Public Policy Committee Meeting  
Sunday, April 3, 2005, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Co-Chairs: D. Vanessa Kam, Stanford University (outgoing), Cara List, University of Oregon (continuing), Timothy Shipe, University of Iowa (incoming)

Executive Board Liaison: Leigh Gates

Committee Members for 2005:  
D. Vanessa Kam, Ann Lindell, Cara List, Timothy Shipe, Rijn Templeton, Cynthia Wolff

In Attendance:  

Recorder: Timothy Shipe, University of Iowa

Membership:  
Attendees introduced themselves. The committee needs two or three more members. Cara will send out a message to ARLIS-L soliciting potential members. Concern was expressed that the committee does not adequately represent Canadian public policy issues; having a Canadian committee member would be desirable.

Minutes:

Review of 2004 Activities:  
The committee’s annual report, submitted to the Executive Board on February 5, 2005, covers the following items in more detail.  

H.R. 107, the Digital Media Consumers’ Rights Act (DMCRA). As indicated in the annual report, the ARLIS/NA Executive Board, at the recommendation of the committee, signed a letter in support of the DMCRA. The committee will need to monitor the progress of this legislation.

"Boilerplate” letters on “downsizing.” Early in 2005, committee members drafted standard language for letters to be written when art librarians’ positions are eliminated. These will be placed on the Board-only portion of the ARLIS/NA website, and are to treated as “boilerplate” suggestions of language to be used as appropriate for particular situations. There was some question as to whether this is within the scope of the Public Policy Committee’s charge. Tracking individual cases and writing specific responses is definitely not within the committee’s purview, but it is not clear who within the Society is responsible for this. Concern was also expressed about ARLIS/NA becoming involved in personnel situations about which full facts are not available, or becoming only selectively involved in cases of which the Society becomes aware. It was suggested that ARLIS/NA might do well to look at ALA’s approach of setting up a
separate organization to deal with such issues. Leigh will take the committee’s concerns to the Board.

Orphan Works. Shortly before the Houston conference, at the recommendation of the committee, the ARLIS/NA Executive Board signed a letter in support of an ARL/CAA initiative on “orphan works” (works for whom copyright owners are difficult or impossible to identify and locate). This initiative, developed in response to a call by the U.S. Copyright Office for statements of concern on the subject of orphan works, proposes legislation to make it easier for authors, publishers, libraries, and other individuals and institutions to make use of such works following a good-faith effort to contact copyright owners. The committee noted the reservations expressed by the Getty regarding the inclusion of proposed compensation for copyright owners who surface after a good-faith search has failed. While the committee members shared these reservations, it seemed important to express general support for the ARL/CAA initiative, given the short deadline set by the Copyright Office for the receipt of comments. The Executive Board agreed with this assessment. If the proposed legislation should come before Congress and includes such provisions for compensation of copyright owners, ARLIS/NA may choose to comment on the issue at that time.

Review of memberships and monitoring assignments for the next year:

Digital Future Coalition (DFC). Cara will monitor DFC activities.

National Coalition Against Censorship. Membership in this organization is too expensive to consider (about $5,000 per year), and would involve sending representatives to meetings several times per year. The Coalition is open to considering forms of alliance other than membership.

Monitoring of lists. Assignments are as follows:


Progressive Librarians Guild: Vanessa.

SPARC Open Access Forum: Cynthia.

Digital Copyright Digest: Ann.

Free Online Scholarship: Cynthia.

LIB-LICENSE: Tim.

LEH (Leslie Ann Harris) Newsletter: Cara.

Review of legislation and issues from past year, and discussion of coming year:

USA PATRIOT Act. Patriot Act II was not passed, but large sections of it are being attached to other legislation. A short list of related legislation is in the committee’s annual report. There is a more complete list on ALA’s website; Cara will locate the link and forward it to the committee.
**Freedom of information legislation.** Vanessa will forward to the committee the relevant link on the ALAWON website.

**Children’s Internet Protection Act.** This legislation went into effect. We need to watch for legislation in various states that would strengthen the provisions; this could have major effects on communications policy.

**2005 Banff Conference:**

The committee discussed possible public policy programs that could be proposed for the next annual conference. Some sort of programming dealing with Canadian or comparative copyright is apparently already on the shortlist. Cara will contact Marilyn Nasserden about what is being planned in this regard. Another possible topic is open access archives and journals in art history.

**Committee Website:**

Responsibilities were assigned for various aspects of the website. Cara will be the webmaster. Rijn will look at the copyright page for possible revisions, and will take a careful look at what is on the copyright pages on the Music Library Association (www.lib.jmu.edu/org/mla/) and the Visual Resources Association (www.vraweb.org/copyright.html) websites. Ann will look at the distance education page. All members will think about other pages we might need on the site. Reaction to ARLIS/NA’s new website design was generally positive.

**Strategic plan**

The committee reviewed the revised (21 March) draft of the ARLIS/NA Strategic Plan, and had two specific suggestions to pass on:

Under Goal IA, add “emerging legislative and public policy issues.”

Under Goal IIIC, incorporate the concept of diversity, including the recruitment of members from all North American countries.

**Core Competencies:**

The committee had been asked to look at the core competencies list, but did not receive the documents. We will discuss this by e-mail in the coming months.

**Committee Goals for 2005/06:**

One proposed committee goal is to write columns on public policy issues for *Update*. Cara will use the minutes of this meeting to write up a shortlist of goals to be submitted to President Margaret Webster.