ACRL/RBMS Guidelines for Borrowing and Lending Special Collections Materials Task Force
ALA Annual Meeting
Sunday, 12 July 2009, 8:00-10:00 a.m.
Palmer House, LaSalle 2

MINUTES

I. Introductions

Task Force Chair Hjordis Halvorson called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Task Force members, advisors, and guests introduced themselves. Task force members and advisors are:

Task Force:
- Hjordis Halvorson, Newberry Library, *Chair*
- Christian Dupont, Atlas Systems, Inc.
- Jeffrey Marshall, University of Vermont
- Laila Miletic-Vejzovic, University of Central Florida
- Heather Smedberg, University of California, San Diego
- Shannon Supple, University of California, Berkeley
- Cherry Williams, Indiana University

Advisors:
- J. B. Hill, ACRL/SAC Liaison
- Dennis Massie, RLG Programs
- Jennifer Schaffner, RLG Programs (not in attendance)
- Laura Micham, Past chair, *ACRL/RBMS Guidelines for the Interlibrary Loan of Rare and Unique Material* task force (not in attendance)
- Everett Wilkie, Past chair, *ACRL/RBMS Guidelines for Borrowing and Lending Special Collections Material for Exhibition* task force; RBMS liaison to ACRL/SAC
- Fernando Peña, RBMS Member-At-Large liaison to the Task Force

Guests in attendance included:
- Aimee Lind, Getty Research Institute
- Peggy Skotnicki, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library
- Teresa Yoder, Chicago Public Library

II. Preliminaries

Task Force members accepted the agenda for the current meeting.

Shannon Supple volunteered to record the minutes.

III. Review of ACRL/RBMS Guidelines for Borrowing and Lending Special Collections Material Task Force Charge

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.”

Combining the two previous guidelines documents into one document is a given, and it will be up to the task force to determine how much the two should be substantively merged and interwoven. The RBMS Executive Committee left this decision to the task force. Since both documents were either scheduled for review this year (ILL) or next (exhibition loans), and those seeking to use the guidelines have been confused about which to use, past chairs Laura Micham and Everett Wilkie recommended that the Executive Committee consider combining the two.

IV. Discussion of Relevant Topics

A. Previous Guidelines and Other Relevant Guidelines/Documents

Everett Wilkie gave a short history of the guidelines. For exhibition loans, RBMS formed a task force to write guidelines. ACRL Standards and Accreditation Committee (SAC) rejected the draft because it contained too many details, inappropriate for guidelines, and required a rewrite. As the task force had been disbanded, a new task force was formed with Everett as chair, and this task force completed the assignment. The ILL task force, with Laura Micham as chair, completed the ILL guidelines expeditiously, which were then approved by SAC. The ILL guidelines task force included ILL specialists so their perspectives were included.

After both guidelines were approved by SAC, Everett and Laura requested that the RBMS Executive Committee consider combining the two, finding that people were confusing them. The Executive Committee eventually decided to form a task force to combine the two guidelines documents while updating them as required after five years. Everett expects that the procedures, forms, and items involved in ILL and exhibition loans are quite different, so that the two might not intellectually merge easily. For instance, with ILL, scanning and digital delivery may work fine for many scholars, but the object itself is needed for exhibitions.

The guidelines emerged, in part, from a concern within the special collections community that University Librarians and equivalent decision-makers would begin to require loans from special collections; so RBMS chose to act quickly to establish guidelines. RBMS had particular concern to provide guidance for administrators who do not have a background in special collections and the special issues involved with primary source materials. To address such concerns, the ILL guidelines include statements such as the following: “[t]hat an item is part of a special collection is not sufficient reason in and of itself to refuse a request” (ILL, section III.7).

Christian Dupont gave a short background from the perspective of the Executive Committee, on which he served during discussions leading up to the establishment of the current Task Force. Only after the ILL and exhibition loans guidelines were written did the Executive Committee realize that there may be enough overlap to consider combining the two. Rather than just cutting and pasting them together, the Executive Committee wanted a task force to rethink the philosophy behind these documents. (What do we want to say? Do we really want to encourage these loans? If so, we should have that as a focus and not be prescriptive.) In addition, in an era of scanning and digital delivery, the ILL guidelines especially need updating.

Hjordis emphasized that the task force should start with our introduction and the philosophy underlying the guidelines as we’re analyzing both guidelines. The two documents are different in framework and style. As we proceed, it is important to keep in mind the nature of guidelines. Further, Everett noted that we are drafting guidelines, not a manual, so too much detail should be avoided.

For reference, it was noted that recently the RBMS Security Committee successfully updated and merged two documents.

B. Changes in Environment and Trends That Might Influence New Guidelines

Ensuing task force discussion sought to surface changes and trends that are relevant to the borrowing and lending of special collections material.

Scanning and digital delivery: Possibilities for sharing are vastly improved in recent years.

Un-hidden collections: More information available on collections will have an effect on borrowing. Scholars will want to see the materials newly known and available. With *MP/LP* (*More Product/Less Process*), there is more available, but at different levels of description. (In an example with archives, a collection or box level description may mean more requests to borrow because a researcher will not know what it contains and will want to review the contents. The owning institution may not have the reference/research time to help, so that researcher may ask to borrow the box.)

Unprocessed collections: Researcher expectations are growing. They want access to “everything out there.” Lending from unprocessed collections has many potential problems.

