

## Minutes

RBMS Membership and Professional Development Committee

Saturday June 15, 2002

8:30-11:00 am

Westin Peachtree Plaza (Roswell II), Atlanta

Members present: Henry Raine (NYU/N-YHS) (Chair), Richard Dickerson (U of Houston), Ellen Ellickson (Yale), David Faulds (Emory), Lois Fischer Black (NCSU), James Fox (U of Oregon), Julie Grob (U of Houston), Rachel Howarth (Harvard), Fernando Peña (Grolier Club), Susan Szasz Palmer (Cornell).

Members excused: Kathy Beam (U of Michigan), Ann Ferguson (Cornell), Mike Kelly (NYU), Gerri Schaad (UTSA)

Visitors: Susan Fagan (Newberry), Laura Guelle (Coll Phy Phila), Jennifer Schaffner (UCLA) (incoming intern), Arlene Shaner (NY Acad of Medicine).

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am, with welcoming remarks and introductions.

2. Schaffner agreed to take minutes.

2a. Additions to the agenda:

-add the Non-Member Survey to the agenda under new business.

-add ALA NMRT Orientation presence after the Report on the

Preconference Orientation

3. The minutes from the January 19, 2002 meeting were approved. A message from Everett Wilkie was conveyed, objecting to the wording in the minutes recording the committee's opposition to expanding the scope of the Educational Opportunities Directory.

4. Housekeeping:

-Committee charge: The charge on the RBMS web site is still incorrect. Raine will forward the correct charge to Christian Dupont, webmaster.

-Committee membership: Grob and Howarth are ending their terms on the committee, and Raine thanked them for their service. Ellickson and Faulds begin their second term, for two more years. Peña is becoming a full member, after his term as intern. Schaffner is the intern for the next year. Fox is a new member.

-Committee roster: Raine asked those present to look at their entries on the RBMS web site and to send him any additions or corrections, which he will forward to Christian Dupont, RBMS Webmaster.

## 5. Educational Opportunities Directory

Ellickson reported that the list of library programs includes 52 schools in the US and Canada. One may click on the links to get to the rare book and manuscript courses. Ellickson emailed deans of all the library schools in the spring for additions and corrections. 21 deans replied, 6 with no changes, and 15 with changes. This information will be forwarded to Christian Dupont, RBMS Webmaster, to update the directory. Ellickson reported that the presentation of the Directory is clean and clear, and that she doesn't want to muddy it up with complexity. Fox asked whether the Directory comes up with a Google search, and Ellickson answered that it does. Discussion confirmed that the intended audience is people who want to go to library school, and are looking for degrees, courses and practicums in the field of rare books and special collections. The information is updated every year. Raine agreed to put Wilkie's idea to rest. He suggested that the Educational Opportunities Directory could be used to work more closely with the library schools to foster diversity, and thanked Ellickson for her efforts. Ellickson says it is becoming second nature, and she has become an expert at navigating library school websites.

## 6. Update on the Scholarship Program

Howarth reported that 3 full and 6 partial scholarships were awarded to attend the Preconference. A full scholarship covered the cost of registration and \$500 for travel expenses. A partial scholarship covered the cost of registration. The names of the recipients were announced at the opening reception. All of the scholarship recipients were offered buddies, and 6 of the 8 recipients requested buddies. A report from the 2002 Preconference will be available at the Midwinter meeting. Travel to the 2003 Preconference in Toronto will be expensive, but hotel and other expenses will be lower thanks to the favorable exchange rate. Howarth reported that funding for next year is uncertain. Raine asked how we might ensure future funding of the scholarships.

Grob asked for an account of who among the scholarship recipients had actually joined RBMS, and wanted to check the membership roster against the list of recipients. Howarth reported that one person turned down a scholarship, because of a misunderstanding about the difference between a full and a partial scholarship. Raine said this needed to be clarified further in the application process, because the money was wasted when it was refused at the very last minute. Rachel suggested we ask the recipients to accept earlier. Raine commented that the pool of applicants was too small, and Howarth commented that we needed to expand the pool. In spite of a suggestion which had been made at Midwinter, for example, we never contacted Clark Atlanta University to let them know about the scholarship program, and therefore missed an opportunity for attracting potential newcomers from a minority institution to the preconference. Fox suggested we use Ellickson's survey to contact the appropriate faculty in library school programs. Fox and Ellickson volunteered to

make these contacts after Midwinter. Raine said we will need to be more aggressive in recruiting applicants for the scholarships, and suggested also encouraging applications from minorities when posting the scholarship announcements.

