

Below are some of the questions which influenced the content and pedagogy of the course:

Cultural values of heritage and conservation – If the need for authenticity, identity and care of cultural heritage is universal, the ways in which these concepts are defined and applied vary according to time and context. How are professionals prepared so that they consider and relate to these variations when they make decisions in conservation?

Concept of heritage – The seminar considered the ever-widening notion of heritage. It is interesting to note that, at the time, the UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of intangible heritage had not yet come into existence (2003), and that we would have to wait another decade before witnessing the development of research to examine connections between conservation of cultural and natural heritage. The question was and remains: As the notion of heritage expands, with an increasing number of actors in the conservation field, how can we accommodate the variety of opinions and needs in our decision processes?

Societal role of heritage and conservation – During the seminar, different ideas were discussed around this theme, but of direct relevance were the notions of accountability and transparency. In particular, how do we fulfil our responsibility to document conservation decisions, and also the underlying considerations and reasons which influence them?

The notion of plurality – Much of the debates evolved around the idea that recognizing and respecting plurality of disciplines, cultures and contexts is crucial to good decision-making and to the development of common methodologies and frameworks. How can we explore and nurture this notion in conservation education and in practice?

The Sharing Conservation Science course of 2001

A strong critique of the field that emerged during the seminar in 2000 was that conservation science had pursued a separate path, focusing on materials, new analytic techniques, and new equipment, rather than informing conservation decisions. As the interest in scientific and technical issues had grown, questions of values, significance and use had been somewhat overshadowed. Building upon these reflections, the first interdisciplinary course was called Sharing Conservation Science. It focused on exploring ways of reconciling science and conservation. The teaching team was rigorously multidisciplinary. The course was designed to put scientific research and analysis in perspective with cultural values of heritage and conservation. In particular we built each of the four weeks of the course around the relationship and differences between (i) material identification and the concept of authenticity; (ii) research on deterioration rates and the meaning of