



35th Annual Conference
Sheraton Colony Square, Atlanta, Georgia, April 26-May 1

Minutes

ARLIS/NA Public Policy Committee Meeting
Atlanta, Friday, 27 April 2007, 3:30-5:00 P.M.

Present: Leigh Gates (outgoing Executive Board Liaison), Martha González Palacios, Roger Lawson, Ray Anne Lockard, Marilyn Russell, Timothy Shipe (Chair), Rijn Templeton, Amy Trendler (incoming Executive Board Liaison).

Absent: Marc Gartler, Marlene Gordon, Cara List, D. Vanessa Kam, Dennis Kreps,

Guest: Rebecca Price (for the ARLIS/NA Assessment Task Force)

Introductions and approval of agenda

Committee Goals for 2007/2008.

The following goals were approved:

Develop position statements on behalf of ARLIS/NA regarding emerging intellectual property and other public policy issues of relevance to the profession, and forward such statements to the Executive Board for endorsement; make recommendations to the Executive Board concerning position statements developed by other groups seeking ARLIS/NA endorsement. (Strategic Plan Goal III)

Revise and reorganize the committee website and maintain the content in order to provide a forum for educating ARLIS members about intellectual property, intellectual freedom, and other public policy issues. (Strategic Plan Goals I.A. and IV.C)

Monitor public policy discussion lists of relevance to art librarians, and disseminate information from these as warranted. (Strategic Plan Goal I.A)

Develop and propose programming related to public policy for the 2008 Denver conference. (Goal I.B)

We still need to develop a goal related to possible changes in the nature of the Public Policy Committee in light of our discussion of ARLIS/NA's proposals for restructuring.

[Note: On 10 May the committee agreed on the following goal by e-mail: "Engage in dialogue with the Executive Board and within the Public Policy Committee to ensure that the essential elements of the committee's charge (developing position statements on behalf of ARLIS/NA and educating ARLIS/NA membership about public policy issues) are accounted for in any organizational restructuring. (Goals IV.A and IV.B)"]

Monitoring Assignments

Members agreed to monitor various issues, lists, organizations, etc. as follows:

CAA-CIP (Lockard)
Canadian issues in general (González)
Digital Copyright List (Templeton)
Digital Future Coalition (Templeton)
Intellectual Freedom Roundtable (Kreps to be asked)
Liblicense (Shipe)
Library of Congress (Lawson)
Orphan Works (Shipe)
Section 108 (Gartler (to be asked) and Lawson)
U.S. Copyright Office (Lawson)

Revision of Committee Web Pages

Marc Gartler has agreed to continue editing the committee's web pages. The committee discussed the recommendations which Marc had forwarded to the committee prior to the conference (selectively paraphrased below). In general, the committee concurred with all of Marc's recommendations, and agreed that the details (specific wording, choice of links, etc.) should be entrusted to Marc's judgment.

Specifically, the committee agreed that the number of links should be considerably reduced, providing only three or four links for each section, and pointing ARLIS members toward good web portals that are relevant to their work rather than developing such a portal ourselves.

The committee agreed that we should prune the list of affiliated and related organizations, privileging the most significant and deleting the rest.

The committee agreed that the pages for distance education and scholarly communication are only tangentially related to the charge of the Public Policy Committee, and should therefore be removed.

The committee agreed that there should be sections for public policy issues that directly relate to libraries, including:

Civil liberties, intellectual freedom and privacy

Copyright

Funding

Government information

Technology, the Internet and telecommunications

In addition, the committee felt that some effort should be made to include Canadian public policy concerns on our web pages. It would be left up to Marc's judgment whether there should be a separate section for Canadian issues, or whether Canadian links should be included in the individual topical sections. Martha González agreed to assist Marc in identifying relevant Canadian issues and links.

The committee is grateful to Marc for his work in updating the web pages and moving them to a permanent home on the ARLIS/NA website.

Program Ideas for the Denver Conference

Tim Shipe agreed to issue an inquiry on ARLIS-L soliciting ideas for programming related to public policy issues. While committees are no longer responsible for programming, we could take the lead in developing a program proposal, as we did with this year's session on copyright.

Assessment Task Force Recommendations and the Future of the Committee

The committee discussed the task force's report, and particularly its recommendation that the Public Policy Committee either be disbanded or reconstituted as an advisory committee charged with advising the Board and preparing statements and expressing positions on behalf of the Society. An alternative suggestion had been made by the outgoing Board liaison that the committee might be reformed as an "interest group" under the proposed new organizational structure.

In the course of discussion it became clear that the Public Policy Committee currently has two distinct but related charges: first, to make recommendations to the Executive Board and prepare statements intended to represent the official position of ARLIS/NA on public policy issues, and second, to educate ARLIS/NA members on public policy issues. It is clear from the recent membership survey that ARLIS/NA members do not necessarily know what the committee is doing. In particular, since public policy statements are approved by the Executive Board and issued by the ARLIS/NA President as official positions of the Society, members are typically unaware that these statements have been researched and drafted by the Public Policy Committee.

After considerable discussion, it was concluded that the current committee charge might be better handled by two distinct groups within ARLIS/NA. The responsibility for advising the Board and preparing positions on behalf of the Society clearly

requires a formal advisory committee; such a committee would probably have a narrower charge than the current committee, one which would exclude the general educational component. The educational component (including maintenance of the public policy web pages) would be better suited to one of the less formal "interest groups" envisioned in the task force's recommendations.

Therefore, the committee's recommendation to the Executive Board is that if the proposed organizational structure goes into effect, the Public Policy Committee should be reconstituted as an advisory committee with the narrower charge described above. Concurrently, an interest group would be formed to handle the general educational aspects of the committee's current charge.

It is our understanding that the Public Policy Committee will continue to exist in its present form and with its current charge for at least the next year, and that any changes would go into effect following the Denver conference, at earliest.

Respectfully submitted
Timothy Shipe, University of Iowa