Cornell University Library

Council of Librarians

Minutes, Meeting of April 16, 1997

1. Library Management System (Sarah). The selection of a Library Management System (LMS) will be delayed until Fall, 1997. The chief reasons involve finances, communication, information technology, and recruitment:

- Provost Randel is a strong advocate for the LMS but neither he nor Sarah have the funding in hand yet.
- Meanwhile, although the evaluation committees involve a substantive proportion of Cornell University Library staff, there is still a need for further communication with the library staff as a whole, not to mention faculty and other stakeholders. The picture regarding our need for a new LMS and the process for choosing it needs to be filled in and presented so that all have a thorough understanding.
- We also need to look at where we fit into the university's information technology plans; more discussion with David Lambert (VP for Information Technology) regarding CIT and other parts of Cornell's IT environment.
- Related to the above issue is the decision to recruit for an Associate University Librarian for Information Technologies. The person in this new position will have the responsibilities of improving the coordination of digital library initiatives going on throughout the library system, and overseeing the Library Technology Division (which, at present, is principally responsible for managing NOTIS). This is an open competition with Christian Boissonnas as chair of the search committee. A copy of the job description for the position was passed out to members of the Council. The job will be advertised in the Chronicle of Higher Education and on listservs (send any suggestions for listservs on which the position should be posted to Ann Dyckman at apd2@cornell.edu) The funding from this position comes for the first year from the Provost, the Library, and the VP for Information Technology. After that first year the Library will be responsible for full support. Nevertheless we can be assured that during the first year the AUL will not defer to CIT, although he or she will participate in appropriate meetings. It would certainly be ideal to have someone on board for this coming fall, and the new AUL for IT must be involved in the LMS decision.

Despite the change in schedule, we don't want to lose the momentum we have built up with our LMS investigative work. We should continue it, pacing it through the summer. Sarah hopes for funding for next fiscal year, and that the library system can make a Library Management System decision in '97.

2. Academic Leadership Series (Sarah). This will be on May 1. It is a session to alert Cornell's leaders -- faculty, staff, and key administrators -- to important trends and issues on the horizon or within the academic community that the University should look at to advance its mission. This year the foci will be digital libraries, emeritus faculty, and research at Cornell. 600 campus leaders have been invited, and about 250 will attend. In a one hour plenarysession each subject

area will receive a fifteen minute presentation. Then the audience will separate into groups of eighty each for further presentations. After that the participants will break into smaller groups of six to eight for discussion. The series is by invitation only; the CUL Senior Management Group has been invited to participate. Facilitators from CUL so far include Ann Dyckman, Paul Constantine, Mark Dimunation, David Block, Janet McCue, and Sam Demas. Depending on registration, there may be need for more facilitators. A summary and key points from each track will be presented in a plenary session at the end.

3. Tactical plan (Sarah). The Senior Management Group and the Senior Staff are looking at documents from meetings over the past few years to draw out goals and objectives. The plan is to meet with a facilitator and agree on a mission and 4-6 overriding goals for the Cornell University Library. These will be brought back to the Council of Librarians for discussion and to be taken to the various units. The idea will not be to try to redirect existing plans or try to shoehorn documents already prepared by the units into this set of overriding goals. Instead the library system will begin working over a period of two to three years, in an iterative process, toward having coordinated aims for all facets of the system. We must begin somewhere; for now we'll begin by working to achieve consensus on the top goals.

4. Number and quality of meetings (Ross). Ross began a discussion regarding whether there is more meeting overload than normal, asking "Is it worse than usual? Do we need help in running meetings? Are meetings being effectively managed?" A number of suggestions and issues emerged from the discussion:

- The Library could investigate ways of centralizing information about meetings to avoid conflicts and allow prioritization. --We could consider having months in which meetings are banned except for emergencies. --We could consider having "no meeting" blocks of time. --The system should have a mechanism to review committees after they've been working for a time to see if they should be discontinued. --We should consider the economic impact of meetings. --Committee leaders should be sure that there is follow-through regarding decisions made.
- Minutes are extremely useful.
- We probably don't use the phone as effectively as we could; we could easily use conference calls more (up to three different phone lines can participate without special preparation; and speakerphones are not that expensive).
- Meetings serve important purposes beyond information, discussion and decision-making: we reward people, as part of our promotion process, for being on committees; meetings are excellent -- and sometimes unique -- opportunities for face time; other intangible but positive things happen via committee meetings.

Ann D. informed the group that Susan Markowitz is looking into sources of information and training regarding improved meeting management. Sarah summarized the discussion, agreeing that many of the suggestions warrant further attention.

5. Digital Library Projects -- a brief overview of ongoing work in the CUL system:

Elaine Engst reported on various projects of the Digital Access Coalition. The Utopia project has digitized Renaissance art images from slides from the Art History and Architecture slide libraries and original works from the Johnson Art Museum, and is now working on images from rare books in the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections. The Museum Educational Site Licensing program (http://mesl.tc.cornell.edu) contains scanned images from museums. A project called IMAG/CU (Image Management and Access Group at Cornell University) is looking for a system to handle image databases in order to provide a catalog for some 27,000 items at the Johnson Art Museum that will be converted using digital camera. The intention is that there will be a connection between this image database and the library database. Planning is taking place with the Plantations to create a Web-based "electronic docent" to help visitors identify plants (work is being done by the Interactive Multimedia Group). In RMC, digital projects include continued scanning of the Ezra Cornell papers, the Johnson family papers (which include the Abigail Adams letters) and the papers of abolitionist Lydia Maria Child. They hope to have all of these collections available on the Web site later this spring. Additionally, the letter from Ezra Cornell found in the Sage cornerstone has been scanned and is available on the RMC Web site (http://rmc.library.cornell.edu).

Sarah Thomas reported that the Digital Access Coalition is now in its 5th year.

Anne Kenney summarized Making of America I which will end this summer with 1.5 million images up at Cornell and the University of Michigan (different access capabilities at each university) and announced Mellon funding to scan Icelandic manuscripts from preservation microfilm, a joint project between Cornell and the National and University Libraries of Iceland (in Iceland original sagas and related manuscripts will be scanned directly); also, the Department of Preservation and Conservation's first issue of "Diginews" has been produced and the Department will host the Big 11 preservation officers' meeting to continue to investigate photo CD's.

Ross Atkinson added that Making of America II is a National Digital Library Federation project involving a distributed digital library across major institutions using their local interfaces; contents will be publications from 1874-1900 and funding is being sought.

Susan Barnes announced that, as of 4/16/97, the beta version of the Core Historical Literature of Agriculture is running for use and testing by Mann staff. This contains scanned bitmapped images of 115 volumes from the list of first priority historial agricultural literature compiled during the Rockefeller-funded Core Agricultural Literature project

6. Slope day (Sarah). Several faculty have sent a "Dear colleague" letter to all faculty. The letter refers to the Clarkson tragedy and invites volunteers from the faculty to be our on the slope May 2 with student patrols to help encourage responsible behavior. The usual Slope Day situation, the measures taken in Uris and Olin libraries, and the difficulty of keeping students on the job that day were described.

7. Various other information from Sarah: the Deans Information Day will be postponed since so much information is being provided this semester to CUBIT (Cornell University Board for Information Technology), FABIT (Faculty Advisory Board for Information Technology) and the

Academic Leadership Series. Of the 17 nominees for the Fuerst Award, 8 participated in a focus group to provide insights about the library (Catherine Murray-Rust will summarize these); perhaps in the future feedback from a random sample of students can be collected.

Recorder: Susan Barnes