

Advisory Council for the Research Libraries

3:30pm, September 19, 2016

Room 201, Stephen A. Schwarzman Building

Meeting Notes

Present: Tom Bender, Elizabeth Blackmar, Linda Colley, Cathy Davidson, Duncan Faherty, Julia Foulkes, David Nasaw, Uday Mehta, Carla Peterson, Joan Scott, Jean Strouse, Annalyn Swan, Sally Webster

Apologies: Farrah Griffin, Stephen Kotkin

NYPL Staff: Carolyn Broomhead, Denise Hibay, Bill Kelly, Ara Kim, Matt Miller

Bill Kelly welcomed the group and provided the following updates on large projects:

1. The Rose Main Reading Room and Bill Blass Public Catalog Room will reopen on October 5. The ceiling has been restored and the room refurbished. There will be a librarian on the desk when the Library is open and a concierge service will be established to help those who need additional help beginning their research. Other improvements have been made to restore the room's function as a quiet and study-focused space.
2. The Milstein Stack project continues, with over 350,000 books having been returned to the second layer of storage under Bryant Park. When the books from the Library's temporary storage facility are returned, there will be 1.5 million items in the second layer of the Milstein stacks, with growth room for an additional 1 million items.
3. Another primary concern for research addresses the discovery of and access to our research collections. We are working on significant improvements to the online catalog and digital discovery process. We are additionally adding to our digital repository, the digital storage for our at-risk audio and moving image material in particular.
4. New staff appointments include Kevin Young, one of the premier poets and scholars of African American culture in the country, as the new director of the Schomburg Center; and Joshua Chuang, a scholar and archivist from Yale and Arizona, as the head of the Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs.
5. We have recently acquired the Lou Reed archive, which includes business correspondence, poetry and diaries spanning his career, and look forward to continuing to build the Library's collections with notable acquisitions.

Kelly then introduced Denise Hibay, the Associate Director for Collection Development, who presented an overview of the ReCAP and the Shared Collection project.

Background:

The facility was built in 2000, when the Library realized it would need more space for research collection storage and a better preservation environment. Columbia and Princeton faced similar space challenges, and though the original project was focused on the shared costs of joint storage, the driving idea was that of closer collaboration between peer institutions. Initially, oversized materials that could not be stored appropriately on-site were relocated to ReCAP, then items that had been digitized as part of our collaboration with the Google books project. Serials account for the highest volume of material at ReCAP, in large part because of their widespread digital availability. The decisions about which items to relocate were driven by both the experience of NYPL librarians and by circulation data about collection use. The low

circulation of items that are now stored in ReCAP confirms that the correct decisions were made about this strategy. In FY15, requests for material from ReCAP storage accounted for only 8% of the total requests made; and approximately 2% of NYPL material at ReCAP are requested annually. We house some special collections items at ReCAP, which are selected by the curators of those collections. The storage of an individual item at ReCAP can be re-evaluated for transfer back to a research center based on librarian review, frequency of requests, or patron feedback.

The current collection management plan for SASB places the most heavily used items -- the past twenty-five years of English language books -- on the first level of the Milstein Research Stacks. The oldest materials will then be transferred to the new second level of Milstein Stacks as we reach capacity. As the second level of the Milstein Stacks reaches capacity, the collection management librarians will evaluate, based on circulation data, what should be transferred to ReCAP. Some new materials are being sent directly to ReCAP, namely foreign language titles due to a lack of space and their less frequent use.

Items from NYPL research collections are not discarded. The Library has a stringent de-accessioning policy for research collections. There are provisions for items that no longer have a useful life due to condition - those things that have crumbled with age -- and for duplicate reference books (e.g. encyclopedia sets). When we microfilm or digitize items we don't dispose of the originals.

Currently, items at ReCAP can be requested by the click of a button in the online catalog. We are working towards this model for all of our general research items.

Shared collection overview:

The partners in the ReCAP facility are working to increase access to a broader collection for our patrons. We are in the initial stages of planning a shared collection - a subset of materials stored at ReCAP that researchers from any of our constituencies will be able to request. Our estimates indicate that NYPL patrons will gain access to a further 5 million collection items through this shared collection program. NYPL's librarians have discussed and proposed a subset of materials for sharing, which total approximately 4 million items. Special collections will not be included in the shared collection. We understand that researchers at each of the partner libraries have questions about how this shared collection will be managed. This particular meeting has taken the form of a largely one-way presentation as we explained the details of the ReCAP partnership. We will devote the next meeting (to be scheduled this autumn) to answering the questions you have and engaging in more of a discussion about this work. We will discuss another shared borrowing program, MaRLI, at a later meeting.