News from the University Libraries Section

A wrap-up of activities at Midwinter

As you will see from the following report, the University Libraries Section had a very successful ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia. Our membership committee met for the first time and already has exciting plans for attracting new members and engaging our current members in ULS activities. Our program for the ALA Annual Conference in Toronto promises to be great fun, and I hope that all of you will be able to join us as we engage in "The Great Debate."

The Executive Committee met with Ray English (Oberlin College), chair of the ACRL Scholarly Communication Committee, and Susan K. Martin, ACRL's visiting program officer for scholarly communication, to discuss ACRL's initiatives in scholarly communication. This was a lively discussion as we talked about the issues of control of the system; educating faculty, librarians, and administrators on the issues; building coalitions; and documenting the effect of the scholarly communication process on all academic libraries. The committee will be developing many methods to help all of us in talking about these issues on our campuses.

The ULS Web site will be changing as ALA migrates to a new template and software. Thanks to John Lehner and Doug Lehman for attending the training sessions and undertaking the important task of migrating our site to the new system. The ULS Web site is a wonderful way to find out about ULS and our activities.

The Standards for University Libraries revision has gone to the ACRL Academic Library Standards Task Force, which has representa-

tives from ULS, College Libraries Section, and Community and Junior College Libraries Section. The draft guidelines will be published in a forthcoming issue of *C&RL News*, and hearings are being planned for Toronto. Our thanks to Lori Goetsch (University of Maryland) for leading this effort on our behalf.

Please do not hesitate to send me your ideas, thoughts, and comments. I hope to see you in Charlotte.—*Louise S. Sherby, Hunter College/ CUNY, Louise.Sherby@hunter.cuny.edu*

Executive Committee

The ULS Executive Committee met twice during the ALA Midwinter Meeting, addressing several ongoing activities and some new concerns. The first meeting included a conversation about ACRL's scholarly communication initiative.

Susan K. Martin and Ray English engaged the Executive Committee in a discussion of scholarly communication issues. The group discussed the need to forge alliances beyond the libraries, and English noted that sometimes, "faculty voices carry further than library voices." Martin described ACRL's activities in the scholarly communication area and solicited input from ULS about the section's perspective on these issues.

Rita Jones, ACRL's liaison to ULS, provided an update of ACRL Board activities. The Executive Committee responded happily to the report that the ACRL Board was considering increased section and program funding. Jones also noted that ACRL is continuing to work on guidelines for virtual meetings, in furtherance of the virtual membership movement.

The Executive Committee's second meeting focused on receiving reports from the section's committee chairs. Sharon Bonk (Queens College), a member of the ULS 2004 Program Committee, reported that the program for the 2004 ALA Annual Conference will be centered on recruitment and retention issues and will include a component on professional education.

Pam Wonsek (Hunter College) reported for the Toronto 2003 Conference Program Planning Committee. The ULS conference program in Toronto will be a debate centered on the proposition that "by 2020, academic libraries will have outlived their need for physical space." Two 2-member teams of Canadian and U.S. academic librarians will debate this timely topic.

Lori Goetsch (University of Maryland) reported on the ongoing efforts of the Standards and Guidelines Committee in moving towards a unified set of academic library standards based on the College Library Guidelines. Hearings on the standards will be held in Toronto. The standards will also be reviewed by the appropriate ACRL sections. It appears that the branch libraries guidelines may be withdrawn, but that a distinct set of undergraduate library guidelines will continue.

Discussion groups

ULS discussion groups were active at Midwinter and well attended, addressing a number of timely and sometimes provocative issues.

The Current Topics Discussion Group continued its discussion of the library as "place." Three speakers addressed the unique aspects of their respective institutions as places. Two of the libraries discussed represent academic and public library enterprises. One of these libraries, Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, is a long-standing historical example of a joint college/city library. The other, San Jose State University, is new joint public and university library that is about six months from opening.

Lance Query, dean of libraries at Tulane University, described his institution's need to substantially expand the library and confront the issue of relocating a historic landmark building.

The Public Services Directors of Large Research Libraries Discussion Group covered an ambitious two-hour agenda ranging from discussions of faculty outreach to electronic reserves to virtual reference. Paul Constantine (University of Washington) led the discussion on virtual reference. He reported that his institution and Cornell University have partnered in providing electronic "chat" reference so that extended hours of service could be offered. The conversation led to a discussion of permitting librarians to work at home while providing virtual reference services.

The last meeting of the Public Services Directors group at the ALA Annual Conference touched on UCLA's efforts to develop new measures for developing reference statistics. The group's meeting at the Midwinter Meeting ended with Janice Koyama (UCLA) leading a discussion on the new approaches that have been developed at the UCLA Libraries. The measures attempt to move away from a time-based approach to reference statistics to an approach that is more focused on the nature of the service being provided to the user. The categories that have been developed can be reviewed at http://stats.library.ucla.edu/reference/category_definitions.cfm.

The newly established Urban University Libraries Discussion Group met for the first time at the Midwinter Meeting. The group discussed issues such as homeless people in libraries, computing security, and the growing pressure to control access to university networks.
—*John Lehner, University of Houston Libraries, jlehner@uh.edu* ■

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