## 7. Update on the Buddy Program

Raine reported that there were 9 requests for buddies, which was less than last year (17). Reasons for this decrease could be fewer attendees at the Preconference and Annual Conference, the location of the conference in Atlanta, and current economic conditions. 6 of the 9 requests were scholarship recipients. 14 experienced members of RBMS volunteered to be buddies, which was a great response from the section. Although we revived the buddy request form on the website, none of the requests came through the website, because the forms were hard to find. Also, both the Preconference website and the Preconference brochure were out late. Raine recommended that the buddy request forms on the web be more prominent, and that they not be tied to the brochure. One should be able to request a buddy at any time. Raine asked if we would like to reshape and expand this into a more long-term mentoring program. ACRL has a mentoring program where we could get ideas. Black will draft suggested guidelines on long-term mentoring. Black and Raine will work on helpful hints for buddies, and Raine will be asking the buddies themselves for feedback, and what they hope to get out of mentoring.

## 8. Report on the Preconference Orientation

Raine reported there were approximately 50 attendees, a good turnout, although about half the people in the room were experienced members rather than new members and first-time attendees. Black's handouts were again a success. Raine was concerned that the tours which were scheduled immediately before the orientation session would not return to the hotel on time for the orientation, and Faulds assured him that the bus drivers and tour leaders had been told that the tours needed to be back on time. Raine was disappointed that there were no ribbons for first-time attendees this year, in spite of Ferguson's attempts to arrange them by going through proper channels. For next year, Raine said we should contact Margot Sutton at ACRL directly. Raine stressed that there are a large number of first-time attendees each year, and that ribbons for new members would help more experienced section members reach out to them.

Raine asked if we liked the format of the orientation. Fox asked about sitting in rows, and suggested serving coffee, having tables, or even making it interactive instead of a lecture. Raine reminded the committee of the prohibitive cost of catering, and that the orientation session is right before the opening reception, where there is ample opportunity for refreshment. Chicago and Claremont were recalled. It was noted that our orientation session is the first official gathering of

the Preconference. Raine will be taking suggestions, especially for another 'emcee'...

#### 9. Report on the Preconference Seminar

Grob reported on the seminar session she chaired at the Preconference, "*A Dialogue on Diversity: Issues Raised by the RBMS Non-Members Survey.*" The seminar consisted of a round-table with 6 panelists, who left us with useful information and personal impressions, and concrete steps RBMS could take – measurable steps, with free and low-costs ideas. Themes included publicity, designing a less staid brochure, becoming more inclusive, and partnering with other organizations. There are a lot of untapped opportunities in ALA and ACRL, as demonstrated by Grob's invitation to the Spectrum Scholars' evening. We could invite minority members to be interns on committees, and our institutions could collect more diverse materials.

Grob regretted that the seminar wasn't longer; she could have used another ½ hour. No one taped the session, which would have been useful, but Deborah Leslie (Folger) was taking notes. Raine commented that it was a great session, very valuable, with good panelists. Grob said it was good that we went outside of RBMS, observed that we got a lot of concrete advice, and suggested that we might bring an action plan to the Executive Committee for an ad hoc committee on diversity, with a charge to include mentoring, scholarships and internships.

Fox commented that we don't want to lose our momentum in creating initiatives for encouraging diversity in the section. He said ARL does nothing on diversity. He recalled Peter Graham's challenge at the Executive Committee meeting in San Francisco, and he noted that we would need money from ALA to implement diversity initiatives. Fox said we need a program, especially in the library schools. Shaner commented that the RBMS survey results revealed the membership's divided responsibilities. Grob noted that it is not one-size-fits-all – it is not just about Harvard and Yale. Fox said we should work on diversity at the ALA Annual Conference rather than the Preconference; the people are here at the Annual Conference, but they were not at the RBMS Preconference. Grob suggested workshops on how to do special collections if you're just one person. Raine said he would be going to the up-coming joint African American Studies Librarians/RBMS session, "*When Old is New: The Art of Creating New African American Special Collections,*" and suggested RBMS explore other joint programs with organizations such as REFORMA and the Black Caucus of ALA.

