

SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on the Development of Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries

Sunday 10 January 2016 * 1:00 - 2:30 (ALA Midwinter Boston, MA)

Task Force Members Attending: Martha Conway (University of Michigan), Rachel D'Agostino (Library Company of Philadelphia), Angela Fritz (University of Arkansas) (recording), Emily Gustainis (Harvard University), Katy Rawdon (Temple University)

Guests Attending: Haven Hawley (University of Florida), Beth Kilmarx (Binghamton University)

Meeting Notes

Martha called the meeting to order and we all introduced ourselves.

Martha shared, and we discussed, the following from our very productive working meeting at the Center for the History of Medicine, Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine (Harvard University):

- “[Born] digital” and “microforms” are no longer considered categories/types of collection material (because all categories/types of collection material can be manifested as “digital” or “microform”).
- We revised the Level 1 Count to include “Intellectual Units” and “Space Occupied” only; “Space Occupied” was further characterized as “Physical Space Occupied” and “Digital Space Occupied.”
- We agreed that cubic feet will be used for reporting “Physical Space Occupied” except “Books and Other Printed Material,” which will be reported in linear feet. Physical space occupied can -- and will -- be measured in linear feet or in cubic feet, and converters and calculators can -- and should -- be used to convert linear feet to cubic feet when necessary for reporting purposes.

We will share and discuss these “breakthrough” decisions with the other members of the Task Force before we consider them “final.”

After the recap, Emily outlined a “to do” list which includes developing the following::

- A “Narrative” to accompany the “Level 1 Count” matrix/spreadsheet. It will explain the methodology as well as provide the rationale for certain decisions, including the preferred use of cubic feet; how the group defines “discoverable” collections, and why [born] digital and microforms are not considered categories/types of collection material)included in the counting categories. Martha volunteered to draft the narrative.
- The “Category Definitions” need to be revised to reflect the changes discussed above.
- A “Container Equivalency Chart”, which will be used as a reference tool to help participants convert measurements to cubic feet. Emily volunteered to existing conversion tools and create a master chart.
- An “Appendix of Examples” including sources of information. This will require the group to further develop well-rounded examples from government agencies, university archives, museums, and corporate/business archives.

- A “Quick Formats Reference List/Chart” as a visual guide for types of materials included in the collection categories. Rachel volunteered for this task.

These will be defined further and specific tasks will be finalized and assigned at our next meeting..

The group discussed a work timeline with a tentative deadline for the above tasks completed and a unified package ready by the first week of May. The goal is to circulate the Level 1 Count spreadsheet and supporting information in late May or early June to enable discussion, comment, etc. at ALA Annual in Orlando in June and at SAA Annual in Atlanta in August. At some point, most likely after the SAA meeting, we will want to invite some institutions to undertake a limited Level 1 Count, with the goal of having some feedback from that activity to inform our work going forward.

Emily suggested that we develop a set of “talking points” to standardize how we explain/answer questions re: method/approach.

Martha and Emily will keep the group posted on the status of our request for a one-year extension (to/for our work as a Task Force).

Martha will send out an invite for the next meeting, at which we will (1) report on our Friday and Sunday meetings (2) explain the revised Level 1 Count spreadsheet and (3) work on revising the category definitions. Additional assignments will be solidified during the next group meeting.

The group met for a short meeting with the Joint Task Force on the Development of Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy and the Joint Task Force on the Development of Standardized Statistical Measures for Public Services in Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries. We shared brief reports on the progress of their work. The entire group discussed the importance of standardizing language and terminology, whenever possible, across the guidelines, measures, reporting tools, etc.