Council of UA System Libraries (CUASL)
Meeting Summary
Friday, July 7, 2006
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
Mullins Library, Rm. 486

Present: Carolyn Allen (Library Dean, UAF), Alberta Bailey (Head of Public Services, UAF), Sandra Campbell (Library Director, UAM), Ben Carter (Director of Library Development, UAF), Martha Coleman (Reference Librarian, UAFS), Wilma Cunningham (Library Director, UAFS), Wanda Dole (Library Dean, UALR), Judy Ganson (Director of Collection Management & Systems, UAF), Mary Ryan (Library Director, UAMS), Juana Young (Associate Dean, UAF), Anne Marie Candido (Recorder, Asst. to the Dean, UAF)

Carolyn Allen opened the meeting by mentioning that she is happy to host the four-year U of A system libraries.

Carolyn mentioned that she had conceived of a Council of UA system library deans/directors for a number of years and felt that there is no time like the present to begin. We all need better inter-communication in this relatively new century and expanding digital age. Examples of library consortia within the state that are already in place are ARKLink, ARKnet; however, institutions within the state system need to be more focused.

Wilma Cunningham volunteered to check on the current status of ARKNet meetings and activities.

*Our hope for this group is to share each library’s unique materials through a collaborative digitization project. Digitizing unique materials—particularly original materials—should not be too costly, especially for UAF, since it already has much of the equipment and expertise that would be needed in such an effort. The UAF library has not had the personnel, however, to do a whole lot in this area, and the program is only in embryonic form. Embarking on a shared digitization project—probably through grant money—would provide a good opportunity to get such a program really jump-started. We should initiate fundraising efforts to find donors to fund digitization of these collections for the whole system. She suggested that there should be sub-groups to create procedures and standards for identifying suitable materials for digitization, and then later create standards for metadata.

Wanda Dole said that all of the UA libraries should be sure to have the same standards for metadata, etc., in any digitization project that we embark on.

*Carolyn also mentioned that she would like to develop a program catering to, K-12 teachers since the mission of the University is to benefit the economic development of the state. She envisions the UAF library becoming a portal for “on-stop shopping” for
materials to support teachers K-12. She will look into possibilities for collective grants for such a program, and the other U of A system libraries could contribute links on the portal to their own resources. Addressing this issue fully would probably require a sub-group.

Mary Ryan mentioned the UAMS photograph digitizing project in their Historical Research Center. They are doing some scanning of original photographs and archival objects and are looking into establishing an institutional repository. Also, they are looking into allowing students to submit their dissertations and theses electronically.

Judy Ganson detailed UAF’s own digitization project in conjunction with ProQuest Dissertations Online but mentioned that UAF does not yet offer the capability of submitting dissertations electronically.

Sandra Campbell suggested that the group form subcommittees to deal with all of these suggested initiatives. Carolyn agreed and said that we will do this once all of the specific initiatives have been identified.

Dean Allen mentioned that since UAF is a member of the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA), the other state academic libraries can participate in database purchases, so we ought to look into the details of this collaborative potential. Mary Ryan suggested that any UA library that belongs to consortia should ask the other UA libraries what interest they would have in joining the consortia purchases.

*Judy indicated that all UA libraries should continue seeking possibilities for collaborating to obtain discounts on collections, as was done in the recent ScienceDirect initiative.

Sandra volunteered to investigate and inquire about the State Library’s role in facilitating the sharing of electronic collections now that a new state librarian is in place.

Judy mentioned that all of the four-year or above Arkansas universities are eligible for participation in the EPSCoR Science Information Group (ESIG) site licensing. ESIG has negotiated a contract with NELINET and set up a membership structure (we have one for Arkansas). The next national meeting of ESIG is expected to be on November 17 in Lexington, Kentucky, in conjunction with the annual meeting of EPSCoR. This meeting information will be updated as details become available. Judy is the coordinator of the Arkansas membership.

Carolyn mentioned that she is currently on the Amigos Board of Trustees and that it is important that Arkansas participate and has representation—especially with regard to interlibrary loan and shared collections. The UA system should be more active in its participation so that Amigos, as a marketer for BioOne, could help in obtaining journals from BioOne, for example. Carolyn said she would keep the group informed of Amigos activities, projects, and initiatives and will be glad to serve as the general information
source if the group has any questions. Alberta Bailey mentioned that Amigos sponsors an ILL collaborative program and encouraged the group to become involved in this.

