

# ACADEMIC VISIT IMD313

## EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE TO SARAWAK STATE RECORDS REPOSITORY

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The academic visit by Diploma in Information Management (IM110) students to the Sarawak State Records Repository on June 13, 2024, aims to expose Part 5 students to the processes involved in records management, the technologies used in managing records, and the preservation and conservation of records.

This visit involved 22 Semester 5 students from the Diploma in Information Management (IM110), accompanied by Ms. Suhaida Halamy, our lecturer for the subject Foundation of Archives (IMD313). The objectives of the visit were to fulfill the subject requirements, enhance students' theoretical knowledge, and provide them with valuable hands-on experience in records management at the Sarawak State Records Repository.

The journey from UiTM Samarahan Campus to the Sarawak State Records Repository took about 40 minutes. We departed at 1:00 PM and arrived precisely at 1:40 PM. Upon our arrival, all students, including myself, were required to sign the logbook provided outside the entrance. Additionally, we were required to wear visitor passes offered on the table before entering the Sarawak State Records Repository.

As we approached the Sarawak State Records Repository, a sense of awe and anticipation enveloped us. The surroundings were truly breathtaking, heightening our excitement. All 22 students, me included, could hardly contain our enthusiasm as we neared the entrance. Lively discussions and eager anticipation had marked the journey. Now, standing at the threshold of the repository, we were united in a sense of wonder and eagerness for this academic adventure.

Upon entering the Sarawak State Records Repository, we were asked to wait in a holding area as the clock approached 2:00 pm. After a brief wait, our arrival host, Mr. Khadzrie, a librarian in the Archives Management Division, provided a short briefing about the repository. A video presentation was also presented to the students before our tour began, giving the students, including myself, a glimpse into the safety measures.



Students from the Foundation of Archive course with Ms. Suhaida Halamy and representatives of the Sarawak State Records Repository at the entrance

After the video presentation of safety measures ended, we were also greeted by Ms. Ayu, a staff member of the Archives Management Division. She introduced herself to all of us before guiding the students on the tour to our next destination. Accompanied by both Mr. Khadzrie and Ms. Ayu, we were then escorted to our first stop, the file processing room on the second floor.

## ONE WEEK ONE STORY

The atmosphere within the file processing room was enveloped in a serene silence, as there were no staff members present at the time. Despite the tranquility, the students' excitement was palpable as we reached our initial destination. The room exuded an air of meticulous order and pristine cleanliness. Every piece of essential equipment was arranged with exquisite precision, reflecting the high standards maintained within the repository. The students, enchanted by the immaculate setting and the significance of the room, eagerly captured the moment. They joyfully took photographs and recorded videos, ensuring that every corner of this meticulously organized space was documented.

Next, we were taken to the bustling working area within the preservation room. Here, we observed several staff members meticulously cleaning and addressing minor damages on records before carefully sorting them into boxes. The students were immediately captivated by the various preservation tools they had never seen before, such as bone folders, static brushes, filmoplast, and many more.



*Students are listening to a briefing on the processes of conservation and preservation*

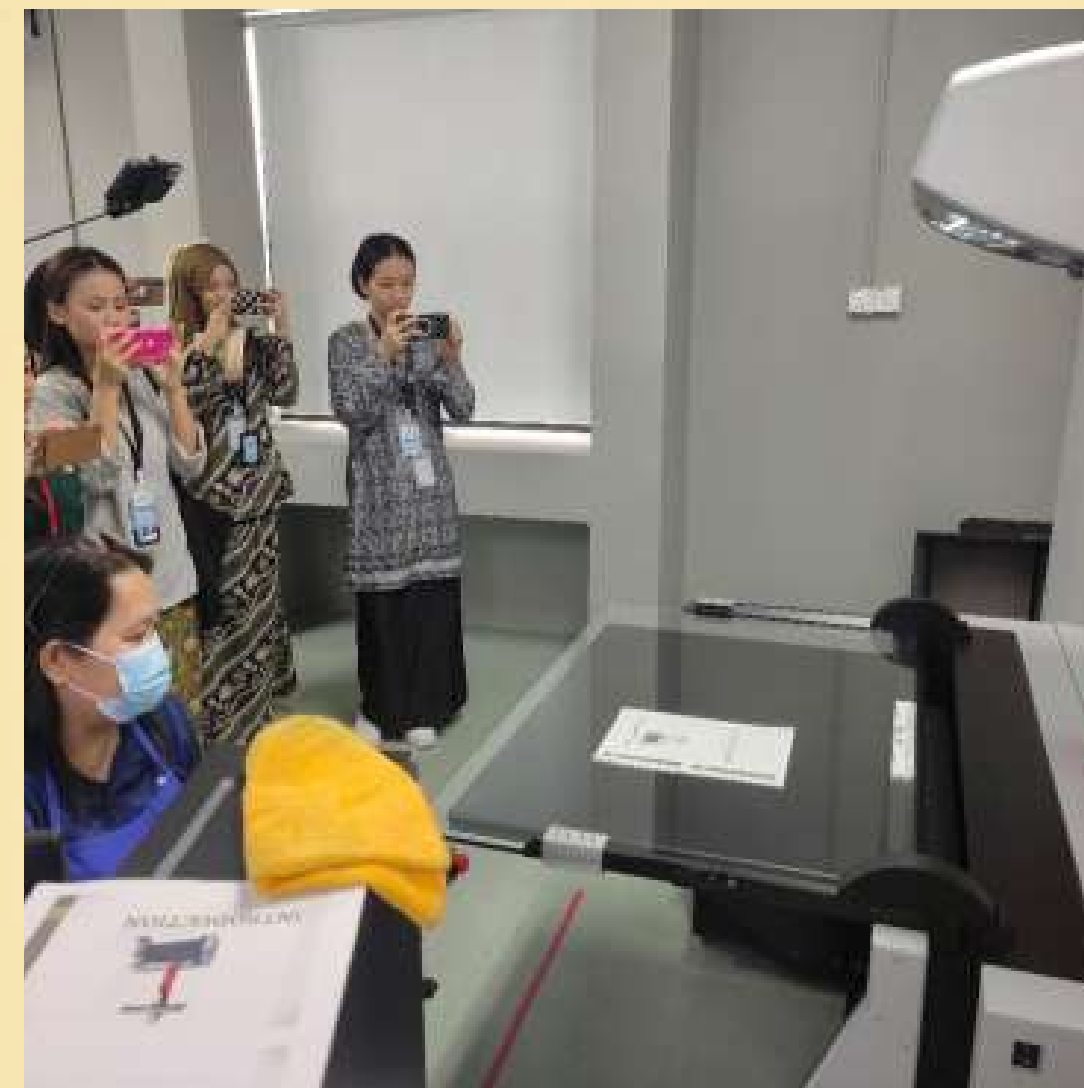
Their endless curiosity led them to ask the archives staff a barrage of questions. The staff, exhibiting great patience and friendliness, responded to the students' inquiries with detailed explanations. The atmosphere was one of intense interest and learning, with the students eager to absorb as much knowledge as possible about the preservation processes and the tools used. The interaction was not only informative but also fostered a deeper appreciation for the meticulous work involved in preserving invaluable records.

