ACRL/RBMS Guidelines for Interlibrary and Exhibition Loan of Special Collections Materials Task Force
Public Hearing
ALA Midwinter – January 8, 2011
10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

Task Force members present: Hjordis Halvorson (chair, Newberry Library), Christian Dupont (Atlas Systems), Laila Miletic-Vejzovic (University of Central Florida), Heather M. Smedberg (UC San Diego), Shannon K. Supple (UC Berkeley)

Task Force members not present: Jeffrey D. Marshall (University of Vermont), Cherry Williams (Indiana University)

Guests present: Dennis Massie (OCLC Research), Jennifer Schaffner (OCLC Research), Scott Duvall (BYU), Anne Bahde (San Diego State), Will La Moy (Syracuse University), Bobbie Pilette (Yale), Fernando Peña (RBMS Executive Committee Liaison, Grolier Club), Terry Dahlin (BYU), Beth Kilmarx (Binghamton University), Crista Starck (OCLC), Eric Brownell (Folder Shakespeare Library), Catherine Uecker (University of Chicago), Scott Britton (U. Miami), Michelle Gorospe (UCLA Law Library), Melissa Nykanen (Pepperdine University), Denise Ford (Michigan State University), Debra Shade (UCLA Libraries), Carlo Medina (UCLA Libraries)

Task Force Charge:

To review, update, and revise the 2004 revised Guidelines for the Interlibrary Loan of Rare and Unique Material; and to review, update, and revise the 2005 revised Guidelines for Borrowing and Lending Special Collections Material for Exhibition, combining these two documents into a single set of guidelines for borrowing and lending rare and unique materials and special collections material

Introductions and Announcements:

Introductions:

All attendees introduced themselves. Those in attendance came from a wide range of institutions and work backgrounds.

Work done/comments received to date:

The task force first met at ALA Annual 2009, officially starting its work at the conclusion of the conference. Since then the Task Force has been working on combining and editing the two documents into one set of guidelines, rewriting sections as necessary. The task force held a preliminary hearing during its open meeting at ALA Annual 2010, seeking feedback on the work to date. These comments were taken into consideration as further revisions were made. The most recent guidelines draft was posted for review and comment on the RBMS website in December, and input was solicited through various mailing lists. The chair expressed appreciation for the helpful comments from conservators, archivists, and others, received prior to the hearing. The task force welcomes all comments; the more feedback the better. The chair emphasized that the group would especially appreciate knowing if the document works for you. Are there stumbling blocks or issues with clarity? What is helpful to you? What can be improved? Is anything missing? Please do mention to us where more or less specificity is required/desired.

Other announcements:

- Christian Dupont has organized sessions on ILL and special collections at the upcoming ILLiad and ACRL national conferences.
- RLG/SHARES members announced their working group, tasked with setting up more streamlined Special Collections ILL procedures in response to a growing number of requests for ILL of Special Collections materials. As requests increase, how do we as special collections and ILL professionals treat this kind of interlibrary lending – less as one-off special projects and more programmatically? The RLG/SHARES group envisions that their work will complement the work of the RBMS task force. They expect to go through the ACRL/RBMS lending guidelines, once approved, and flesh out appropriate areas for more specific guidance. Their work will cover book, manuscript, and other special collections formats.

Discussion of general aspects of the document: (All comments paraphrased)

Prompt Question: How do the guidelines convey the range of decision-making that goes on surrounding these two types of lending activities? For example, if your administrator is either encouraging or resistant to "opening the flood gates," does this document help you to have informed discussions?

Comments:

- One commenter's library dean would want guiding principles, so the language included in the introductory sections is useful. On a more practical side, administration will also want to know who lends, how often, why, when, and to see examples of successes.
- It was seen as helpful that the guidelines list particular material types as part of the definition of Special Collections. It would also help to acknowledge that in addition to very rare and valuable materials, Special Collections often hold materials that are semi-rare, etc. To open up collaborative discussions on a local level, it would be helpful if the guidelines included more discussion about the various levels of decision-making, based on the range of materials in our collections.
- Even though case-by-case decisions may seem like a sure way to slow things down to a halt, or take days of staff time, "case-by-case" decisions could actually be made at collection level or material type level, with appropriate forethought and policy setting at the local level. Tiered decision-making then could avoid bottlenecks. This approach may help institutions consider the possibility of lending certain portions of

our collections, without agreeing to lend everything from special collections. Direction along these lines would be helpful in the guidelines.

- It was suggested that the guidelines emphasize even more forcefully the team effort that goes into many loans (e.g. SC/ILL or SC/Exhibitions Staff or SC/Preservation Staff). These partnerships are critical in decision-making and affect the staff resources required for lending.
- More than one respondent would like to see archival materials addressed more explicitly in the guidelines.

