

**Approved Minutes  
RBMS Diversity Committee**

**ALA Midwinter Meeting, Boston**

**Sunday, January 17, 2010, 8-10 a.m.**

**Hyatt Regency Boston, Concord Room**

**Members in attendance:** Athena Jackson (Co-Chair), Louisiana State University; Veronica Reyes-Escudero (Co-Chair), University of Arizona; Helice Koffler, University of Washington; and Anne Marie Lane, University of Wyoming

**Members absent:** Katharine Carrington Chandler

**Visitors:** Fernando Pena, Grolier Club (former Co-Chair); Donna Hirst, University of Iowa; Deborah Whiteman, Santa Clara University; Mark Danley, University of Memphis; and Vernica Downey, Houghton Library

**I. Introduction and selection of recorder**

After Athena welcomed everyone, and Anne Marie offered to record, Athena mentioned the importance of the Toolkit to new member Helice and the visitors.

**II. Review and approval of previous minutes**

Since the committee did not meet at annual 2009, it was the minutes from the 2009 mid-winter meeting in Denver that were approved.

At this point, Deborah asked about the history of the committee. Veronica summarized the background: she talked about Julie Grob's article, and the impetus for RBMS after a survey reported a dearth of under-represented groups in RBMS. Veronica also summarized our outreach efforts to date. The committee targets the four federally recognized groups. The Toolkit was devised so other members could also recruit into Special Collections libraries.

**III. Preconference update**

Veronica explained that part of our job is to suggest seminars. She and Athena have proposed a seminar on the Toolkit, which was accepted. Athena and Fernando will be the presenters, and possibly also Veronica.

Athena reported that she attended the 2011 PreConference Committee meeting. She is on the Local Arrangements Committee (it will be in Baton Rouge). She reported that Steve emphasized a theme related to it being “our time to shine.”

Debra suggested we look at past meetings, such as the 1993 preconference line-up, for seminar ideas. Mark added that 1993 was a pivotal moment in terms of the digital realm and well worth considering in terms of seminar ideas.

Athena reported that the Preconference Committee is excited about how the Preconference is taking shape and will share more with our committee as plans are firmed.

#### **IV. Scholarship Committee representative update**

Veronica explained about the membership of the Scholarship Committee: representatives from the Budget and Development Committee, Membership and Professional Development Committee, Exec, and the Diversity Committee. There was a discussion about whether Debra could be in it as our representative, since she is not on the committee yet. She *will* be on it as the M&PD Committee liaison.

Fernando said that the activities will be starting right away, so Veronica and Athena will confirm the appointment as soon as possible.

It was mentioned that Mark, Veronica, and Athena were all past scholarship recipients.

#### **V. Liaising to other Committees**

We’ve been good about getting to other committees to share our ideas, and that diversity issues come up at appropriate times. For example, Anne Marie was previously on the ACRL Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee. Athena and Veronica have received an email from the ACRL R&ED Committee Chair, Trevor Dawes to see if we could get a representative to their group. We certainly do want an official liaison, so we’ll need to work this out by email after the meeting.

Fernando suggested looking at various ACRL and RBMS committees where our presence might be useful, in terms of the work they are doing: e.g., the ALA Office of Diversity and the Spectrum Scholars Mentoring program. (They did a little recruiting among RBMS a few years back, by circulating emails on our lists.) We need to put a list together to stay abreast of what other ALA and ACRL groups are doing.

Athena noted our Toolkit was recently reviewed by the SAA Diversity Committee chair, Terry Baxter. Veronica had a discussion with him by phone earlier in the year. SAA is working on a brochure, so they wanted to use our ideas. (It was an agenda item at their last SAA meeting.)

Our discussion led to questions about demographic studies by ALA and other related groups. Mark asked about the library profession as a whole: how librarians “identify” within their type of library, their field of

specialization, and their areas of responsibilities (especially across departments, like reference/technical services). The discussion continued with regard to how people self-identify and the challenges of ascertaining hard data within our community.

Getting back to the topic of liaisons, Fernando offered to make a list of the old committees that Julie and others worked on, and said that he would get that list to Athena and Veronica.

Athena and Veronica will work on assigning liaison duties in the coming months.

## **VI. Funding for recruitment presentations**

Veronica submitted a request to the RBMS Budget and Development Committee, and it was approved for this mid-winter. She also asked about sustainable and renewable funds, so we don't have to ask every time. That request will go on to ACRL.

Fernando said he thought that for 2011, it is not approved for that year; but we can re-apply like previously on an "Action Plan" (that is now eliminated, though). Now people apply "as needed" through the year. So, we can re-apply.

