

## **The curation of university geology collections: an example from the Quartermain Earth Science Centre, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada**

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Like many universities, the University of New Brunswick (UNB) collections of geological specimens have been procured over the last 120 years. The fossils, rocks, and minerals are largely the result of research projects of both faculty and students with additional input from other donors and collectors. The Quartermain Earth Science Centre (QESC) was opened in 2011 to display the more unique specimens and to provide educational exhibits and structured programs for students and the public. One of the primary mandates of museums is collections care, which is challenging for many universities due to the lack of financial resources, adequate storage space, personnel, time, and dedication to make specimens accessible to the public.

In 2014, the Earth Sciences department at UNB received support to acquire a part-time curator to manage the QESC and the very large historic collections. Since then, space within the Earth Sciences department has been renewed into the museum storage and preparation room designed for sustainable care of natural specimens. Collections are being meticulously catalogued within a comprehensive searchable digital collections management database, capable of storing high-resolution images, supportive publications, and general day-to-day activities. The more exceptional specimens are displayed within the museum or in display cases around the Earth Sciences department, while other, less exotic specimens have been diverted towards outreach activities for visiting students. Although the QESC is managed on a small budget, the interactive programs and extensive collections are proving to be a growing essential resource for education, public outreach, youth employment, volunteer experience, and invaluable research. In the short time since its existence, the QESC at UNB has demonstrated the importance of, and need to preserve, such collections.