

RBMS Membership and Professional Development Committee

Draft Minutes

Saturday, January 10, 2004

8:30-11:00 am

Bristol San Diego—City Scene

Members present: Henry Raine (chair), Kathryn Beam, Ellen Ellickson, David Faulds, Ann Ferguson, James Fox, Hjordis Halvorson, Anne Marie Lane, Fernando Peña, Linda Reynolds.

Members not present: Karen Weaver.

Visitors: John Cullars, Tom Larson, Mary Lacy

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Selection of recorder and finalization of agenda

3. Approval of minutes from June 21, 2003 meeting

Item 6. Scholarship Program will be reworded to state that 14 people applied and of that 7 of them were students and all 7 students received the scholarships. The minutes were approved with this correction.

4. Housekeeping

Raine announced that a number of committee members would be coming to the end of their term after the annual conference. He said that anyone interested in serving on the committee should be encouraged to submit a committee service interest form, which is found on the RBMS web site.

The committee roster on the RBMS web site was updated in October. Raine asked that members let him know if there are any additional changes. He also asked committee members to check their contact information on the ALA web site and to get in touch with ALA directly if changes need to be made, since ALA does not check the individual section web sites for updated information.

Raine announced that Susan Szasz Palmer has resigned from the committee, in order to devote herself to other activities in ACRL.

5. Educational Opportunities Directory

Ellickson reported on her recent updates to the Educational Opportunities Directory, and asked the committee about highlighting information on the Rare Books and Special Collections concentration within the MSLIS program at Long Island University Palmer School of Library and Information Science in the “other Resources” section of the web site. The committee agreed. She also said that she had been contacted by the University of Western Ontario, which is not on the list but would like to be; she will obtain their information and make sure it is added to the directory. She also mentioned that a log

counter has been added to the web site to see which institutions are of greatest interest and also at what times of year the directory is most frequently accessed. She will report the results in June.

Ellickson announced that the theme of the 2005 preconference is education for special collections librarians, and that she is serving on the program committee. Raine asked the committee to think about possible seminar topics for the 2005 preconference and to let him know.

#### 6. ARL Special Collections Education & Training meeting in Chapel Hill

Ellickson reported on the ARL special collection education and training meeting held in Chapel Hill in November 2003. The meeting was called to discuss the problems relating to the fact that special collections librarianship seems to be a graying profession. Where will new special collections librarians come from? At the same time, those recent graduates who want to specialize in rare books and special collections are having trouble finding jobs. Can ARL libraries help to offer solutions to these problems? One result of the meeting is a white paper that outlines the problem and various solutions, and one aspect of the problem that the committee may be involved in is establishing a list of competencies that special collections librarians should possess. It was suggested that people could go to the ARL web site to see the white paper, and the minutes of the special collections task force.

This committee will start looking into the question of competencies for special collections librarians. There is going to be more activity on the topic after midwinter. Halvorson, Beam, Ellickson and Ferguson will start creating a list of such competencies.

The issue of certain library schools offering academic credit for Rare Book School course was mentioned.

#### 7. Update on the Scholarship Program

Peña reported that the Scholarship Subcommittee is implementing the recommendations of the RBMS Task Force on Diversity regarding the scholarship program outlined in the RBMS Diversity Action Plan. These include offering preconference scholarships to librarians and to students from underrepresented ethnic and racial groups. Two of the available scholarships will now be designated for minorities, one for a library student and one for a librarian.

There was some discussion about publicizing the availability of minority scholarships. Raine explained that he contacted the five ethnic caucuses of ALA last year, and sent them the announcement about RBMS scholarships prior to the preconference. Three of the organizations responded and expressed appreciation for having been contacted, but unfortunately no minorities applied for scholarships last year.

Raine also explained that Ellickson had sent the scholarship announcement to the 52 schools of library and information studies listed in the Educational Opportunities Directory. The committee suggested finding out which of these schools have a large

minority student base and which ones have strong collections focused on minorities, and to target professors and other individuals at those institutions to help find minority students who might be interested in applying for the scholarships. A further suggestion was made to especially target library schools located in the vicinity of a preconference site, and to look into non-accredited library schools as well. Another suggestion was to see if the RBMS Task Force on Diversity or the ACRL Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee might have ideas on how to increase the number of minority applicants to scholarships. Peña asked the committee to contact him with other suggestions.