*Mary brought up the importance of disaster planning. The group should discuss who would “back up” individual UA libraries if a disaster occurred such as a power failure, flood damage, etc. She asked how prepared can we afford to be. Carolyn suggested that a sub-group be created to address this issue. There is definitely a need to keep the Web sites working during such disasters.

*Carolyn put forward the subject of a shared online catalog. Most of the UofA campuses are using the Innovative Interfaces system and should continue a quest to look into this possibility. There would have to be a database set-up fee, and each participant would pay a yearly fee for a shared catalog. Judy mentioned that there is a software package available to link up with non-Innovative systems such as the one used by Pine Bluff. Other virtual services such as reference could also be shared.

BREAK

*Carolyn thought we should start an inventory of what collections each of our libraries has that are strongest so that we can then share them with the other campuses. By identifying each of the campuses’ strongest programs and strongest library collections each institution could then focus on holding comprehensive collections for those fields so that the other libraries can concentrate on their own strengths—especially on the graduate level—and not have to strive for comprehensiveness in the weaker fields. A sub-group should be appointed to help all the campuses to prepare for such an inventory.

*Carolyn offered the services of Ben Carter, development director for the UAF Libraries, to assist with a shared plan for raising funds and pursuing grant opportunities to fund UA system library projects. Carolyn suggested that perhaps UAF could hold a fundraising workshop for the directors/deans.

*A coordinated effort could be made to identify which materials from each campus should be digitized for a shared University archive in one “electronic storage location.” This would probably involve the participation of the UA system office. Carolyn recommended that a sub-group be created to get archivists together to plan such an initiative.

Juana Young brought up former efforts to create an Arkansas Digital Library, which included all libraries in the state. She suggested that the group become more familiar with any UA System Office initiatives and projects that are in progress.
Mary suggested that the group also keep in touch with the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE). This group could become a gateway for a system-wide digital library.

Judy recommended that the UA system libraries consider membership in LOCKSS, which is an open-source, peer-to-peer software that functions as an access preservation system, imbuing online collections with the staying power of traditional hardcopy books and journals. Information is stored using a sophisticated but easy-to-use caching system.

*More general open access issues were also mentioned, and Alberta said that various academic society editors are beginning open access initiatives.

*The issues of preservation and conservation were also brought forward, including establishing a centralized preservation program that would involve developing a shared plan and perhaps shared personnel expertise. The plan should involve electronic, unique, and circulating collections.

Sandra said she would look into preservation possibilities (perhaps through a shared listserv), including methods for evaluating materials and pursuing grants to fund preservation initiatives. She will send to the group a successful grant proposal that her library wrote.

LUNCH

Carolyn said that she and Anne Marie would draft an alliance mission statement or “operating statement” that includes the group’s broad goals based on discussions today. Wording would include phrases like “sharing ideas and resources,” sharing collections,” “for the benefit of students, faculty, and people of the state,” “supporting academic programs and research of the UA system,” “create cooperative programs to promote shared user services, operational excellence, staff development, etc.”

Once the mission statement is approved, members of some of the sub-groups and task forces should be appointed.

A brief discussion ensued about whether the UA system law libraries should be included in the group. The consensus was that they need not be involved on a regular basis since their concerns and issues are so focused, but that they should be invited whenever they might be impacted or would benefit from dialog on some issues, such as a shared online catalog.

It was agreed that the chairmanship of the group should be on a rotating basis, and Carolyn was unanimously chosen to be the first leader.
It was also agreed that the group should meet four times a year, with the next meeting to be scheduled directly after the meeting of ArLA in Fayetteville on October 8-10. It was agreed that the meeting date should be October 11.

Ahead of the October meeting, task forces should be identified and then prioritized via group e-mails or listserv, and then coordinated at the meeting itself. Some of these sub-groups can be activated at the same time.

Anne Marie was given the task of thinking about a name for the group. CUASL (Council of University of Arkansas System Libraries) will be used in the interim.

One list-serv should be created just for the library deans/directors, and then another larger one that also includes office secretaries, as well as others as necessary.

Carolyn suggested that when thinking about who to appoint for the various task forces, the relevant library dean/director should make sure this assignment becomes a part of the appointed person’s annual assignment to emphasize the seriousness of our commitment to participate.

A Web page for the group could be created eventually that would highlight goals, initiatives, presentations, relevant links, summaries of meetings, etc.

There should be rotating venues, and these can be planned a year in advance.

Carolyn added that she would like the first initiative of the group to be shared access to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. She will look into this possibility before the next meeting.

Carolyn thanked the group for their commitment and energy in this first meeting, stating that she hopes that this will be the beginning of a beautiful group relationship for a long time to come.

* Designates topics for possible task forces