ARLIS/NA Architecture Section Business Meeting

Saturday, May 3, 2008  5:00 – 6:00 pm

Moderator: Alan Michelson, University of Washington, Seattle

Janine Henri of UCLA discussed the Association of Architecture School Librarians (AASL) meeting in March 2008, hosted by the University of Houston. ARLIS/NA and AASL are affiliated and so ARLIS/NA members can go to any AASL meeting. About 30 members attend the AASL conferences and do everything together. There was a tour of the University of Houston.

Portland, OR is the next AASL conference location. There are now two travel awards to attend the upcoming conference. One award is for professionals and the other is for students.

ACSA News has a column dedicated to communication between librarians and architecture faculty. This is good place to publish.

Al Willis stated that there is a partnering potential between ARLIS/NA and Architectural Librarians. He attended the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) conference last week in Cincinnati, OH. The SAH will have a conference in Pasadena, CA in April 2009. ARLIS should be involved. In particular, ARLIS members should work with SAH Architecture Visual Resource Network (AVRN) members. One example of a joint project could be working with faculty to gather information resources about Third World architecture. Another possibility is to work on information resources about Southern CA architecture. Let’s talk ideas and proposals. ARLIS members would need to speak or help organize the conference and register to attend.

Another announcement was an expression of appreciation for the food provided by the Maryland Office of Meyer Scherer and Rockcastle, Architecture and Interior Design. We voted and approved sending a thank you card to them.
A call for a Vice-Moderator to serve for the next year with Patti Cossard was made. Paula Wolfe volunteered. Alan explained that the job involved corresponding with one another, a few phone calls, and working on the agenda together. The Vice-Moderator becomes the Moderator the following year. The 2010 conference will be held in Boston.

The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) sets accreditation standards. There needs to be a better mechanism for sharing statistics about library use. There is a group of five individuals working on this now. To help the process of sharing, a survey mechanism could be posted on the AASL listserv and the ARLIS listserv as well. The results could be put in a spreadsheet and posted on the University of Houston Web site. Accrediting boards look at the usual measures.

Janine Henri gave a summary of the NAAB accreditation process with regard to librarians. NAAB is responsible for accreditation of architecture schools in North America. CAAB is the Canadian equivalent. What NAAB does also affects CAAB. In 1991 librarians became involved in developing the guidelines. There are 5,729 criteria. NAAB is working to get rid of the criteria for 5,000 titles. In general, quantitative analysis for information resources is not a good measure of the libraries impact on a program’s success. Another objective of NAAB is to ensure that U.S. institution degrees are equivalent to degrees abroad. Librarians have been asked to revisit the guidelines. A taskforce was established from 1999 to 2005 to evaluate the criteria. The next validation conference is in October 2008.

Susan Lewis talked about the new NAAB taskforce. It is important to make changes in the standards. There is a need for more library character in the standards. Need to take this opportunity to show that libraries are relevant. There will be AASL members on the committee.

Questions from the audience were raised about the new directorship of NAAB. It was suggested that librarians should volunteer and especially those who recognize faculty from their institution on the list. We were also urged to read Vol. 1, 2008 of the ACSA.

There was a call for volunteers and Rebecca Price, Cathy Carpenter, and Alan Michelson were interested in the opportunity. Susan Lewis explained that compromise was necessary with regard to accreditation criteria.

Another comment from the audience was that the board was more focused on “inputs in” than outputs. The portion on Context and Instructional Relationships was interesting, but it needs revision. The good news is that Architecture libraries, in general, are fairly heavily used.
A question by the audience was raised – Do we need a library report, i.e. how many computers, books, slides are in the library? In addition, the annual statistics form needs to be modified to match the current technology. In the past it has been about space and stuff. We need to incorporate information literacy skills as well. The library should provide assistance.

Interestingly, research is listed outside of the library section. The library needs to have a say in sections outside of the library portion.

It is useful to think about this in terms of what do we want these people asking about in terms of our institutions, jobs, and collections. There is concern that the library section could be taken out all together. Accrediting boards are not too concerned with libraries.

Patti Cossard introduced people who wanted to talk about collaboration in the slam portion of the meeting.

Ann Whiteside talked about her AVRM project, which is designed to bring scholars and librarians together. The library goes back to faculty and talks to them. It is important to talk to the university libraries and get cooperation at the Dean’s level. This makes things go much better.

Paula Wolfe said she is looking for collaborators for digital projects, or just interested in talking to others who are doing similar digital projects. She is working to get the Jostler drawings digitized in an effort to bring more exposure to local and regional architects.

Patti Cossard, University of Maryland, is working on a project to restore ancient Stabiae. She has done an annotated bibliography focused on Pompeii. The most recent excavation of the site was in 1950. There will be an excavation this summer during a 6 week field session. She and others will be forming a relationship with the University of Naples during the 6 week session. People should get in touch with her if they are interested in being involved in the field session.

Meeting adjourned.