

## **Introduction for Seminar B: “Work it, Baby! The Power of Collections Assessment” RBMS Preconference 2012**

Archival collections assessment is the systematic, purposeful gathering of information about archival collections and can provide data that support many aspects of special collections and archives management from setting processing priorities to advocating for additional resources and funding. In this seminar, our speakers will provide an overview of the current state of professional knowledge on collections assessment, as well as existing methodologies and tools. They will share their own experiences and the experiences of others in undertaking collections assessment projects and give guidance on how you might conduct similar projects at your own institutions. They will also offer insight into the importance of collections assessment not only in managing collections but also in aligning special collections and archives with the mission and strategic goals of the library as a whole as well as of the college or university. Our hope is that you will leave this seminar with an understanding of what collections assessment is and the many ways collections assessment can be used to support your work. We also hope you will feel empowered to take action using the variety of methodologies and tools that are already available to you.

Our first speaker and the organizer of this seminar is Merrilee Proffitt. Merrilee is a senior program officer at OCLC Research and is the co-author of the report “Taking Stock and Making Hay: Archival Collections Assessment,” which was published in 2011. The report defines archival collections assessment and identifies projects and methodologies to make it easier for institutions of all types to undertake collections assessment and to encourage a community of practice.

Co-author of the report with Merrilee and our second speaker is Martha O'Hara Conway. Martha is Associate Director of the Special Collections Library at the University of Michigan, where she has a broad range of responsibilities that are centered on improving access to special collections material. She worked previously for the Newberry Library and at the Yale University Library and the Library of Congress. Martha is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College and earned her MILS at the University of Michigan.

Our final speaker and avid reader of the "Taking Stock and Making Hay" report is Lisa Carter. Lisa is the Associate Director for Special Collections and Area Studies at The Ohio State University Libraries where she has administrative oversight of rare book, manuscript, archival, museum and international collections. Previous to her appointment at OSU in 2011, Lisa was the Head of the Special Collections Research Center at the North Carolina State University Libraries and before that, Director of Archives at the University of Kentucky Libraries' Special Collections and Digital Programs. She received her MLIS from the University of Michigan and BA in interdisciplinary humanities from Michigan State University.