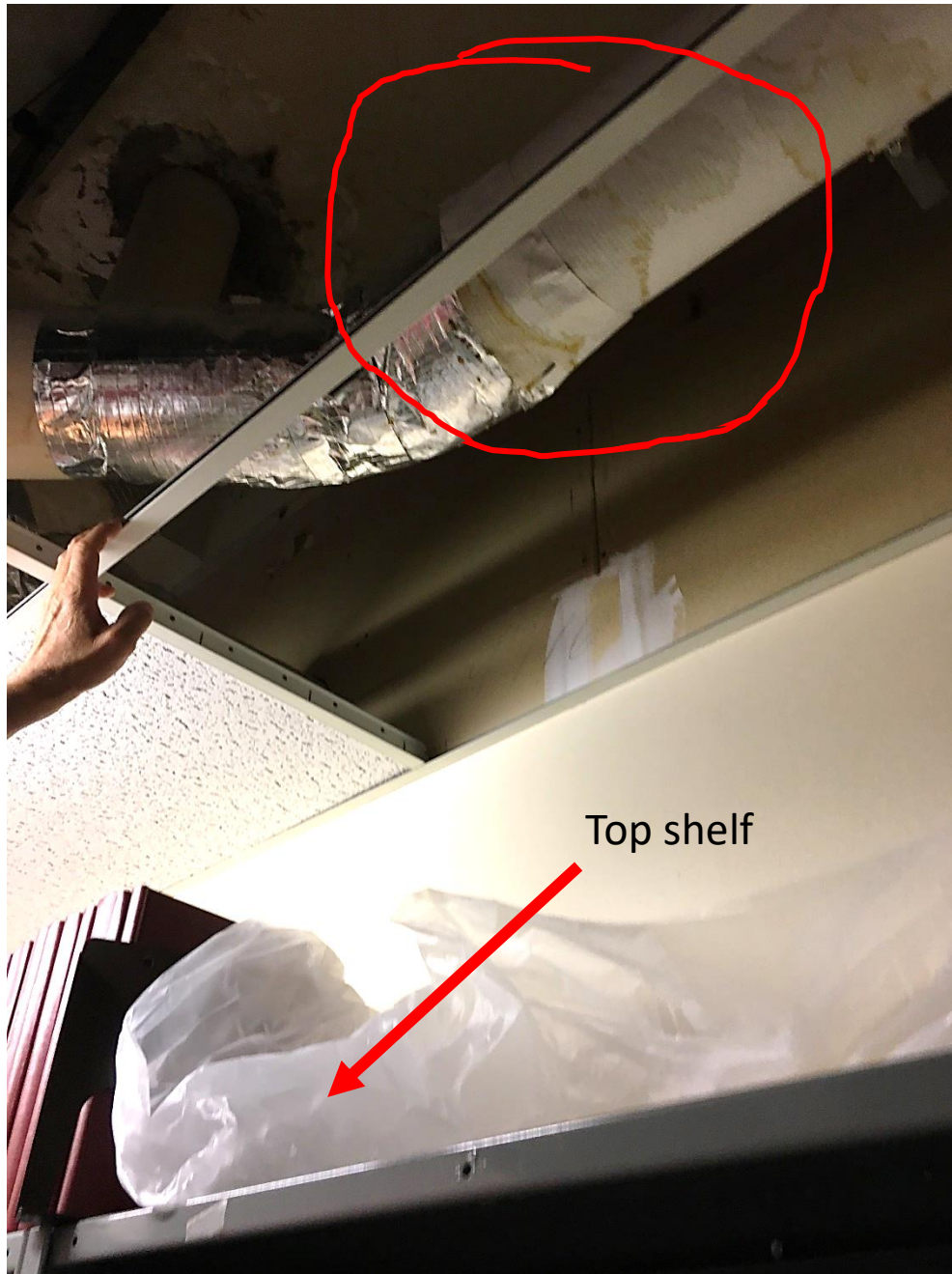
August 4<sup>th</sup> 2020, 8 a.m.

Water dripping from  
the elbow of the pipe



“the pipe”

Original  
affected area



**WET IS ONE THING! MOLD IS ANOTHER!**  
It takes only 24 hours for mold to germinate and grown spores if there is a high temperature in conjunction with high relative humidity.

