

RBMS Manuscripts & Other Formats Discussion Group
Sunday, June 27, 2010 10:30 am-12:00 pm
JW Marriott Hotel, Congressional / Senate
Washington, D.C.

Minutes

A small group of RBMS members met in Washington, D.C. to discuss topics relevant to manuscripts and other formats in Special Collections. Much attention was focused on metrics, thanks in large part to the ongoing CLIR initiative to expose hidden collections through innovative efficiencies in archival processing and cataloging. It was concluded that means of measurement vary widely – for example, one attendee observed that while some institutions count linear feet before processing takes place, others measure only fully processed collections. It was noted that weeding may take place during the appraisal process. Attendees acknowledged that there are parallel challenges in public services as reading room data collected varies from counting the item, the box, or the folder when documenting use statistics at the reference desk. The importance of the impact of statistics on resource allocation (such as funding new or existing personnel) can't be underestimated.

Finally, discussion concluded with anecdotal evidence regarding the many forms support for collections processing may take. Examples ranged from the provision of outright financial support of processing and preservation to the offer of specialized knowledge or expertise that may be contributed by the donors of the collections themselves.