Facsimiles and other copies: In some cases, particularly in the ILL realm, non-originals may suffice and can be sent in lieu of an original.

Copyright: May we make copies under existing copyright law? Will we lose control of the content of an item by sharing a scan?

Limited researcher and institutional budgets: Even as we're more able to digitize, if we don't have the staff to digitize, can we send a requested item to a researcher? A digitization program can take a lot of staff and resources to run, so this question will come up for some institutions. Likewise, lending itself is a program that requires staff time and other resources.

Proxy researchers: Other local researchers can work on behalf of a primary researcher on-site.

Fellowships: Libraries can offer fellowships for researchers to use our collections on-site, thus providing some research funding for scholars to come to us.

On-site need: What about the situations in which an item is lent, but is requested on-site while it is away on loan? Would a copy be made for the lending institution and would it be sufficient during these periods? What about those users who visit expecting that certain items will always be on-site? How do we manage their expectations?

Special collections highlighted within library/institution/community: With special collections being highlighted more and more within the greater library community and beyond, new communities of users (e.g., the public, undergraduates) emerge. How does this affect our ability to lend? What levels of service are expected?

Off-site storage: Packing and transporting special collections materials are already being done in many libraries with the use of off-site storage. (This is also true when we buy items that are then shipped to us – it goes through the mail just fine when we buy it, but then we never want it to be mailed again?) What can we learn from the models we are creating to manage off-site storage workflows?

Workflows and responsibilities: We need to consider the many different groups that should be involved in these activities, including ILL staff, special collections, conservation, transportation companies, etc.

C. Questions and Assumptions

ILL works within a clearly-defined framework, but this is not necessarily so with exhibition loans. In what other contexts are items leaving the building or otherwise leaving the control of special collections (e.g., see off-site storage example, above)? Should these additional contexts also be addressed? Are they within the scope of the Task Force?

D. Work of OCLC/RLG Programs SHARES and Sharing Special Collections Project

Dennis Massie provided some background on the OCLC/RLG Programs Sharing sSpecial Collections Project, which was recently launched.

In 2002, RLG Programs hosted an RLG Members Forum called *Sharing the Wealth* (http://worldcat.org/arcviewer/1/OCC/2007/09/28/0000073852/viewer/file489.html). Some RLG members had been sharing special collections, but many were fearful and called the idea "unthinkable." Some members said they wanted to talk about it more but then vacillated about whether or not they wanted to further pursue the idea. At the same time, the SHARES group was interested in the same topic because ILL managers had been receiving more requests for special collections materials. Although a consensus was not reached at the time, Dennis believed that keeping the conversation going would make the idea less scary over time.

Dennis recently formed a steering committee on the sharing of special collections. On May 28, 2009, RLG Programs sponsored a webinar, *Treasures on Trucks and Other Taboos: Rethinking the Sharing of Special Collections* (http://www.oclc.org/programsandresearch/parcasts/default.htm#webinars, scroll down). The webinar featured a special collections and ILL team from Emory University, who has been borrowing and lending special collections for a long time, and another from the University of Miami, who just started doing so. Now Dennis wants to keep the discussion going by looking at ways to streamline, mainstream, and make practical the sharing of special collections materials. It may involve finding the right division of labor between ILL and special collections staff. In addition, the group is considering other questions. (For example: How do you build the trust in others necessary so that people are willing to share these materials? Can high-end scanning be enough? What can be done when the researcher needs to see the original?) One group is currently focusing on workflows while another is looking at handling and packing.

V. Methodology for Revision and Combining the Guidelines

The Task Force should begin by establishing a framework. (The OCLC RLG project is working on implementation details and approaches. Our Task Force should not begin to address details at this point.)

Conference calls and online meetings may help the Task Force with their work. Christian offered to facilitate Task Force online meetings, and ALA Connect may be useful as well. The Task Force will set up a Google Documents account so that members can collaborate more easily. The use of a wiki was also discussed, but one will not be set up for now.

Once written, the guidelines will go to the RBMS Executive Committee for approval and then to SAC, which makes the final determination to recommend them for ACRL Board approval.

We will need to determine how to include the archives community and others. Once these guidelines are approved by SAC, we could ask SAA to officially endorse them or we may decide to keep it more informal. At minimum, we could keep SAA informed about what we are doing at various stages in our process. The museum community and the ILL community were also mentioned during discussion. We will keep alert to ways to involve and inform our related communities.

VI. Timeline and Assignments for Task Force Members

Timeline: The Executive Committee did not specify a timeline, though the Task Force members have two-year appointments. Guidelines generally must be revised every five years. Hjordis will clarify this with the Executive Committee.

Committee Assignments:

- Gather a bibliography (need not be comprehensive to begin) – Cherry and Shannon
- Explore ILL community's general guidelines and report back – Christian and Heather
- Begin working on the framework and introductory issues – Hjordis and Christian
- Survey ourselves (Task Force members) on what we would do with certain borrowing scenarios and compile responses – Jeffrey
- Set up Google Documents account for Task Force to use to collaborate – Hjordis

VII. Questions and Report for RBMS Executive Committee

Hjordis will ask the Executive Committee about their timeline for the Task Force and their expectations with regard to combining the two sets of guidelines into one.

VIII. Adjournment

The Task Force meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.