MOBIUS Cooperative Collection Development Task Force
Preliminary Report, Part I: Management Issues
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I. Purpose

The MOBIUS Collection Development Task Force has been charged first with listing the management issues that would affect cooperative collection development efforts within the consortium. To begin to do that, the group drafted a statement of purpose, which follows:

> The primary purpose of cooperative collection development by MOBIUS member libraries is to maximize the strength, currency and diversity of their combined collections to better serve the learners of Missouri. As part of this effort, individual collections must continue to reflect and support their institutions' programs and missions. Enhancement of collections and increased cost effectiveness become possible through strategic diversification and cooperative collection management activities.

In considering the implementation of any cooperative collection management plan or project, various management issues must be addressed. The purpose of this report is to identify the major management issues as a first step toward developing a plan for cooperative collection development within MOBIUS.

II. Present situation

As stated in the Memorandum of Understanding, cooperative collection development is one of the five objectives of the MOBIUS consortium, supporting the goal "…to provide students and faculty at Missouri's academic institutions with the broadest array of information resources in an easy, timely, and seamless manner regardless of the geographic location of the patron or resources."

Given the present structure of MOBIUS committees, a standing committee on cooperative collection development should be created, parallel to the other consortium-wide advisory groups. The Task Force members felt that existing cooperative agreements need to be respected, and that a survey of collections of some sort will need to be undertaken at the MOBIUS level. Potential participants will very likely choose to take part in MOBIUS efforts, but the new efforts should not be coercive.

III. Categories of management issues

In discussion of the management issues involved in potential MOBIUS projects, several categories emerged. The Task Force drew heavily from the report on the best practices in collection development given at the second Aberdeen Woods Conference on Cooperative Collection Development (2002) (http://www.crl.edu/info/awcc2002/BESTPRACTICESRPTrev.pdf), sponsored by the

Association for Research Libraries (ARL). The Task Force envisions layered or segmented projects as described below. However, all of these have some common management issues.

Not all issues are within libraries' control. An example of an area in which MOBIUS would have no control, but one that is nevertheless a management concern, is the question of access versus ownership when individual institutions (or more commonly programs within institutions) deal with professional accrediting agencies that require specific title counts. Of course, funding variation among institutions, both public and private, is the most obvious issue that is to a great extent outside libraries' control.

The detailed list of management issues in the types of projects the Task Force envisions follows (divided into the three categories developed by the ARL researchers and reported at Aberdeen Woods).

IV. Category 1: Formation of cooperatives; mission & agreements

In forming cooperative agreements, commitment to the collective, commitment to the mission of the individual institution, and pre-existing commitments to other consortia or collectives must always be balanced. A potential model for MOBIUS would be to centralize coordination and support of cooperative projects, but encourage the development of agreements among interested groups within the consortium on a voluntary basis, resulting in a multi-layered matrix of projects. Projects could be developed according to subject area, library type, or material type. For example, libraries supporting aviation programs, theological libraries, and libraries with large microform collections could enter into separate cooperative agreements.

In this multi-project model, the role of the consortium is to encourage and support the development of cooperative agreements by providing the mechanism for the formation of agreements and technical and legal expertise.

The development of a template for a standard agreement would be an important aspect of MOBIUS coordination. Standard license language and a process of central review could ensure that all necessary issues are adequately addressed in the agreement document:

- levels of participation
- responsibility
- financial commitment
- assessment
- termination of the agreement
- legal issues

V. Category 2: Decision-making, organization & administration

Decision-making authority, the process of making decisions, and the methods of communicating decisions all need to be considered and clearly stated. The following issues must be addressed in any implementation plan:

- Who has the authority to initiate, plan, and evaluate projects?
- How are projects initiated, planned, and evaluated?
- What criteria are used in evaluating projects?