Raine suggested not just minority students, but also minority librarians, and those working in libraries with ethnic collections who don't come to RBMS should be encouraged to apply. Also, Fox said we should be more assertive, and suggested collaborating with SAA and perhaps even going out and speaking to schools. Peña said that the Task Force on Diversity is working on that.

Discussion followed concerning the dollar amount of each scholarship. Right now, there is \$3000 that is divided into full scholarships of \$695 each and partial scholarships of \$195 each, with a view to offering scholarship money to as many people as possible, in order to give as many people as possible the opportunity to attend the preconference. The committee discussed whether \$695 really is a sufficient amount to attract applicants and to cover the expense of attending a preconference. A suggestion was made to look into what other groups are doing and how much they are offering for their scholarships.

Cullars stated that ACRL has contingency funds targeted specifically to minority recruitment, and that, if approached, the ACLR Board might come up with additional funding for RBMS scholarships. He said, however, that this is a bad year to get money from ACRL, and that it is too late to do it for this year's scholarship. He suggested looking into it for next year.

#### 8. Update on the Buddy Program

Raine reported that there were four buddy requests and ten volunteers, which is about average for a midwinter meeting. He thanked everyone who participated.

#### 9. Mentoring Program for RBMS

Peña explained that the RBMS Diversity Action Plan has charged this committee with expanding the buddy program to include mentoring for new members from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. The RBMS Task Force on Diversity is encouraging this committee to develop a mentoring program for minorities, and also for any other new or recent member of RBMS interested in a mentor.

Discussion on a possible mentoring program included whether RBMS should model their program on that offered by SAA. The point was made that different people may be looking for different types of information: some new people just want information about RBMS and how to get involved, while others are looking for career advice.

Some of the parameters of a mentoring program might include limiting the official role of a mentor to a one-year commitment; the mentor would contact the “mentee” at least once a month to see how things are going. The mentor would offer career advice if needed, would provide information about RBMS, and would facilitate networking at conferences.

Peña, Fox and Ferguson volunteered to look at the SAA mentoring program and to see what its goals and parameters are. The next step will be for them to develop a draft proposal for an RBMS mentoring program and to draft a request for volunteer mentors, to be circulated to the committee for comment by March 1st. The goal is to have the proposal finalized by April 1st to present it to the Executive Committee, followed by an announcement on the RBMS electronic discussion list one month before the preconference.

A discussion followed about offering newer members of RBMS who are not at the preconference and only attend the main ALA conference a venue or opportunity to meet each other, to meet other RBMS members, and to find out more about RBMS. It was suggested that the half hour break between the end of the Annual Conference Program and the beginning of Information Exchange might be a good time to have an informal meeting at the back of the room for anyone interested in learning more about RBMS and making connections with other members of the section. Fox and Reynolds volunteered to organize this.

#### 10. Update on the Diversity Task Force

Halvorson and Peña reported that the RBMS Task Force on Diversity would be meeting tonight to discuss the implementation of the section’s diversity action plan. It was mentioned that Julie Grob wrote an article about this in *RBM*. Halvorson is working with Lacy on the 2005 Annual Conference program, which will concern diversity collections in Chicago. Peña suggested looking at the Diversity Task Force section on the RBMS webpage. The Task Force plans to have liaison relationships with other committees and task forces in other organizations.

#### 11. Letters to new members/reinstated members/dropped members

Raine announced that he is continuing to receive monthly membership statistics from ACRL, along with mailing labels, indicating new members, reinstated members, and dropped members. The November statistics listed 12 new members, 6 reinstated members and 16 dropped members. The monthly numbers are fairly consistent, with a slight increase in the months immediately preceding the preconference, because new memberships, membership renewals, and dropped memberships are staggered throughout the year. Raine announced that he had also been doing a monthly mailing of letters to new members welcoming them to the section and enclosing an RBMS brochure. Beam said she would draft a letter to dropped members to find out why they dropped their membership to RBMS, and urge them to reconsider. She will circulate the letter to the committee for approval. Cullars volunteered to take on the monthly mailing to new members and dropped members, and Raine said he would send Cullars a batch of RBMS brochures, the template for the letter, and other necessary information, and forward him the monthly mailing lists when he receives them from ACRL.

