

Minutes

RBMS Diversity Committee

ALA Annual Conference

Sun., June 26, 2011, 8-10 am

New Orleans Marriott- Mardi Gras B

Members present: Athena Jackson (chair), Louisiana State University; Katharine Chandler, Free Library of Philadelphia; Katie Henningsen, University of Kentucky; Michelle Mascaro (recorder), University of Akron, recorder; Michael Taylor, Louisiana State University; Christina Thompson, Hendrix College

Guests: Kathryn Brooks (M&PD committee member), University of Wyoming, American Heritage Center; Juli McLoone (incoming member), University of Texas San Antonio; Katherine Trouern-Trend (Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) and incoming member), Hartford Public Library; Chella Vaidyanathan (incoming member), Johns Hopkins University

Absent: Veronica Reyes-Escudero, University of Arizona; Helice Koffler, University of Washington; Meg Meiman, University of Delaware; Lisa Tafoya (virtual intern), University of North Texas SLIS, Daniel J. Slive (Ex-Officio Member), Bridwell Library

Introduction of members and guests and selection of recorder: Michelle Mascaro volunteered to record minutes.

Review and Approval of Previous Minutes: Members reviewed and unanimously approved the minutes from the 2011 Midwinter Meeting.

Creating Historical Document: This project is now redesigned to assist knowledge transfer between present/past chairs to incoming/current chairs. Katie Henningsen proposed having chairs place all their notes on a thumb drive that could be passed along to their successor(s). It was also suggested to put a clear timeline of the committee's notable successes from the Diversity Toolkit Presentation in lieu of a full historical document on the Diversity website www.rbms.info.

- ❖ Action items: Athena Jackson will collect documents for next chair. Katharine Chandler will work on the timeline visual for website.

Diversity recruitment:

- **Section survey request to Membership & Professional Development (M&PD):** Katie Henningsen, Diversity Committee liaison to M&PD, stated that M&PD is moving forward with our request for a new survey of the section membership. With Kathryn Brooks, Katie will monitor and report on any survey updates. Juli McLoone, Athena Jackson, and Katherine Trouern-Trend also volunteered to help.
 - ❖ Action item: As an incentive for completing the supplemental Diversity survey, Athena Jackson will try to get a donation of book (regarding diversity in special collections) to be raffled off to members who complete an optional survey.
- **Identifying and assigning target affinity groups to contact for more active recruitment:** Katherine Trouern-Trend, from her work with EMIERT, has a list of colleges with large populations of underrepresented group we can target for recruitment. Chella Vaidyanathan will make a list of Asian Study Programs to pass along to Katherine Trouern-Trend to be included. Juli McLoone and Katharine Chandler will work on a promotional document that can be sent to these schools for dissemination. Juli McLoone attended the ALA Diversity Outreach Fair and brought some example fliers we could emulate. Christina Thompson, Spectrum Scholar, and Katie Henningsen, former ARL Fellow, will look into outreach to those groups. Juli recommended contacting career centers and honor colleges specifically at schools.

- **Deploying Toolkit Online:** Athena Jackson would like to record her next Toolkit presentation (yet to be determined) for mounting on the website, or another online space for outreach. Chella Vaidyanathan volunteered to serve as the Toolkit liaison and monitor the Toolkit online and make sure all the links work. The group discussed other ideas for promotion in the future.

Other Committee and Program Reports (formal or informal liaisons): Diversity has two formal liaisons, one to the Scholarships and the other to M&PD Committees.