Our journey then continued to the digitization area, where Mrs. Rina welcomed the students. She demonstrated various machines used for record copying, including a large photocopier and the microfilm process. However, the most thrilling part was entering the darkroom to witness the process of manual photographic development.

After that, with great interest, we proceeded to the conservation area, also known as the "Conservation Lab." Here, we were greeted by Mr. Herrie, one of the skilled staff members in the conservation lab. He meticulously demonstrated the 14 conservation steps to the students, showcasing each one with precision and care. Among the most memorable conservation methods he presented were deacidification and encapsulation, leaving a lasting impression on the students.

The adventure continued as we ventured into the fumigation room. Here, we witnessed a fogging machine in action, used for sanitation, insect control, and odor removal by applying chemicals in a fine mist. The students learned that the Sarawak State Records Repository utilizes two types of fogging machines: an in-house fogging machine and a mobile fogging machine. Our next destination was the cutting board room, where the students observed a particular machine designed to cut acidic boxes with precision. Mr. Herrie demonstrated the simple, yet precise set of instructions required for the cutter to shape the boxes perfectly, leaving the students in awe and amazement.

After that, with a sense of excitement and anticipation, the students were taken to the repository area, a vast space where records and archives are securely kept. The records are housed in various setups, including large compactors, open shelves, and drawers. Here, the students were informed about the types of records that are preserved, the precise methods for retrieving records by referring to the ARMS system, and the suitable temperature and humidity conditions for keeping different types of records. With excitement bubbling,



the students eagerly took numerous photographs, especially when they encountered the enormous compactors with their impressive handles for the first time. The sight of these massive storage units, efficiently housing countless records, was both awe-inspiring and fascinating for everyone.

The visit concluded with a tour of the reference area, where the students gained valuable knowledge about using reference materials and the borrowing process. They were introduced to both digital and physical finding aids, which are designed to help them effectively navigate and access the extensive archive materials.

At the end of the session, the organization graciously treated the students to a delightful feast. After enjoying the meal, we gathered for a group photo to capture the cherished memories of the day. As the clock neared 5 p.m., our van arrived, signaling the end of our visit and compelling us to say goodbye to the beautiful experiences we had accumulated. We departed with heavy hearts despite the fatigue clearly etched on the faces of each student. However, the invaluable knowledge and experiences we gained that day far surpassed any weariness. Some students, still brimming with energy, engaged in jokes and shared their experiences with the van driver during the journey back. The camaraderie and shared enthusiasm made the ride home lively and memorable.

Filled with deep gratitude, the students reflected on the wealth of knowledge and experiences they had gained during the visit. The insights they gathered will undoubtedly enhance their academic pursuits and future careers in information management. Their firsthand exposure to advanced archival practices, preservation techniques, and digitization processes has equipped them with practical skills and a more profound understanding of their field.

Sincere appreciation was extended to the Sarawak State Records Repository for their warm hospitality and unwavering support throughout the visit. I sincerely hope that the Sarawak State Records Repository will continue to be open and welcoming to our students from UiTM Sarawak in the future. Thank you for providing exceptional service to our students and tirelessly answering their questions.