

## **ARLIS/NA Occasional Paper Proposal**

### ***Staffing Standards for Art Libraries and Visual Resources Collections***

The proposal is for a document to update Occasional Paper 11, **Staffing Standards for Art Libraries and Visual Resources Collections** (1996). The present staffing standards document covers self-assessment and planning; the main body of work outlines the varying levels of staff in art libraries and visual resources collections (professionals, paraprofessional/technical staff, and other support staff). It also covers staffing by type of collection (academic, art/design school, museum, public, and visual resources). Appendices cover self-assessment criteria, typical responsibilities by type of position, and a selected bibliography. While the document is helpful at a very basic level, it is vague and not supported by case studies or hard data, especially regarding responsibilities by type of position in the various types of libraries.

The proposed update would attempt to provide more on-target information to identify minimal to optimal staffing standards for each type of library (public libraries might be excluded, as that population of ARLIS/NA membership has declined dramatically since the 1996 document was published). Standards for staffing levels should be closely examined; for example, my research has shown that typically paraprofessional/technical staff have at least a bachelor's degree, and frequently an advanced degree. Furthermore, very few libraries have identified any staff members as "clerical" or other, a category discussed in the 1996 document. (This excludes the category of student workers, which might in itself present an opportunity for another Occasional Paper). A thorough investigation into these trends is warranted. Additionally, the updated document could refer to information gathered for the joint ARLIS/NA-VRA standard **Criteria for the Hiring and Retention of Visual Resources Professionals** (updated 2002).

Finally, case studies of each type of library might be solicited from library directors within ARLIS/NA. These could serve as excellent examples of how goals and objectives for the collection are set, how each staff member contributes, and how a self-assessment can assist in documenting needs for increased staffing, budget, hours, services offered, space, and other factors that can improve the overall functionality of the library. As with the 1996 document, a selected bibliography would be included.

Submitted by Sarah E. McCleskey  
Co-Chair, ARLIS/NA Standards Committee