Plastic covering  
the shelving unit  
across from the  
affected area

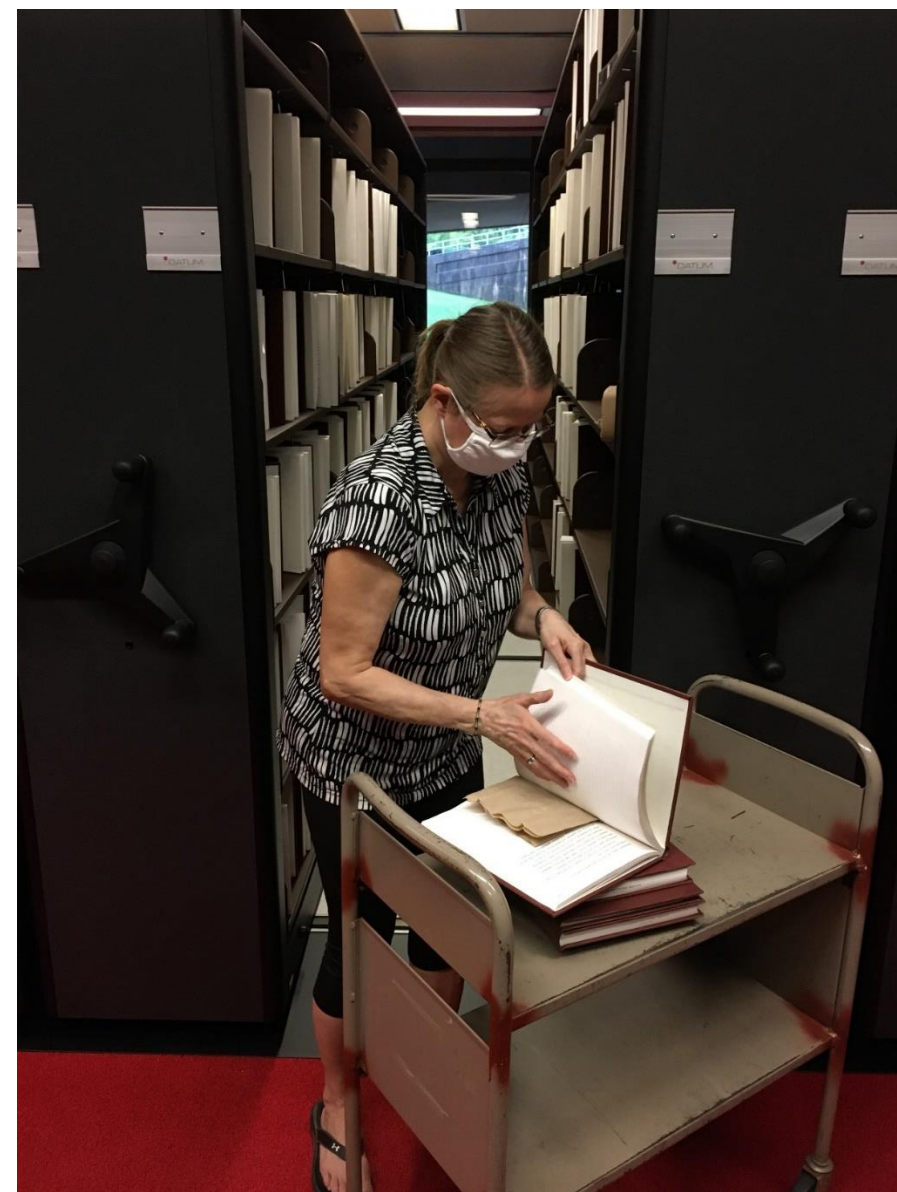


Homemade  
plastic funnel

Large trash container



Water found in the garbage  
can the next day – our  
funnel worked!