## 12. 2004 RBMS Preconference orientation

Some suggestions were made regarding the RBMS orientation session that takes place at the beginning of each preconference. Lane suggested that all of the members of the Membership and Professional Development Committee who are present stand or sit by Raine at the front of the room so that they can be readily identified by newcomers as committee members. She also suggested that they wear a ribbon or sticker during the preconference with some kind of designation (someone suggested “Ask me about RBMS”) so that newcomers or people with questions can find someone to ask them. Other experienced RBMS members outside of the committee could also wear this designation.

In the past few years, giving new members and first time attendees the option of wearing a ribbon to identify themselves as first time attendees has worked well, and the committee agreed to do it again at the next preconference. Faulds will contact **Margo Sutton** at ACRL to request ribbons or stickers for new members and first time attendees, as well as ribbons or stickers with “Ask me about RBMS,” for experienced members.

Raine said he would contact Lois Fischer Black to ask her to send him copies of her handouts so that he can prepare new handouts for the preconference orientation.

## 13. RBMS presence at the 2004 ALA NMRT orientation

Fox and Reynolds volunteered to attend the ALA New Members Round Table Orientation at the Annual Conference to hand out RBMS brochures and answer questions about RBMS. They will get in touch with the NMRT to find out what they need to do. Raine will send them brochures once they find out how many are needed.

Lane mentioned that she would be representing RBMS at the ACRL information booth this weekend at the San Diego convention center, and that Raine had brought brochures for her to hand out there.

## 14. Liaison Reports

a)ACRL Professional Development Committee: there was no report since Ellickson, the liaison, had to leave to attend that meeting.

b)ACRL Membership Committee: with Palmer’s resignation from the committee, no one attends that committee’s meeting, which always conflicts with the Information Exchange, but Raine receives monthly updates from ACRL Membership, and reported that the committee seems quite active.

## 15. New Business

a) Newcomers party at preconference:

The committee discussed the tradition, which began spontaneously last year, of new or recent members of the section and first time attendees at the preconference getting together for an informal social occasion. At the last meeting, Jennifer Schaffner volunteered to organize a similar event for the next preconference. The committee

discussed the concept of a newcomers party, and agreed that if there is such an event again, an announcement should be made inviting people to attend, rather than relying solely on word of mouth, so that no one is inadvertently left out. There was a feeling among the committee members that the party should continue to be something that the newcomers organize themselves, without too much interference from the committee or from other more senior members of RBMS. Raine and Faulds agreed to talk to Schaffner to find out her thoughts about how to make sure that such an event continues to occur at future preconferences.

b) New members forum at preconference:

At the last preconference, the committee sponsored a seminar which consisted of a panel of new or recent members of RBMS sharing their experiences of RBMS. The seminar generated a lot of interest, and there was some discussion about having a similar panel discussion or new members forum become a regular feature at preconferences. The committee agreed that this was worth exploring, perhaps not as a yearly event, but every few years.

The committee discussed the possibility of presenting other seminars at the 2005 preconference, which has the education of special collections librarians as its theme. Possible seminar topics might include the new members forum, or a seminar on core competencies for special collections librarians. Another suggested topic was “what you didn’t learn in library school.” Ellickson is on the program committee for 2005. Fox has been on the Seminars Committee, so he can assist with this. The deadline for presenting seminar topics for next year is June 1.

c) Link to new members web site on the Preconference web site:

The committee agreed that a new members web page needs to be developed on the RBMS web site. It should include general information about RBMS and how to get involved, information about the buddy program and the future mentoring program, and a general FAQ. Reynolds volunteered to create this web page.

Raine thanked the committed and adjourned the meeting at 11:05am

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Reynolds