

Minutes of the Mobius Electronic Resources Advisory Committee February 8, 2000

MERAC met at the MOBIUS Consortium Office at 10:00 a.m. The next meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, March 13th and Thursday, April 19th.

Axie Hindman reported that the budget which Governor Holden sent to the Legislature did not include the \$900,000 that MOBIUS requested for new initiatives and electronic resources. This allows more time for MERAC to make recommendations of databases for state funding. The target date for the proposal is this Fall. MOBIUS may want to change its proposal to reduce the amount of matching funds contributed by members.

The current project of evaluating trial databases for member purchase is not affected. We will continue to evaluate databases and make a recommendation for consortial purchase at the March meeting. Darrin Daugherty mentioned that the consortial purchase may be affected as state institutions did not get any increase in funding for additional purchases. For his institution, either database choice requires new dollars.

Fourteen persons had submitted online evaluations of the trial databases as of February 8th. MERAC discussed whether the committee should do an in-depth evaluation of the trial databases. The following members agreed to submit in-depth reviews: Darrin Daugherty: ABC-CLIO databases; Mary Slater, BIP—Bowker interface; Karl Suhr, Gale BIP; Carol Antoniewicz, FirstSearch BIP; Scarlett Swall, OVID BIP; and Xiaotian Chen, EBSCO BIP.

Raleigh will bring up the evaluation form used in RED and send each volunteer a password for submitting the in-depth evaluation. The reviews will differ as ABC-CLIO is an evaluation of a single-source product. With Books in Print, we are interested in a comparison between vendors.

The Committee set March 1st as the due date for the in-depth evaluations and for the general evaluations by MOBIUS users. This will allow the Committee to recommend a database for consortial purchase at its meeting on March 13th. If BIP is chosen, it will have to go out for bid. The committee can't recommend a specific interface. MCO asked vendors to answer questionnaires about their databases. Terry will distribute the vendors' responses to the committee members who are doing the in-depth reviews.

Terry Austin distributed new pricing models which included a category of "very small" institutions. The models were based on FTE figures obtained from CBHE. Terry worked on a model using library materials expenditures. However, that data was older than F.T.E. It didn't seem to make a major difference in the distribution of costs.

Axie mentioned that there is a strong feeling at MOBIUS that access to databases should be available to all member libraries—that we should choose a product to provide to everyone. Raleigh suggested that there might be ways to subsidize, on a case-by-case basis, institutions that can't or wouldn't subscribe. He suggested reducing the savings that subscribing institutions get in order to provide a better price for institutions that have to spend "new money."

The question was asked: Could MOBIUS make a commitment to reimburse institutions when state funding is made available? In the ensuing discussion, several problems were noted: (1) The consortial purchase is designed as a good-faith effort to demonstrate to the legislature that the sharing of electronic resources is needed and that it results in cost savings for subscribers. (2) There are bookkeeping and political problems with reimbursement. It would be easier to look at reducing member costs in the future.

Terry asked committee members to make sure that their institution and the institutions in their cluster have reported the cost information for databases. The cost information is kept confidential and is seen only by the MOBIUS Consortium Office. Terry needs this information in order to develop a model or models using Raleigh's idea. One problem with the ABC-CLIO databases is that not all subscribers subscribe to both databases. Some libraries subscribe to one.

The committee discussed Darrin's idea that we survey member libraries to get more input about the types of electronic resources and the specific databases that they need the most. Darrin and Karl agreed to draft the questionnaire and

distribute it on the list prior to the March meeting. Karl suggested that the questions be more open ended and narrative. Darrin mentioned that we don't want just one person responding for an institution that has several librarians. The committee suggested the following questions:

1. What types of resources does your institution need (bibliographic? full text?)
Break down full-text to say "books, journals, images, etc.?"
2. For what subject areas do you need electronic resources? (Rank them?)
3. What electronic resources are least important to you?
4. What databases would you like to see MOBIUS provide?
5. What databases should be included in a core collection for a virtual library for Missouri?
6. Is your institution interested in electronic reserves or course management systems?

Lorna will make a report to the MOBIUS Executive Committee on February 15th, sharing the "Proposed Mobius Goals for Implementing Statewide Access to Electronic Resources" with them. Axie and Lorna will discuss Mobius Plans for Electronic Resources at the HELIX Conference at Tan-Tar-A on March 22nd.

In writing a description of the presentation for the HELIX meeting, George Rickerson came up with the phrase "Mobius Information Gateway" to describe MOBIUS electronic resources. He said that we do not have to keep that terminology. Lorna distributed a handout with a list of terms used by other statewide or consortial libraries. Carol mentioned that Wash U. would probably add Mobius resources to the library's web page rather than accessing databases through MOBIUS. That might affect the choice of name. The Committee agreed to continue the discussion about a name.

Attending were: Per Almquist, Covenant Theological Seminary, BRIDGES; Carol Antoniewicz, Washington University, WASH U; Xiaotian Chen, Truman State University, LANCE; Darrin Daugherty, Missouri Western State College, Northwest; Janice Earnest and Sheila Ouellette, alternates, St. Louis C C, ARCHWAY; Raleigh Muns, UM-St. Louis, MERLIN; Kathy Schlump, East Central College, ARCHWAY; Mary Slater, Missouri Valley College, Quest; Karl Suhr, Southeast Missouri State University, Southeast; Scarlett Swall, Metropolitan C C, WILO; Lorna Mitchell, Westminster College, ARTHUR; Rhonda Whithaus, Observer, UMC, MERLIN; and Axie Hindman and Terry Austin, Library Systems Specialists, Licensing, MCO.