Drying, fanning, checking – during a pandemic



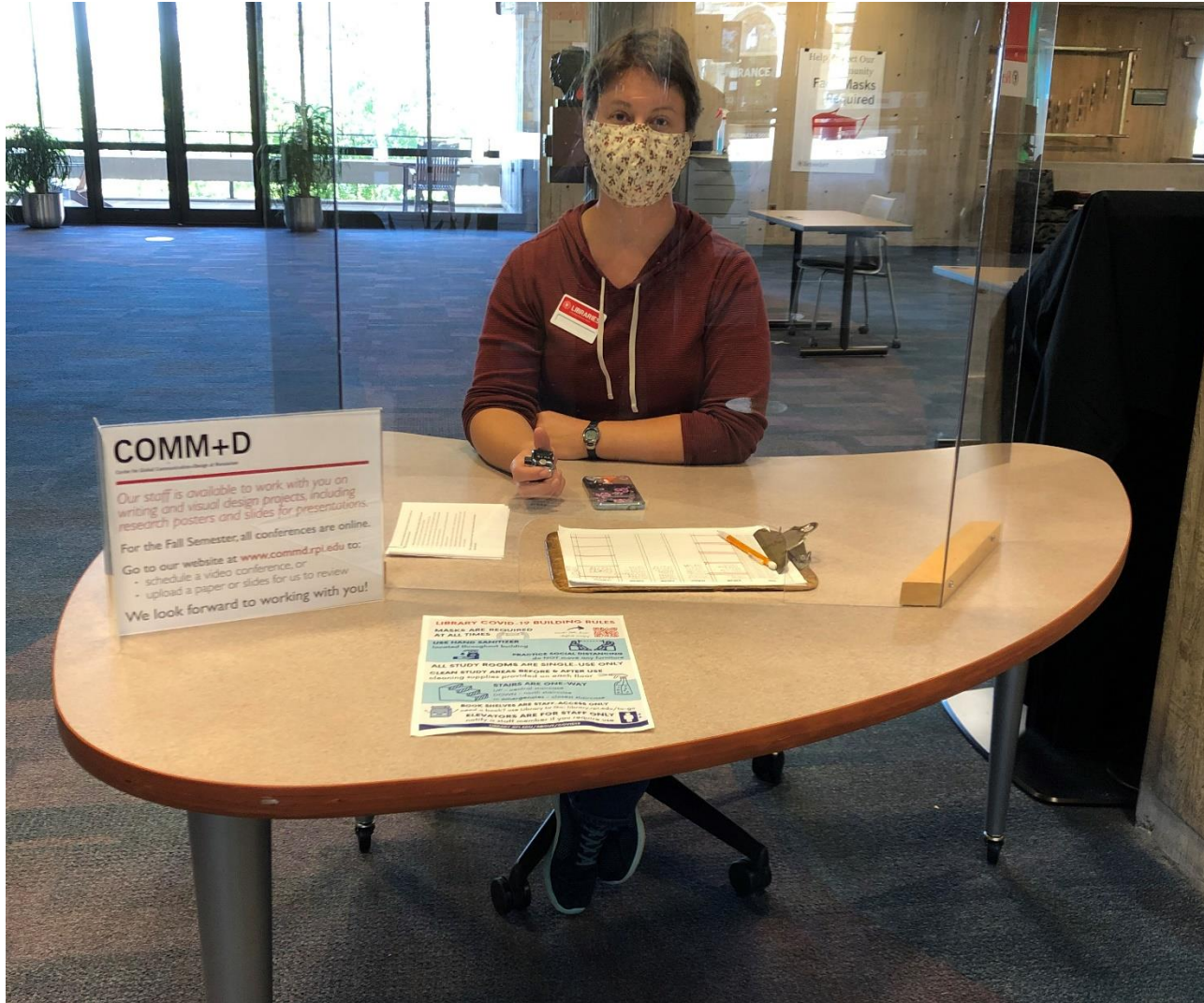
Institute archives and Special Collections storage area (aka cage) underneath the plaza.

# New Observations

- Oversights and omissions
- More clarification on steps and workflows
- Future discussions and refinement of plans
- Understanding that stressors (especially now) are an ongoing presence.



# Where We Are Now



Stop the spread of COVID-19!

## Wash Hands Often

with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.  
If not available, use hand sanitizer!

## Wear a Face Mask

at all times in public spaces and avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes to stop the spread of germs.

## Clean and Disinfect

frequently used surfaces.

## Cover Coughs and Sneezes

with a tissue and then dispose of the tissue and wash your hands.

## If you feel sick, stay home.

Contact your doctor or the Student Health Center  
if you think you have COVID-19.

# Take Aways!

- Safety
- Supplies
- Training
- Disaster team
- Communication
- Be aware of limitations
- Seek help
- Stay positive
- Have a written plan!



# Mold and Disaster Preparedness Resources

## **Alliance for Response (AFR)**

<https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/alliance-for-response>

## **Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA): Managing a Mold Infestation**

<https://ccaha.org/resources/managing-mold-infestation-guidelines-disaster-response>

## **Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services for New York (DHPSNY)**

<https://dhpsny.org/>

## **Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) Preservation Leaflets**

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/overview>

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/3.-emergency-management/3.8-emergency-salvage-of-moldy-books-and-paper>

## **NYS Program for the Conservation and Preservation of Library Research Materials**

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/cp/>



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