- What elements are required in any project plan or proposal?
- How are decisions communicated, reported, and publicized?
- How do cooperative collection development activities fit in the existing MOBIUS committee structure? How would a collection development committee coordinate with MERAC?
- What are the roles of MCO, clusters, and institutional personnel in this process?

Participation in cooperative collection development involves a shift in emphasis from ownership to access, which affects many constituencies: library employees, teaching faculty, institutional administrators, library users, accrediting agencies, and funding agencies. Implementation of the Task Force's plan must include ways to convey to all participants the benefits of and rationale for cooperation. In addition, cooperative collection development may involve library employees in new activities (collection analysis, digitization, delivery) that require re-training. A commitment to teaching library users to make the best use of shared resources is also necessary. Education and training in many of these areas would probably be local responsibilities, but collaborative development of training plans and materials could prevent duplication of effort.

The added value of the consortium to introduce these ideas to accrediting agencies and funding sources is very significant. Helping to raise awareness of the value of access to material and cooperative agreements is an important service the consortium can provide, especially for smaller institutions. However, administrators must also recognize the need to maintain institutional collections as described in the Memorandum of Understanding.

VI. Category 3: Funding and infrastructure

Funding is a crucial management issue in any project. The sources and distribution of funding may vary from one project to another, depending on various factors. Cooperative purchase of a database by the entire consortium might require a commitment from all participants and central coordination of licensing and payment, while a book collection project among several members might involve local cost-shifting, but little or no additional funds and no central accounting. Each project would involve consideration of:

- sources of funding
- fund accounting
- financial benefits
- cost analysis (delivery, additional labor, equipment, additional storage or workspace, preservation or replacement of more heavily used materials.)

Note that in many cases cooperative projects will result in greater financial efficiency –more resources for the funds in the aggregate—rather than cost reduction.

A more general question is the equitable distribution of costs and funds among consortium members that vary widely in budget, user populations or constituents, as well as in funding sources. The contributions of members may also vary. The labor involved in retrieving, packaging, and delivering materials, or the use of specialized equipment may require consideration in equalizing costs to the member institutions.

Some models the Task Force reviewed involve central funding, comprised of a combination of state or grant funds and institutional funds from required contributions. (MOBIUS CLP funding,

of course, is done on a similar model.) Other models involve only contributed funding from participants in specific projects, while others, as described above, have little or no indirect cost. Consortial projects should have specific plans for tracking all costs, direct and indirect. Assessment and evaluation of projects should also contain some form of cost-benefit analysis.

VII. Specific local management issues

Note that specific projects would most likely have separate agreements, probably developed from a template agreement formulated by the MOBIUS standing committee and approved by appropriate legal counsel. These would cover issues standard to most projects. Some issues, however, can be addressed only at the level of each individual library within the consortium. Participants will need to be clear on the obligations they are undertaking. Local issues include:

- Individual institutional needs must be satisfied first.
- Roles of selectors must be clear.
- Staff times and loyalties must be considered.
- Trust among institutions must exist.

VIII. Management issues that apply to more specific cooperative projects

Finally, each individual project within the mosaic of various cooperative efforts will need to address some issues specific to that project. Some of these that the Task Force has been able to identify are listed here:

- Joint purchases of online resources
- "Last copy" retention plans
- Shared storage facilities
- Rotating collections
- Complementary collection profiles
- Digitization
- Joint grant applications
- Cooperative approval profiling

IX. The Next step

MOBIUS is well positioned to implement cooperative collection management projects. The MOBIUS online catalog, efficient delivery system, consortium office support, committee structure, and communications system provide the basis for effective cooperation. MOBIUS institutions already have experience collaborating with other libraries, but can benefit from a wider scope for cooperation. This outline of the essential management issues forms the foundation for the next phase of the Task Force's charge: the development of an implementation plan for MOBIUS cooperative collection development. In the next months the Task Force will consider possible answers to the issues raised in this report and recommend concrete actions that will enable MOBIUS to build on existing strengths.