NASULGC's 110th annual meeting examines library concerns

Copyright, scholarly publishing, and technology discussed

By Jill B. Fatzer

The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) held its 110th annual meeting in Washington, D.C. on November 16–18, in the wake of a Congress that had just adjourned leaving a number of important higher-education measures unsettled. Not surprisingly, legislative issues dominated many of the 52 programs and numerous business meetings attended by some 1,200 participants.

NASULGC's infrastructure more or less parallels the structure of academic institutions with Councils for Academic Affairs, for Student Affairs, for Continuing Education, and the like; and Commissions on International Affairs, on Human Resources, etc. Librarians find their interests reflected in the Commission on Information Technologies (CIT), which is further subdivided into Boards on Distance Education, on Technology Infrastructure, and on Library Resources and Services. The CIT offered programs titled, "Intellectual Property Issues: Copyright Protection, Fair Use Guidelines, and Database Protection" and "New Alliances in Higher Education and Information Technology," plus a dinner featuring "Congress and Telecommunications: A Senator's [Sen. Conrad Burns, R-Montana] Perspective," which was quite illuminating.

Legislation updates

The program on intellectual property issues provided updates on the various conflicting pieces of legislation vying to redefine rights and responsibilities regarding digital information. The breaking news was a bill by Reps. Boucher and Campbell that goes farther than the Ashcroft amendments in guaranteeing fair uses of information in electronic form.

In contrast, grave concern was expressed about HR 2652, which provides new copyright protections to "compiled information," with absolutely no fair use provisions. One speaker feared that as defined in this bill, "compiled information" could include not just data sets, but any text from "a dictionary to the Bible." This session also included a presentation of Mary Case of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) of SPARC: The Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition, the proposed mission of which reads "SPARC is conceived as a partnership of the Association of Research Libraries and other educational and research organizations . . . to create a more competitive marketplace for research information by providing opportunities for new publishing ventures; . . . to promote academic values of access to information for research and teaching; . . . to encourage innovative uses of technology to

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improve scholarly communication by collaborating in the design and testing of new products; . . . and developing systems and standards for the archiving and management of research findings." Basically, SPARC seeks to initiate and foster alternatives to the current pattern of scholarly journal publication by innovative utilization of new technologies by those who originate the material: authors in colleges and universities.

Technology issues

The program on New Alliances was about the background, progress, and prospects of the initiative to create "Internet 2." While it was anticipated that some 40 or so institutions would participate in this venture (and thereby provide its startup capital), some 116 members have signed up, including some consortiums representing several universities. The University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development (UCAID) has been incorporated and Douglas van Houweling (formerly CIO at the University of Michigan) hired as its chief executive officer. While the level of interest and corporate progress has been heady, the audience was cautioned that a lot of hard, technological work lay ahead before successful implementation could be guaranteed.

Many other NASULGC entities are involving themselves in technology issues, with the Council on Academic Affairs doing a program entitled "Using Technologies to Create New Communities of Learning," while the Commission on Human Resources and Social Change presented sessions titled "The Changing Role of Faculty in the Age of Technology" and "The New Knowledge Professor."

Speaking with one voice

The business meetings of the CIT and its three boards featured the release and distribution of the pamphlet *Higher Education Policies for the Digital Age*. This publication is the first fruit of Commission on Information Technology's chair (and President of Penn State) Graham B. Spanier's efforts to position NASULGC as a leading organization on information technologies to assure that higher education speaks with one voice on issues of importance to us all. The pamphlet was generated by brainstorming among representatives of some 15 relevant associations (in-

cluding ACRL), followed by consensus building on five key areas: intellectual property, free speech and inquiry, advanced communications, telecommunications policy and regulation, and distributed education. Final drafting was done by a small group that included librarians, and library issues are prominent throughout the document. Though published by NASULGC, it is issued by The Higher Education Alliance for Information Technology, made up of all the presidentially driven associations of higher education and endorsed by nine participating associations, including ACRL. The legislative liaisons of all participating organizations and institutions will be provided with copies, so that "speaking with one voice" may be more readily facilitated.
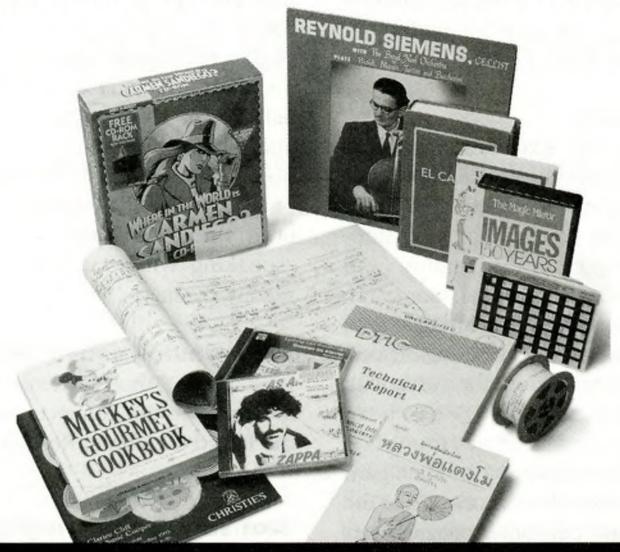
A continuing conversation

