

ACRL RBMS Conference Development Committee
ALA Annual Conference –
Chicago, Illinois Sunday, 30
June 2013, 8:30am 0:00am
Hyatt Regency Chicago -
Skyway 265

Minutes (*approved 26 January 2014*)

Members present: James P. Ascher (Univ. of Colorado, Boulder), Lois Fischer Black (Lehigh), Randal Brandt (UC Berkeley), Richenda Brim (Getty), Margot Conahan (ACRL), Martha Conway (Michigan), Erika Dowell (Indiana), Jane Gillis (Yale), Athena Jackson (Miami), Mike Kelly (Amherst), Mary Lacy (Library of Congress), Deborah J. Leslie (Folger), chair, Jennifer MacDonald (Delaware), Laura Micham (Duke), Arvid Nelsen (Minnesota), Fernando Peña (Palmer LIU), Marguerite Ragnow (Minnesota), Shannon Supple (UCLA Clark)

Members excused: Rebecca Fenning Marschall, Edward Oetting

Visitors: Lisa Browar (Linda Hall Library), Matthew Beacom (Yale), Scott Carlisle (Princeton), Jessica Pigza (NYPL), Daniel Slive (Bridwell), Aislinn Sotelo (UC San Diego) Welcome and introductions made.

Jessica Pigza volunteered to record minutes.

Minutes from Midwinter 2013 were approved

as presented. Preconference Reports:

Shannon Supple reported for Nina Schneider on 2012 Preconference (San Diego)

The following is a summary of the survey results:

- 30% of attendees have been employed in their current position for 1-5 years
- almost 39% have attended 2-5 Preconferences
- 3 people thought the Preconference was below average, but nearly 62% rated it as "excellent"
- almost 59% attended because of the topic/plenary speakers, followed by almost 43% who attended for networking opportunities -- since there are two choices, these are the top two reasons.
- almost 53% learned about the Preconference from the RBMS website, while 17.4% learned about it from the postcard

- the number of session types were "just right" according to the majority, although 1.4% (3 people) thought there were way too many plenaries and 0.9% (2 people) thought that there weren't nearly enough
- Nearly 53% preferred having all the sessions at the hotel
- Someone responded that the best thing about RBMS 2012 was the tacos and the short papers
- Complaints (usually more helpful) included:
 - website and vade mecum "were unusable"
 - Booksellers' showcase needed more than one day
 - important to send out info on alternative lodging arrangements early on
 - people want free wifi
 - people want vegetarian tacos
 - people want to attend sessions AND go on tours, just not at the same time
 - website should be up earlier
- People either loved or hated the plenaries. Perhaps it would be helpful to remind RBMS members what plenaries are and what to expect from them. This could help in future planning for the Preconference Program planners. A few people complained that the 2012 plenaries were too focused, others complained that they were too theoretical.

It was suggested that it might be useful, from a site choice and time selection point of view, to watch for any shift over time in the number of Preconference attendees who continue on to Annual.

A general conversation of the strengths and weaknesses of the survey as a tool ensued. Some questions need to be tweaked (the options for length of time in the profession, for example). But one should be careful of changing too much from year to year, because it limits the usefulness of comparing results year to year. It was agreed that the chair of the Conference Development Committee will be included in future survey planning/editing.

James Ascher, Arvid Nelsen, and Marguerite Ragnow reported on the just-completed 2013 Preconference (Minneapolis):

There were 359 early registrants, and by the opening the registration had increased to 368. There was a difficulty in that last-minute registrants continued to use the online form up to the moment the programming began, leading to some confusion. Although this was a novel problem to have, there was discussion that in future years the website might be changed as the Preconference date nears to let people know how to register in person.

New programming options were successfully experimented with at this conference, including regional unconference discussion sessions as well as poster sessions, and both will be repeated in 2014, with the change that all regional discussion sessions will occur at the same time. Additionally, it was suggested that remote participation via skype or webex might be useful in regional discussions in the future, to draw in new professionals as well as encourage diversity.

There is interest in having an online vade mecum in the future, perhaps modeled on the ALA online scheduler. Furthermore, continued complaints about the print vade mecum's usefulness as currently organized led to the suggestion that Publications/Communications Committee could collaborate on a design for a truly functional template/arrangement for the next print vade mecum. Ascher volunteered to take that request to the Publications/Communications Committee.

All agreed that local arrangements were seamlessly planned and executed. The Mill City reception was a particular high point.

James noted his appreciation that, as a newer program chair, he was able to work with a more seasoned and unflappable team handling local arrangements. He also felt that having a well-organized structure of subcommittees and division of labor made things run smoothly.

Richenda Brim and Athena Jackson reported on early progress in planning Preconference 2014 (Las Vegas):

The theme is RetroFit, and it is scheduled for June 24-27, 2014. It will occur at Bally's Las Vegas, where attendees can book their stay through ALA as well; and the rooms as well as the program spaces all will have wifi. UNLV will also be able to offer nice dorms for those who need that option, with easy bus service between dorms and Bally's.

