

Abstract

This investigative work analyzes the documentation related to the history of universities, highlighting the reason for the existence of objects, specimens and instruments in teaching and research methods. It is divided in two parts. In the first place, the issues which have lead many collections to a state of abandonment and the proposals which have been generated to mitigate the situation are presented. In the second place, a study about the particular case of the *Museo de Farmacia y Plantas Medicinales* of the University of Puerto Rico is performed. A diagnosis of all of its structure is developed, followed by the implementation of current museological strategies, to measure its effectiveness in the university environment. This corroborates that the established museological plan remained marginal to the institutional mission for decades, provoking incomprehension and lack of interest in the university community. Inclusive strategies are used to correct this, acknowledging the museum as a curricular tool to foster active participation of students, faculty and employees. It is concluded that the university museum should be recognized as an instrumental component where teaching, research and social commitment are priorities for the generation of significant experiences through its heritage and in that way justify its place within the university institution.

Key words: university museums, university collections, participatory museum, and heritage interpretation.