Re: SOPAG charge re “Proposal to develop a comprehensive plan for the retention of retrospective government publications collections within the UC libraries”

From: UC GILS US Government Information Librarians
Date: 21 October, 2011

We are sending this progress report and update on our planning on behalf of the UC GILS group. We are a bit behind schedule on the charge as the charge was delayed and it was challenging to have conference calls with all participants during the summer and the busy fall quarter.

The librarians with primary responsibility for U.S. Federal government information within UC GILS formed a subcommittee to work on the SOPAG charge to UC GILS to “develop a comprehensive plan for the retention of retrospective government publications collections within the UC libraries”. Our understanding is that we should begin with a plan for the U.S. Federal documents; a later effort may expand to include the California state documents and the librarians with responsibility for those collecting areas will then focus on that phase.

The group has met twice via conference call and we have communicated by email as well. A small group met in person during the ALA Annual conference. The ALA small group included Emily Stambaugh who has provided guidance on developing formal agreements, and on shared print in place policies. Our first conference call on Sept. 7 was with Sherry DeDecker as consultant. She explained that the charge arose in part because most of the UC libraries have serious space constraints. Weeding is being done at many of our libraries and there is concern that we do not all discard the same things. She clarified that the first part of the plan is for retrospective collections of U.S. Federal documents and could expand to state documents in the future.

We discussed our current weeding practices for U.S. documents in our libraries, space issues, and changes in our item selections within the past few years. We also discussed our current and retrospective practices with collections of congressional documents.

Preliminary conclusions:

Congressional hearings:
UCLA retains print congressional hearings at the SRLF from the 1980’s to 2008. UCB continues to select all congressional hearings and sends them directly to the NRLF (since 2009). UCB is committed to retaining print hearings. Some other UC libraries are weeding hearings selectively, others will need to weed, and some libraries have discontinued item selections for some or all congressional hearings. After discussion we feel that one copy at the NRLF (going forward), deposited by UCB, would be sufficient access to allow other libraries to weed and deselect hearings as needed. This agreement would need to be formalized as part of a larger plan.

Agency documents:
We believe we can work with a collaborative agreement similar to the ASERL agreement to distribute agency responsibilities. We have a copy of the ASERL list of agencies and are reviewing it with the intention of modifying and shortening the list to reflect our collections. We are considering dividing the government agencies across the system. Each campus would be responsible for a selected collection/agency. Any proposed agreement is not intended to limit
another campus library from selecting or maintaining materials that another library has agreed to maintain, but a campus could discard if they wish, knowing that a someone has agreed to retain them for the UC. Decisions to discard documents that have already been deposited at an RLF are understood to be a local decision. We'll consider retrospective to be prior to 2000 for this project.

Next steps:
Several of us plan to meet during the Federal Depository Library Conference in Washington DC in October.

We will review and revise the agency list and begin to make notes on our collection strengths.

The UC GILS group has not met in person since spring 2008 and we have lost some momentum for collaboration. We would prefer to meet in person for a full day workshop to concentrate on this task. Please let us know if it would there would be support for us to meet in person so we can make substantial progress on this plan.

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