Veronica had wanted to give it one more test this mid-winter.

## **VII. Recruitment presentations**

For this mid-winter presentation, Veronica was able to secure funding but it got approved a little late in the semester to co-ordinate with winter/intercession classes. She had a long list of Boston area colleges, so it worked out best to do a public program at Boston Public Library, because they offered space. Veronica contacted Beth Prindle from BPL who suggested Em Clair Knowles from Simmons Library Science program/Special Collections. The original response was 16 to 18 students. Athena and Veronica worked on the presentation, and both she and Veronica went—but the turnout was only a fraction of the interested parties. Athena said it was probably a matter of scheduling (Friday at noon, as opposed to the preferred date, on MLK – on which we wouldn't have been able to secure a venue). Veronica added that she spoke to one of the students who attended and that person had a very positive experience.

Athena and Veronica are exploring way of making this presentation available at a grander scale (online, graduate school classes, &tc.) Fernando said that Seattle and San Antonio were more successful (in terms of attendance) because ALA was a little later those years, so classes had already started. He supported any attempt at making this presentation available to larger audiences using online technologies. The rest of the discussion focused on ideas of taking such measures for online outreach.

Veronica brought the committee back to the question about looking for permanent funding for mid-winter presentations. Deborah W. said that her UCLC Library School has a strong diversity interest; thus, a presentation for next mid-winter in San Diego could be a possibility. San Jose State is also close, so would be another options. The Co-Chairs said they will consider those.

Veronica then reported that she does presentations for the introductory course at the University of Arizona IRLS program, and encourages others to talk with the students, because it is exciting. Athena suggested that we “think outside the box” and approach different kinds of classes at our local institutions.

### **VIII. Future diversity-related conference program**

Athena referenced what Veronica said: that we like diversity to have a strong presence at Seminars, so we try to think of a few ideas to pitch. She was at the 2011 Preconference Committee, and listed the ideas mentioned in general. Athena pitched the idea of having a moderator with two people in RBMS having a dialogue. The dialogue would be between a more experienced person, and a newer one—perhaps even someone from the Scholarship pool. Her suggested title is “Passing the torch.” Mark suggested having two pairs instead.

Veronica explained that in the past we try to brainstorm at mid-winter. If you suggest something, it doesn’t mean that *you* have to do it.

Fernando brought up a current issue that Exec is looking at: the ALA TCE (Traditional Cultural Expressions). Debra Leslie will be commenting on the current document, which is seen as “incomplete,” thus ALA is asking for suggestions.

Athena said that she was previously an intern at an anthropology division of the Smithsonian, and is hoping her connection there may enable her to find a speaker to discuss the TCEs at a future preconference. She will investigate.

She reported that she enjoyed and learned much at the 2009 Preconference discussion session, “Many Voices at the Table: Diversity in Special Collections,” because it was about asking the hard questions, and did not shy away from the issues.

Veronica noted that we have time to refine our ideas, and Athena suggested that we aim for Thanksgiving—though we can certainly talk about it more at annual. Veronica told the committee that if anyone thinks of an idea to email her and Athena.

### **IX. Discussion: Getting colleagues involved - Publicizing the Tool Kit**

Athena felt we had covered this topic already, and that the Tool Kit will be publicized through other outlets, such as online. This will need further consideration.

### **X. Other Business**

Veronica said that she and Athena need to come up with a history of the committee, to offer to the next chair, and also put online (i.e., the timeline we discussed earlier in the meeting).

Helice asked if we have considered using space that ALA gives for ALA Connect. Fernando answered that Exec is deploying ALA Connect now.

Veronica brought up the topic of committee membership, and there was some uncertainty about just when a chair or co-chair has to cycle off the committee (when they have previously served as just a member). We need to think about future chairs when Veronica and Athena's terms are up.

Athena said that it would be ideal to cultivate relationships at the Preconferences with Scholarship recipients, and encourage them to attend our meetings. It would help if the Scholarship Committee could give us relevant names. Mark agreed that it is important to encourage and keep these young professionals active in the field. Veronica feels that it is a part of our "responsibility" to get out there.

Deborah suggested the Mentor and Buddy programs as possibilities for new contacts. Mark added that the new "Regional Workshops Committee" will reach a latent body of interested people, so this is a good possibility for us.

Athena reported that the "Librarians of Color" conference has invited us to attend. This is under consideration, as well.

## **XI. Announcements**

No one had anything else to add; so, in conclusion, Athena said that she hoped the guests today would consider joining the committee.

Submitted by Anne Marie Lane