International Collaboration for the Creation of a Conservation MA Program in Peru

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As you can see from these images, Peru is a country with a great wealth of cultural heritage. However, much of Peru is hot and humid, leaving these materials more susceptible to damage from fluctuating temperature and relative humidity, mold, mildew, and insect activity. Despite this abundance of beautiful, yet fragile artwork, Peru has no graduate programs in conservation. Currently, conservators must learn through apprenticeships or go abroad for their training.

To solve this problem, the Museum of Art of Lima (MALI) and the University of Engineering and Technology (UTEC) have teamed up to create a master's program in Preventive Conservation. After years of research and planning, *preventive* conservation was chosen as the focus because it would best serve the needs of Peru's cultural heritage.

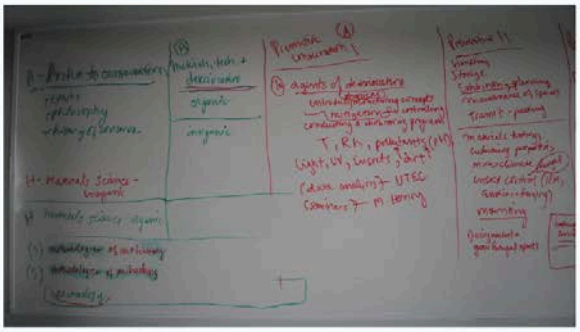
Finally, MALI and UTEC were ready to plan out the curriculum for this proposed program. Ellen Pearlstein, Leah Bright, and I, along with conservators, museum professionals, archaeologists, and engineers from museums, sites, and universities across Peru were all invited to Lima to participate in an intensive weeklong planning meeting.

Meeting Participants toured the conservation labs and storage areas of Museo de Arte de Lima (MALI), Pachacamac archaeological site and museum, and Museo Nacional Arqueología, Antropología e Historia (MNAAH) to better understand the preventive conservation needs and concerns of Peru's sites and museums.

Along with meetings, presentations, and discussions, participants also toured the museum galleries, conservation labs, and storage areas at MALI, the National Archaeological Museum, and the Pachacamac archaeological site and museum. We also toured the UTEC campus to see the classrooms, facilities, and equipment that would be available to the future students.

All of these activities helped us to better understand the preventive conservation needs and concerns of Peru's sites and museums and compare them with the resources available at MALI and UTEC.

The Curriculum



The final agreed-upon curriculum written out on a white board in an UTEC classroom.

Semester 1:
- Conservation Principles & Ethics
- Documentation & Imaging
- Preventive Conservation I
- Introduction to Art History & Material Culture
- Materials Characterization: Organic Materials

Semester 2:
- Materials Characterization: Inorganic Materials
- Technology & Deterioration of Inorganic Materials
- Technology & Deterioration of Organic Materials
- Preventive Conservation II
- Research Methods

Semester 3:
- Collections Care
- Instrumental Analysis
- Preventive Conservation III
- Research Methods (MA Thesis Preparation)
- Art History/Archaeology Elective

Semester 4:
- Project and Site Management
- Preventive Conservation IV
- MA Thesis Preparation

With all of the information and experience we had gathered throughout the week, we were finally able to plan out and finalize the curriculum for this new master's program. Because the program specializes in *preventive* conservation, there are no treatment classes. Rather the focus is on collections care and management, documentation, and understanding materials and their deterioration mechanisms.

This program also aims to attract students of diverse backgrounds, from art, history, archaeology, AND science. Rather than having prerequisite courses and work experience, as is required for North American conservation programs, this MA program will gather students together in the summer before their official coursework begins. Science majors will take a general art history/archaeology course, and humanities students will study chemistry fundamentals. This will ensure that all students have the background information needed when they begin their first semester of coursework.

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