Prompt Question: How do you think these guidelines address the balance of preservation and access?

Comments:

- On the whole, the document does bring up preservation concerns; however, in the ILL section preservation does not receive the same attention as in the exhibition section. Conservators would like to see the same value placed on preservation concerns in both portions of the guidelines. For example, regarding documentation of materials before shipment: the guidelines emphasize a much more thorough documentation process for exhibition loans than for ILL. It was suggested that the guidelines should address the various tiers of decision-making that occur for both types of loans (based on material type, rarity, value, collection-based, etc.) and encourage tiers of documentation along the same lines. For certain types of materials extensive documentation should be required, regardless whether the item is being sent for exhibition or ILL/research loan, and for other materials less documentation may be required. Overall, there was consensus that the guidelines should recommend a tiered approach to decision-making and documentation.
- In response to the question of preservation and access, it was suggested that the guidelines emphasize more explicitly the partnership with conservation/preservation staff. Responding to other particular suggestions, the task force members noted that we did not specifically state “conservator” when talking about this partnership because not all institutions using the guidelines will have a conservator or a conservation department. We kept the language general because many institutions may and should have staff trained at evaluating conservation concerns as part of curatorial decision to lend or not.
- It was also brought up that collections are subject to wear and tear in local reading rooms, and that type of wear is not normally documented in condition reports. Nevertheless, the guidelines should perhaps address this type of wear. Digital photographs made of items prior to loan and upon their return can be an easy and effective way to assess minor wear as well as actual damage.

Prompt question: Does this document adequately address the new digital environment?

Comments:

- One commenter suggested it would help to add more emphasis on digital surrogates.

- Additionally, the suggestion was made to include more specifics on scan-on-demand for special collections materials. The specifics of various delivery methods may be more appropriate for the RLG/SHARES group.

Discussion specific to ILL sections:

- More than one respondent commented that the guidelines too strongly emphasize a central role for ILL departments outside of Special Collections. While this may be the best arrangement at some institutions, this will not be the case everywhere. It was suggested that the particulars of how these partnerships are forged should remain a local decision and the guidelines here should emphasize partnership, but without being overly prescriptive.
- It was recommended that a step be added to the lending institution or general guidelines section. Check back with the requester to ensure they actually need the original item before proceeding further down the curatorial decision-making path: 1) to ensure they are aware the item is a Special Collections item and will require additional time and handling rules (only view in Special Collections reading room, no copying, etc.) and 2) to inquire whether or not a surrogate, digital or otherwise, would be sufficient. Experience has shown that this initial inquiry cuts down on the number of requests and can save time and money if done before proceeding with curatorial decision-making steps. Currently, the guidelines place this responsibility on the borrowing institution; however, many ILL requests are patron-initiated and do not always pass by ILL staff at the borrowing institution. Several attendees suggested that the lending institution should contact the borrowing institution immediately to ask them to do the work of contacting the requester and tracking down a viable surrogate (if appropriate) before continuing with the request. Perhaps the detailed advice belongs in the RLG/SHARES best practices, but it was agreed that the task force should find a high level way to include this concept in the guidelines and provide advice on how to handle both mediated and unmediated borrowing requests.

Discussion specific to the exhibition loan portion of the document:

- A suggestion was made to place more emphasis on traveling exhibitions, e.g. consider the idea that venues may be added onto a touring exhibition after the initial loan agreements are arranged.
- It was again mentioned that different emphases have been placed on documentation for exhibition vs. ILL loans in this draft of the guidelines. While the liability questions *are often* different for exhibitions (e.g. exhibition loans tend to have separate insurance policies for each loan), some research loans may also warrant this level of documentation and coverage. The guidelines should aim for more consistency, setting general guidelines that each institution may use to establish its own local practice, adapted for its local situation, staff, and resources.
- One respondent pointed out that some institutions proactively are preparing materials, doing much of the preparation in advance (e.g. shipping with supports in place) to make materials exhibition-ready right out of the shipping box.

Discussion on the appendices:

Prompt Question: What is helpful to have in appendices? Do you find the given sample reports/outlines are useful?

- Several respondents would prefer sample forms and reports to general outlines. Further, it was suggested that from an administrator's viewpoint, the current sample loan agreement form is too descriptive. Others suggested that including a more prescriptive sample agreement would be helpful for librarians, who do not always know all the legal implications.
- Concern with posting a loan agreement form was addressed. Is it our place to endorse, in effect, one version of a legal document? It was recommended that any examples be clearly marked as such, with explicit directions to review the forms with your legal counsel before adopting for local use.
- It was suggested to query the COOL conservation listserv for sample condition reports.

February 4, 2011