Academic Roundtable Meeting
AkLA Annual Conference, Juneau 2015
March 01, 2015 / 08:00 AM

Present

Tuzzy: David Ongley
UAA: Anna Bjartmarsdottir, Page Brannon, Erik Carlson, Christie Ericson, Jennifer McKay, Rebecca Moorman (co-chair), Micah Muer (co-chair), Ruth Terry
UAF: Paul Adasiak, Karen Jensen, Tyson Rinio
UAS: Nancy Eagan, Elise Tomlinson, Bethany Wilkes

Minutes

Micah opens the meeting. Those present introduce themselves.

Agenda is approved.

Old business

Summary of annual report: The ACRT's annual report, prepared for the AkLA general membership meeting, was summarized. Basically, the roundtable did a few things since its last meeting on March 1, 2014:

- In the Summer of 2014, and after several years of the batting around the idea of becoming an ACRL chapter, Alys Jordan of UAF arranged for interested Alaska academic librarians to attend a webinar hosted by ACRL leaders. Few Alaska librarians attended. Over the summer, a few people signed a petition to become an ACRL chapter.

- Throughout the year, a subset of ACRT librarians with instruction duties met via Google Hangouts to try and align LS101 outcomes and to plan a preconference for the 2015 Juneau conference.

- In late 2014 or early 2015, the ACRT chose Ruth Terry to replace the departing Bella Gerlich on the Governor's Advisory Council.

ACRL effort: It was mentioned that the ACRT's efforts to join ACRL (detailed above) have not gained any traction. Only a handful of the 25 necessary signatures (from people who are both ACRT and ACRL members) have been collected, the benefits of joining (which Paul asked about) were unclear to all present, and the obligations that would befall us (also unclear) were said to not be desired. Page mentions that keeping money local is a good idea in this tight budgetary climate. The general consensus was to suspend the effort indefinitely.

New business

Governor's advisory council: Bella Gerlich has left UAF and therefore also left the Governor's Advisory Council. Ruth Terry volunteered to replace her. There is a slight issue:
Bella’s term ends in January 2017, just when work begins in earnest. Since it seems odd to appoint Ruth to a shortened term which expires just when the important work begins, Micah sought (and found) a general consensus to let Ruth serve until at least the Summer of 2017, provided she wants to.

It’s not clear if we extend her appointment or if she'll have to be appointed for another three-year term in the beginning of January 2017. Page provided some interesting background, saying that the Council works on a five year cycle but that terms are on a three year cycle.

**Future retreat or preconference plans:** In keeping with the issues she raised at our 2014 ACRT business meeting, Elise says that budget matters would make for a good conference. This is followed by loud murmurs of assent. A bit more fleshing out results in a tentative plan for the 2016 preconference:

- Its title might be “Telling our story” (Elise) or “Demonstrate your impact” (Bethany)

- The theme would be communicating the value of libraries (particularly to those responsible for funding us).

- This preconference would necessarily involve more than just instruction librarians (a group past preconferences have probably overrepresented, as was pointed out). Somebody suggested separate 'tracks' for different groups (e.g., catalogers, instructors). All meet to talk about how to show their value. At the end of the day, everyone comes together to share.

- Good to cover: how to market libraries using this type of data.

- Also good to cover: showing how libraries help meet “core themes” or institutional objectives.

- Page mentions that ACRL has a workshop on how to demonstrate the value of academic libraries. Karen and Page agree to look into how much this costs and whether it focuses on practical things (a workshop heavy on theory is probably not worth the cost given our finances). Page mentions that there is an article or something available in PDF form that recapitulates at least some of the workshop. She will find it and send it out.

**Selection of new chair:** Anna Bjartmarsdottir volunteers to serve a two-year term as co-chair. She replaces Micah. Rebecca will be “senior” co-chair now.

**Other things:**

- Elise says that the financial situation at UAS is tough.

- Erik gives advice to the effect that librarians should not respond to budget cuts by doubling down and doing more with less. This encourages future cuts and is unsustainable anyway. It ruins morale and leads to high turnover. Somebody says that
you need to be clear that you can only “do less with less,” though they add that it's important not to use this kind of language as a threat or challenge.

- On the topic of keeping our progress going, it was decided that routine Google Hangouts meetings – both to discuss things generally and to plan the preconference – would be useful. There is also a general consensus that everyone should be on the listserv. A sign-up sheet was passed around. Finally, it was said that the wiki could be used to store documents we come up with. This would be more inclusive and better demonstrate our impact!

- Discussion of using Google Sites to store material pertaining to demonstrating our value. Christie makes the point that it's not useful to just post links or names of articles; some effort has to be made to summarize these or at least say why they're important.

- David mentions that the Polar Libraries Conference will be in Fairbanks in 2016.

- Tyson says that after the retirement of Merrie Mendenhall in Bethel that position went from a faculty one to a staff one.

- While maybe all libraries face decreased funding, smaller libraries across the UA system are really threatened. There is some discussion about libraries that may close or may have directors who are not replaced (at least not as faculty).