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Beyond the Project: Sustaining Community Partnerships

Jamie Rogers, Assistant Director of Digital Collections

Over the past 16 years, the Digital Collections Center has cultivated over 25 community partnerships, the majority of which have worked towards expanding the historical record through the digitization and dissemination of culturally and historically significant content. In a previous Humanities Edge Faculty Development Seminar, I discussed the concept of radical collaboration and the ways this approach can lead to more equitable and lasting community partnerships.

For this session, I would like to delve deeper into the topic of sustainability for university-community partnerships, providing examples for what sustainability may look like in different contexts. While it is important to recognize the tangible costs associated with sustaining collaborative relationships, it is also vital for universities to practice self-awareness of our role and how we are perceived within our local communities as we develop these partnerships.

This presentation will draw from the community partnership experiences of the Digital Collection Center, such as the development of a multi-project 15-year collaboration with the City of Coral Gables; our ongoing work to bring content from the Virginia Key Beach Park into primary school educational resources; as well as larger network building efforts for the State of Florida and the Digital Public Library of America.

I hope that this presentation will inspire the group to continue discussions of the broad implications of sustaining university-community partnerships, strategies for successfully continued relationships, and how we can best prepare our students for enduring, meaningful, and responsible community collaborations.