Perhaps the most interesting facet of the meeting was the connections made between the Board on Library Resources and Services

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and the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA). CAA is made up of the chief academic officers of the member institutions, and includes committees relating to the spheres of interest of the various commissions. While the CAA Committee on Libraries and Information Technology had over the years lost contact with the Board, its current chair, Marlene Strathe (provost at the University of North Dakota) responded to the invitation issued by Board Chair Elaine Albright (Library Director at the University of Maine) to meet with the librarians. During the course of the discussion, she invited the librarians in attendance to meet with her committee later in the conference. In a room reminiscent of the ALA Conference's dreaded "meeting table" room, some half-dozen librarians met with a like number of provosts, plus representatives of the ARL and the Association of

Section 2. Board of Directors. Mail or electronic votes of the Board of Directors may be taken provided they are authorized by the officers of the Association and all voting Board members are canvassed simultaneously. An affirmative vote of a simple majority of the voting Board members shall be required to pass a motion. On each mail or electronic vote, each voting Board member shall have the option of voting for or against the motion, to abstain, or to hold for discussion at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Time limits shall be the same as stated above in Section 1 of this article. Actions shall be confirmed at the next regular meeting of the Board.

Section 3. Committees. Mail or electronic votes of duly constituted committees may be taken by the chair of such committees. An affirmative vote of a simple majority of the committee members shall be required to pass the motion. Voting option and time limits shall be the same as stated above in Section 2 of this article.

Section XXI: Parliamentary authority

The parliamentary authority used by this Association shall be the same as that used by the American Library Association.

Article XXII: Amendment of bylaws

Section 1. Proposals. Amendments to the bylaws may be proposed by the Board of Directors; by any standing committee of the Association in writing to the Board of Directors; or by a petition signed by 25 or more members of the Association.

Section 2. Board action. A proposed amendment to the bylaws shall be voted upon by Association members after it has been approved by a majority of the Board members present and voting at two consecutive meetings held not less than two months apart.

Section 3. Notice. Written notice of the text of the amendment shall be provided to members at least one month before consideration.

Section 4. Voting. Amendments may be voted upon by members either by mail ballot or at a public membership meeting.

   a) If by mail ballot, the bylaws amendment is accepted if a majority of those members participating vote in favor of the amendment.

   b) If at a public membership meeting, the bylaws amendment is accepted if a majority vote of the members, present and voting, vote in favor of the amendment.

Section 5. Adoption. If not otherwise specified, a proposed amendment becomes effective as soon as it has been approved as described above. ■

American Universities. The upshot of the stimulating, wide-ranging conversation was twofold. First, it became clear that at least some provosts now realize that many "library" issues, such as the spiraling cost of serials or the licensing difficulties of digital information, are really systemic issues for the whole academy to grapple with. The second result was an invitation for librarian participation in a half-day program at the Council on Academic Affairs' summer meeting, and consequent opportunity to bring these matters to the attention of many more of the member chief academic officers.

There will also be a separate summer meeting of the Commission on Information Technology in conjunction with the Commissions on Outreach and Technology Transfer and on Extension, Continuing Education, and Public Service on the theme: "Cyberpartners: Will It Change the Way We Collaborate?" It will be held June 3–5 at the Chicago Hilton and Towers. While only 15 or so librarians participated in the NASULGC Annual Meeting, it is hoped that more will attend and form a visible presence at this summer program.

NASULGC is comprised of some 180 land-grant and public colleges and universities, all of whose librarians fall under that membership eligibility. It is an influential organization whose attention is increasingly riveted on all the issues of importance, both to individual libraries and to ACRL. More participation by librarians can only benefit us all. ■

hand. Catalog records that routinely include subject access will enable our users to exploit the full promise of automated systems and the MARC format, at the very moment when on-site browsing takes a back seat to remote access and the associated reliance on online records. Measures to track more precisely interlibrary loan traffic will open the way both to new strategies for cooperative collection development and to the creation of a shared, cost-effective "digital library."

Note

1. My colleague Barbara Halporn introduced me to this happy phrase. ■