

RBMS Conference Development Committee minutes
ALA Midwinter 2019
January 27, 2019, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM
Washington State Convention Center, Room 603

Committee members in attendance: co-chair, Beth Kilmarx (Indiana University of Pennsylvania); co-chair, Michael Taylor (Western Washington University).

Visitors: Mary Lacy (Library of Congress); Deborah Leslie (Folger Shakespeare Library); Lois Fischer Black (Lehigh University); John Overholt (Harvard); Tory Ondrla (ALA); Elizabeth Call (University of Rochester); Shannon Supple (Smith College); Jason Sylvestre (University of Miami)

1. Welcome and introductions
2. 2019 Midwinter Agenda – Approval
3. 2018 Annual Minutes – Approval
4. 2019 RBMS Conference Program Planning Update
5. RBMS@ACRL2019 Update

RBMS members have been debating ways to have a greater voice at ACRL meetings. Ideas include repeating successful programs/presentations from other RBMS-related events. Tory Ondrla said that ACRL would love to have a greater RBMS presence, but there has been little movement so far, possibly because members are stretched thin and have so many conferences to attend.

Tory said that Midwinter is going away after next year. There will be something new to replace it, but there are no specifics at present.

6. 2020 RBMS Conference Program Planning Update (Elizabeth Call)

The program theme will be “Power, Resistance, and Leadership.” Conference structure still TBD. Conference Planning Committee is accepting volunteers (deadline Feb. 15.) Conference will be based on the campus of Indiana University. A new hotel, The Graduate, just opened. Erika Dowell and Rebecca Baumann are co-chairs of local arrangements.

7. 2021 RBMS Conference proposals

Prior to the deadline for conference proposals, the Conference Development Committee reached out to various institutions to encourage them to submit proposals. These included several Midwestern institutions within a reasonable distance of Chicago. All declined to submit because of logistical concerns.

The CDC received three proposals: Emory University, Wayne State University, and the University of Tennessee. Prior to Midwinter, Tory Ondrla researched the viability of each site. Atlanta has no hotel availability during the proposed dates because of a large, citywide conference. Detroit also has no hotel

availability because of the Detroit Car Show, which will be held during the week of RBMS. The University of Tennessee's proposal, despite its strengths, was tabled because of recent California legislation prohibiting state-funded travel to Tennessee (and other states) for laws seen as discriminatory towards the LGBT community. The University of Tennessee will be contacted and given an opportunity to respond.

Tory Ondrta will contact Emory and Wayne State about the possibility of different dates. Changing the traditional dates of RBMS, however, could have a cascading effect, interfering with other conferences and the set schedules of places like Rare Book School.

Tory said that another option would be to have a hotel-based conference anywhere. Beth Kilmarx asked about the possibility of a post-ALA conference. Michael Taylor suggested that this might cause problems with travel funding if the RBMS conference were in July (i.e., into the new fiscal year). This could possibly be avoided if the conference/travel started in the fiscal year, even if it overlapped into the next year.

Beth asked if RBMS is constrained to having the conference adjacent to ALA. Tory replied that it is not and that changing the date would only require a board action form. A concern was raised, however, that RBMS would then become another stand-alone conference, presenting problems for people who work at institutions where travel to RBMS and ALA is viewed as one absence.

Recent conference evaluations report that only about 30-50% of RBMS attendees go on to ALA.

It was discussed whether sites could be identified in Atlanta or Detroit farther from the city centers, but the idea was not well received because it would likely present problems for travel, lodging, and dining.

Shannon Supple mentioned that she has been having conversations with the Society of American Archivists (SAA) about the possibility of a joint SAA/RBMS conference. This would be easier for SAA because it is not part of a larger bureaucratic structure. If RBMS wanted to proceed with this, we could write a proposal for the ACRL board. Questions raised include: Would RBMS want SAA staff to do the groundwork regarding planning? Should we survey RBMS members regarding the desire for a joint conference? It was pointed out that SAA is much larger than RBMS, about 2,000 people. Would this detract from the distinctive character of RBMS? It was asked how many RBMS members routinely attend SAA. Shannon replied that RBMS is about 17% of SAA and SAA members are about 30% of RBMS. Many people do not have funding to attend both conferences.

Action item: Tory will investigate hotel-based options in Chicago and other Midwest cities.

8. Old Business:

Conference Planning Manual update (Jay Sylvestre): We have a completely new draft of the manual.

Reception at RBMS conference: There was a discussion of the cost of receptions as a possible deterrent to getting hosts. This may be an issue, but not having a reception detracts from the conference experience.

"Swag bags": Shannon Supple stated that there will not be bags at RBMS 2019 because of the conference theme (sustainability). The only physical item produced will be the program book. A concern

was raised as to whether we would lose sponsors because of eliminating the bags. Reply: Session moderators will verbally promote sponsors in sessions; fundraising has still been good, no negative impact yet seen. It was suggested that we have a literature table where materials could be submitted in a lower quantity for people to take if they want it, rather than receiving pre-stuffed bags.

Annual SAA meeting: Beth Kilmarx mentioned the possibility of having an RBMS workshop at SAA to give its members an idea of what we do.

9. New Business:

None.