What we do about diversity in RBMS is the hard part.

#### 10. Draft RBMS statement on diversity

As a continuation of the above discussion, Raine presented a draft statement on diversity for RBMS, previously circulated to the committee via email. He

reiterated the recommendations made at the Preconference seminar that RBMS incorporate diversity into its strategic planning, with every committee, and in every part of our work. Raine suggested we create an action plan to expand what RBMS does for diversity. Raine said that the panelists at the seminar had identified the following possible new initiatives:

a) scholarships – offer money for memberships and conferences; the question came up whether the Executive Committee could fund a scholarship program, or fundraise for scholarships, without involvement by ACRL? Fox says we should ask ALA for funding for these scholarships, as well as money to go to library schools and other conferences. Howarth suggested SALAAM.

b) invite people to come present at conferences and preconferences and to publish in our newsletter and elsewhere? Offer a one year free membership in return?

c) appoint a liaison to the ACRL diversity task force? ALA has an entire office on diversity

d) establish outreach to library schools and student chapters

e) hand out brochures? Create a different, more inclusive brochure?

f) ensure there is information on rare books and special collections in “introduction to librarianship” courses in library school

Fox stressed we need to get money, get grants, get outside funding, using the Banks example of training special collections staff at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Grob suggested we invite the head of ALA’s Diversity Office to the Executive Committee meetings, and that we go to the Spectrum Scholar Fair.

Fox wondered about recommendations for an ad-hoc committee, while Raine wondered about publicity, a new brochure, and a listserv. Fox wondered who should take this on? Do we suggest it to the Executive Committee? Would an ad-hoc committee report to both the Membership and Professional Development Committee and to Exec? Should we contact ALA? Fox said, by way of an example, that for the scholarships, RBMS does all the legwork, but the most difficult part is getting the money back from ACRL. Should RBMS have a diversity officer?

Discussion continued about being inclusive in our collecting, and the results of the RBMS survey. Maybe we should target library schools with strong special collections programs, to reinforce diversity in the schools and get students involved. Raine wondered about the half-dozen schools with strong programs: could they fund a student chapter of RBMS? Could the involvement of local alumni have prevented the closing of good programs, like Columbia?

Raine asked the committee about money to promote diversity, and how to pursue it. Should we have a specific minority scholarship? Should diversity be a factor in the decision, or be especially encouraged? Howarth was to check with ACRL on this. Palmer wondered if an explicit statement would help us get funding. Grob wondered who would look at the suggestions and decide what was beneficial or

practical. Where is the decision-making? Raine commented that there is some debate about this; should the section aim at diverse representation on every RBMS committee? Howarth asked how we could make diversity an action item, or an item on the RBMS agenda.

Fox again noted that a bold diversity initiative would take both work and money – “business as usual” won’t work for this, and RBMS cannot be passive. Raine would draft a statement – a very preliminary statement – as a first step to address concerns raised at the seminar at the Preconference. He will list ideas, our committee will certainly participate, but there needs to be activity bigger than our committee. Raine will talk with Taraba, and he thanked the committee for their comments on his draft of a diversity statement.

## 11. Liaison reports

Ellickson – ACRL Professional Development  
Palmer – ACRL Membership

## 12. New Business

### A. RBMS Non-Member Survey

Grob said that the people who began the RBMS non-members survey have rolled off the committee, and that there was no mechanism to transfer knowledge and responsibility. Both the RBMS membership surveys and the electronic version are gone! Raine asked about designing a new non-members survey form, and Grob noted that we have good data from the responses that were already received, and that we should get the rest of the survey out the door soon, because the EEOC will be changing the ethnic descriptions soon. The first batch of surveys went out in 2000. The committee wondered who to send it to next: members of SAA’s Manuscripts Section? Should we compare our membership list to theirs, or just send it? Raine suggested we post the survey on listservs, which was considered a very good idea. Peña asked about SLA. Schaffner will go to SAA and hand out the survey, with an October 1 deadline, and Peña will compile the results before Midwinter.

### B. Seminars

Raine asked if we should sponsor more seminars on the theme of diversity at future preconferences. Shaner asked that there be time for Q and A, and suggested an open forum, to exchange ideas. Raine said he would email the committee for volunteers to work on a seminar for Toronto 2003, and Fox offered to work with someone on a diversity seminar.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Schaffner