Mold in the Library’s Automated Retrieval Collection (ARC)

This fall, a number of people have asked me: "So, is the ARC all fixed now?" The short answer to that question is: "No, but we have no additional mold growth."

Back in March, we discovered mold growth on some older materials in the ARC, and it began to spread somewhat over the next several months. Physical Plant was working hard to get the temperature and humidity conditions in the ARC stabilized within ranges that would assure no additional mold growth, and they brought in temporary equipment to assist in the process. A design firm was hired to analyze the situation, and we now have their design plans for both equipment and construction that would be necessary to permanently stabilize the ARC.

The Physical Plant and the Provost explored possible funding for the project, and $1.7 million was approved by the Board of Regents at the December Board meeting for this endeavor. These upgrades, which will begin immediately, will provide the ARC with enhanced environmental control systems. The best case scenario at this point is to have the ARC fully restored by Fall 2013.

We are able to provide most materials that people request from the ARC. If someone requests an item that is found to have mold on it, the library assists them in getting the item through interlibrary loan. We have also done several small cleaning projects for heavily used or specially requested materials. So, if you have items you know you will need for the Winter semester, please let us know now, and we can include them in the next cleaning process.

We may need to make the ARC inaccessible during construction, equipment installation and/or remediation, and we will send out campus updates well in advance if that is necessary. Rest assured that Environmental Health & Safety continues to monitor the air to ensure that the mold levels remain low and isolated to the ARC area.