AALL Online Bibliographic Special Interest Section Chair Annual Report, 2017-2018

The 2017-2018 OBS-SIS Executive Board consisted of: Jennifer Noga, Chair; Jackie Magagnosc, Vice-Chair; Kevin Carey, Treasurer/Secretary; and Patty Alvayay and Jason LeMay, Members-at-Large. Committee Chairs were: Jennifer Noga, Education Committee; Gypsy Moody, F.R.O.G. Committee; Keiko Okuhara, Local Systems Committee; Georgia Briscoe, Nominating Committee; Emily Dust Nimsakont, OCLC Committee; and Barbara Ginzburg, Web Advisory Committee.

Activities and Accomplishments

Re-positioning Initiative:

This year marked the beginning of an OBS-SIS initiative to examine and possibly revise the section name or its underlying mission or both. This initiative is rooted in years of member feedback in formal instruments such as the biennial survey and from informal conversations. The feedback expressed dissatisfaction or confusion about our section name and focus. Our section has operated under its current name since the 1970s and a re-evaluation was due. The OBS-SIS Executive Board appointed a special committee in the fall of 2017 to study the issue and make recommendations. The committee, chaired by Jason LeMay, recommended changes to the language that describes the section objectives (called the "object" in the bylaws).

The Executive Board approved the changes to the section object as did the AALL Bylaws Committee. The object revision was unanimously approved by the membership at the OBS-SIS business meeting in Baltimore in July. See the appendix for the new OBS-SIS object that will be incorporated in to our bylaws.

The idea is that this update to the section's objectives lays the groundwork for any potential change to the section name. We anticipate the section repositioning and rebranding work to continue into the coming year(s).

Programming and Professional Development:

The OBS-SIS Chair heads the section's Education Committee for the first half of his or her term. From July 2017 through December of 2017, the Committee was very active, planning programming and educational opportunities requested by OBS-SIS members. The committee's efforts culminated in two OBS-coordinated programs on the 2018 AALL Annual Conference schedule:

- APIs: What They Are and How to Use Them (AALL-funded program)
- Manipulating Data with OpenRefine (OBS-SIS sponsored program)

The Committee also used program content ideas to create a successful section Hot Topic session called "When Systems Change" about system migrations. In addition to these programs, the section coordinated its regular OCLC and Local Systems roundtables to give members an opportunity to learn about and discuss various library systems.

The Education Committee was successful in keeping programming costs low at the annual meeting by taking advantage of the expertise of AALL members, who were graciously part of our programming content, and by designating a VIP, LYRASIS DevOps Specialist Lora Woodford, who was local to Baltimore.

Online Content:

OBS-SIS's long standing "Website of the Month" service, for which one of our members, Keiko Okuhara, sends out a monthly email to the OBS community with an online resource and corresponding record, continues to be very popular. The service was enhanced this year by providing batch files on the section website, bundling all the previous records in one file available for download for those who may have missed previous records or who are new to our section. The "Website of the Month" batch file is updated annually.

In addition to this enhancement, the "Website of the Month" archive page was re-organized for easier browsing. This reorganization took place in conjunction with the overhaul of the OBS-SIS website that was part of the larger AALL website reorganization. Barbara Ginzburg, the OBS-SIS Web Advisory Committee Chair worked with AALL staff to ensure all our section web content was organized and accurate.

Support for ALA Liaisons:

In 2017-2018 OBS-SIS continued its longstanding support for the ALA Liaisons. After the decision made by the AALL Executive Board not to approve the recommendations from the ALA Liaisons Review Special Committee for funding the liaisons, the OBS-SIS Executive Board supported the formation of another special committee to continue to look at alternate means of long-term, sustainable funding of the liaisons' important work. In addition, the Board agreed to contribute $300 in 2018 to assist with financial support from other special interest sections so that new liaisons could be appointed and begin participating in the work of their respective committees. The incoming Chair, Jackie Magagnosc is a member of the special committee and has been key to representing OBS-SIS concerns pertaining to the liaison funding.

Membership and Leadership:

OBS-SIS membership increased by 13 members during the course of the 2017-2018 year. While not a huge increase, it is also not insignificant considering that OBS is a smaller section. This increase hopefully establishes an upward trend in membership numbers going forward.

Regarding section leadership, the Nominating Committee, chaired by Georgia Briscoe put forward a slate of candidates for open officer roles for 2018-2019. The election took place in April with the following members being elected to the Executive Board: Jessica Pasquale, Vice-Chair; Barbara Szalkowski, Member-at-Large.

Summary

In general this has been a successful and productive year for OBS-SIS. We continue, however, to struggle with low member involvement and with distinguishing OBS-SIS's focus from other sections. Those challenges will likely continue in the coming years, but the hope is that our repositioning efforts and our continued focus on quality programming will make an impact. In addition, a new initiative to update our procedures manual will help the section focus on its goals and main activities.

Fortunately, we have a core group of active members and leaders who are dedicated to making OBS-SIS a productive group that is responsive to the needs of its members and continues to lead conversations about systems in law libraries.

Respectfully submitted:

Jennifer Noga
OBS-SIS Chair, 2017-2018

Appendix

The object of the Online Bibliographic Services SIS shall be:

- To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information on the use and capabilities of metadata, electronic resources, and library systems (defined to include library resource management systems, discovery systems, and bibliographic services and utilities); and
- To explore ways that emerging technologies can be integrated with library systems and how these changes affect libraries and librarians; and
- To communicate the concerns of its members to the governing bodies of those systems; and
- To foster communication between all types of law librarians to explore ways to improve access to information for users; and
- To represent its members' interests and concerns within the AALL.