- **M&PD** (Katie Henningsen): In addition to the survey, Katie reported that the MP&D committee discussed ideas brought up at the “Issues for and Questions from People New to RBMS and Special Collections” Discussion Group that took place at the RBMS Preconference, especially the possibility of establishing regional and student RBMS chapters.
- **Exhibition Awards** (Michael Taylor): Michael mentioned how he raised the possibility of adding diversity as an award category criterion and will continue to advocate for such a feature.
- **Cultural Competencies: From Development to Action!, ACRL Program:** (Juli McLoone) The ARCL Cultural Competencies Survey looked at outcomes, not just values.
 - *Action Items:* 1) Athena Jackson, Katie Henningsen, and Michelle Mascaro volunteered to work on a white paper on hiring members of underrepresented groups into the rare book and manuscript profession. Athena Jackson would like to explore including anonymous interviews with hiring managers.
- **ACRL Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee, ALA Office for Diversity Meeting, & ALA Diversity Program, Urging Leaders: Moving Diverse Leaders Forward:** (Athena Jackson) Spectrum was awarded \$300,000 from Bill and Melinda Gates for an online leadership program. The only ACRL sections with formal diversity committees are Instruction and RBMS. Athena Jackson had a conference call with chairs of the Instruction and ACRL at large Diversities committees. They talked about creating a shared calendar to prevent conflicts with diversity programming at ALA. Also, they discussed co-sponsoring a future program about challenges in diversity outreach across the academic library. Athena learned about Diversity efforts from affinity groups throughout ALA and shared several good points from a diversity session focused on promoting leadership from librarians from diverse backgrounds.

Preconference update:

- **Seminar Debriefing:** “Tell Us Your Story: Putting Diversity into Action” was very engaging and successful. Thirty people attended and the feedback was very positive.
- **Outreach to Scholarship recipients update:** Athena Jackson sent congratulations to all scholarship recipients who self identified themselves as members from underrepresented groups and invited them to join her restaurant night group. Athena is thinking of doing a similar social outing at next year’s preconference as a way to engage with scholarship recipients.

Scholarship Committee update: Katie Henningsen, for Daniel J. Slive, reported of the thirty-six legitimate scholarship applicants, seven self identified as being from an underrepresented group, of which six received funds. Meg Meiman will be the new Diversity representative to the Scholarship Committee. Future representatives in order are: Katharine Chandler, Juli McLoone, and Katie Henningsen.

Future Diversity Programming Ideas: The immediate goal of our committee is to ensure that we are not merely talking to one another, but that we are providing practical advice and engaging programs for our colleagues to discuss putting diversity initiatives to action at their respective institutions.

- Using diversity as leverage for cooperative grant projects and outreach.
 - ❖ *Action item:* Michael Taylor will write proposal.
- Breaking down barriers between collecting from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

- Working with volunteers from diverse backgrounds.
- Looking at our profession through the lens of 21st century collection development shifts.
- Cataloging program focused on the question: Can we justify acquiring “other people’s materials” and then providing access to it only in English?
 - ❖ *Action item:* Michelle Mascaro will write up as proposal to Technical Services Discussion Group.
- Special Collections tools for working with K-12
 - ❖ *Action item:* Katherine Trouern-Trend will write up.
- Reconstructing Cultures through Oral Histories (proposed by Katherine Trouern-Trend.)

Virtual Committee Participation and Meetings:

- Katharine Chandler asked what the policy was about virtual committee membership. Athena Jackson responded that chairs can appointment virtual committee members and recommended that the committee vote (possibly at Midwinter) to always accept virtual members.
- Virtual meetings worked very well for planning the preconference seminar.
- Our unofficial virtual chat meeting last spring was very useful and generated a lot of future ideas for programming. Recommended that next time we do a virtual chat to establish the order which people are supposed to respond. (Perhaps alphabetically by screen name?)
 - ❖ *Action item:* Athena Jackson will email transcript of chat to all members.

Other business:

- Athena Jackson has been asked to propose a seminar for the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, Sept. 2012 in Kansas City.
- Chella Vaidyanathan brought up the need for assessment of diversity and cultural awareness efforts. These issues are talked about in committees, but cultural awareness is not necessarily taking place in the workplace. We will share this information with M&PD and perhaps the membership survey will have data to start assessing concrete initiatives in the workplace.

No Further Business.

Submitted by Michelle Mascaro, Special Collections Cataloger, University of Akron