

University Libraries Section at Midwinter

A wrap-up of activities

The rapid pace of change in the library world is both the most exhilarating and the most stressful aspect of professional life for me and, I would suspect, for other librarians, as well. Neither we as information professionals nor our parent organizations can afford to sit still for even a moment. And our professional organizations must change, too, if they are to support us into the future.

It was this train of thought that led me to invite a trained facilitator, Sue Baughman of the University of Maryland, to a University Libraries Section (ULS) Executive Committee meeting at Midwinter. Baughman's talent and well-tested techniques resulted in the generation of dozens of insights and ideas for making ULS a stronger, more member-oriented, responsive, and effective organization.

The work we did together at Midwinter will undoubtedly make it possible for us to move forward in creative ways. Not only will it enable us to improve ULS and provide more opportunities for our members, but we will also be able to make a more substantial contribution to the work of ACRL and ALA.

I welcome your ideas on how ULS can serve its members, our libraries, and our profession more effectively.—*Julia Zimmerman, Ohio University, julia.zimmerman@ohio.edu*

Committees and discussion groups

The ULS Executive Committee met twice during Midwinter and has begun examining roles and potential directions for ULS. The first

meeting included a special session, facilitated by Sue Baughman, to help the Executive Committee identify future directions for ULS.

A large number of issues were identified, but several key areas were seen as especially relevant for ULS, given the section's primary focus on university libraries. The group ultimately identified four areas of special importance for ULS to address in the next several years. These areas were: 1) standards and guidelines and how we measure ourselves, 2) scholarly communication issues, 3) changes in higher education and the concomitant changes in the role of libraries, and 4) involvement in accreditation processes.

The results of the facilitated meeting were referred to ULS's Policy and Planning Committee. This committee responded at the second meeting of Executive Committee with an initial recommendation to expand the number of ULS committees and broaden involvement of the section's membership. The recommendation included the creation of new committees on service assessment, scholarly communication, and accreditation, as well as examining recruitment and retention of ULS members and a review of the ULS mission.

The Standards and Guidelines Committee has continued to pursue new standards for university libraries that are more oriented to outcomes and assessment, similar to the standards for college libraries. Lori Goetsch (University of Maryland), this committee's chair, received the Executive Committee's endorsement to continue collaboration with the

College Libraries Section and the Community and Junior College Libraries Section to consider a single, unified set of standards for all academic libraries.

The ULS Public Service Directors of Large Research Libraries Discussion Group addressed proposals for expanding its membership, as well as several substantive issues. The new recommendation on membership includes all current members as of 2000. The top 33 ARL libraries, by volume count, up to a maximum of 50 institutions, would also be included. Diane Strauss (University of North Carolina), the group's convenor, reported that they will be voting on this proposal by the ALA Annual Conference in June. The group also discussed library security issues and Web site usability studies during its regular meeting.

The ULS Current Topics Discussion Group organized its session around the topic of what academic libraries can do to enhance the role of the library as a "place" on campus. Betsy Baker (Northwestern University), the group's convenor, presented a newly coined term "inreach"—that is,

establishing facilities and services that draw our library users back into the physical place of the library.

The Current Topics session included presentations from three institutions with innovative new facilities in place, or anticipated. Ruth Kifer described George Mason University's unique Johnson Center, a multiuse facility that provides a wide range of services to students, including some library and information services. Lynn Sutton described Wayne State University's new undergraduate library and some of its nontraditional programs. The last presentation was by Richard Meyer, who presented plans for the new information commons at Georgia Institute of Technology, as well as long-range plans for a new innovative Learning Resource Center. In addition to these progressive facilities, he described several innovative library inreach programs, such as lunch and instructional sessions for senior administrators' secretaries. The discussion group's session was well received with more than 80 attendees present.—*John Lehner, University of Houston, jlehner@uh.edu* ■

("Library-sponsored..." continued from page 266)

faculty book-buying trips far outweighs the issue of final say. The retail trips are, after all, only one of four acquisition channels.

In another article, Buis² proposes complex "departmental selection parameters" for acquiring new books. The amount of effort by both librarians and faculty in this system appears to be extensive. The cost of acquiring a book in terms of staff time is a big factor in small higher education libraries. At both the university and community college, investing in materials versus process must receive a high priority.

A later article by Dittmore³ reports on how Tulane University is bringing the responsibility for book selection back to the library. Faculty politics and better use of resources were cited as a driving force for making this change.

Conclusion

Changes in the information flows of the late 1990s suggest that new players are joining the patron's information channels. In the foreseeable future, libraries will have even more

competition for materials budgets with other library-like information providers and computer departments.

I believe it is crucial for the library to take a twofold approach to providing students and faculty with books. First, we must take advantage of the electronic advances in order to be efficient and functional. Secondly, we shouldn't turn our backs on spending quality time with our faculty and should use super bookstores to gain an advantage over our library-like competition.

Notes

1. K. Strauch, "Librarian versus faculty selection: the good meets the bad and the ugly," *Collection Management* 12 (1990): 37–41.
2. E. Buis, "Collection development policies: coordinating teaching faculty and library staff interest at Southeast Missouri State University," *Collection Management* 13 (1990): 11–25.
3. M. Dittmore, "Changing Patterns of faculty participation in collection development," *Collection Management* 16 (1992), 79–89. ■

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