Local Arrangements has been hard at work, looking into the following possible tours at discounted or group rates: Mob Museum, Neon Museum, Atomic Testing Museum, Clark County Museum, Hoover Dam, and maybe even Zappos. Many can be managed using the city's excellent public transit, but some may require dedicated bus service. Additionally, David Copperfield may be interested in doing a late-night exclusive behind the scenes tour of his rare book collection; this was discussed as a ticketed event for scholarship development. Other possibilities for ticketed fundraising events include "Cherry's Sherry Tasting" and a black tie dinner dance.

Randal Brandt reported on Preconference 2015 (Oakland):

There's much enthusiasm for hosting in lovely and temperate Oakland, and a Local Arrangements team has already been identified; it includes Randal Brandt, Jennifer Nelson, Mattie Taormina, Shannon Supple, and others. The Marriott downtown is the likely hotel choice; it is directly adjacent to a BART station, which makes for easy transportation to/from airports, to/from San Francisco. A visit to Berkeley campus is a possibility, as is dorm housing there (though there's a walk to consider between the dorms and the nearest BART station).

As incoming chair, Arvid looks forward to assisting and recommends getting the hotel locked in as soon as possible to be sure to get the dates/spaces desired.

Laura Micham and Danielle Culpepper have been selected as programming co-chairs.

Workshops:

Jane Gillis reported on the three workshops just held in Minneapolis:

"A Multi-Faceted Exploration of Digital Exhibitions for Special Collections Libraries" had 24 participants. "Building Collections: Acquiring Materials and Working with the Antiquarian Book Trade" had 22 participants. "Cataloging Medieval Manuscripts, from Cassiodorus to Dublin Core" had 12 participants. Web-based post-workshop surveys will be sent out to all participants very soon. On behalf of the Workshops Committee, Gillis expressed her appreciation that Tory Ondrla of ACRL permitted all workshops to proceed, in spite of low registration on the Cataloging workshop. The target registration for workshops is 20-24, ideally.

Conference Program Reports:

2013 Chicago, Athena Jackson and Jennifer MacDonald reported:

"History on Fire! How Libraries Mitigate Loss of the Cultural Record Due to Disaster or Destruction" is scheduled for June 30th, 1pm. It will be moderated by Alice Schreyer (Univ. of Chicago) and speakers are E.C. Schroeder (Yale), Russell Lewis (Chicago History Museum), and Valerie Harris (Univ. of Illinois at Chicago). The committee decided to stay "green" and distribute an e-flyer instead of printed postcards/flyers.

2014 Las Vegas, Lois Fischer Black and Jessica Pigza reported:

The theme will be "sin and vice in special collections," and plans are currently underway to invite speakers who will offer different perspectives such as institutional, scholar, and collector.

Old Business:

On the question of a joint IFLA preconference:

It was decided that Conference Development would no longer wait to see where in North American IFLA selects to hold its 2016 conference. Leslie will send out a request for proposals soon, and possible sites include Florida (ALA Annual being in Orlando in 2016) as well as the southeast region broadly. 2016 might, however, offer an opportunity to separate the conference in both time and place from ALA Annual. And while partnering with SAA has been considered in the past and continues to be of interest, it isn't feasible to attempt this pairing as quickly as for 2016.

Preconference Planning Documentation:

Deborah is looking into new possible formats--a blog or a wiki, for example--as a more user-friendly home for the lengthy manual on preconference planning (which currently exists as an unwieldy doc). Ascher suggested that he place this question in the hands of the Publications/Communications Committee.

Recording at Preconference:

There has not been consistent communication at sessions that they are being recorded, and this should be standardized. Of concern is that, while speakers may have officially signed on to be recorded, attendees who participate in Q&A periods have not. One possibility is, as practice or policy, to not record Q&A periods but just capture the formal presentations. Also good to keep in mind is that a robust take-down policy can manage difficulties.

New Business:

2017 Preconference Proposal

Lisa Browar reported further on the joint preconference proposal for 2017 from University of Kansas / Linda Hall Library

This proposal offers the flexibility of a few different options that could be explored and then the one that seems most feasible could be selected. Options include a campus-based conference at the University of Kansas in Lawrence; a city-based/hotel-focused conference in Kansas City and making use of Linda Hall Library facilities and hotel spaces in and around the Country Club Plaza area; and a conference that divides its time between the two locations.

In Kansas City, the Raphael and Intercontinental Hotels on Country Club Plaza have offered Browar low room rates in the past and could be considered for preconference.

Concerns about spending time in both Lawrence and Kansas City include the perhaps prohibitive cost of shuttling all attendees between Lawrence and Kansas City.

One option could be to select one site for the preconference but add an optional day tour at the other location before or after the preconference.

Fundraising options have not yet been identified, but Arvid highly recommends looking beyond local fundraising options to national corporations/vendors with whom we all work.

The question of when to send out a request for other proposals for 2017 was considered but left open.

Membership Issues

Leslie reminded committee and RBMS vice-chair/chair elect to be sure to stay on top of complexities of who need to be formally selected as ex officio members of Conference Development Committee, based on their other committee roles.