Results of the 2010 Survey

Background: *This survey was open for Hidden Collections project staff to participate in during the month of July 2010. It is the second such survey that our research group has distributed for our study, prior to making visits to the project sites.* *Red-colored font* *denotes a new category in the 2010 survey.*

Survey Data

Response rate, scholarly use of collections, services. Our online survey asked questions about primary users, services provided to researchers, the assessment of those services, and the extent of scholars' involvement in the grant proposal and project development. We contacted the Principal Investigators for all 14 of the projects beginning in 2010 (awarded funding in 2009), and we received 15 responses. 5 of the 15 respondents came from one consortial project, so we estimate that our response rate for 2010 is at 71% (down from nearly 100% in 2009).

Scholarly use of collections was included in the mission and/or strategic plan of 69% of the special collections libraries and archives surveyed (down from 94% in 2009). 64% of respondents said their Hidden Collections project would affect services for scholars, primarily by improving understanding and access and establishing better intellectual and physical control over collections.

Users of special collections libraries and archives. 93% of respondents identified academic faculty and graduate students from outside their institution and independent researchers as the primary users of their collections. This echoes the 2009 survey results (the same three topped the list at 88%) and confirms that special collections libraries and archives serve a broad constituency beyond their institutional base, making the identification and anticipation of user needs a complex process. Other primary users identified included academic faculty from within the institution and local community members (80%); graduate students from within the institution and staff members (73%); undergraduates from within the institution (67%); authors of non-academic works (new category) and undergraduates from other institutions (60%); and journalists (new category) genealogists, and K-12 teachers (53%). One respondent commented that while their users varied widely, "the majority of users who repeatedly and deeply use the collection are students and scholars."

All users were identified at a higher percentage than in the 2009 survey: outside faculty, graduate students, and independent searchers (93% vs. 88%); internal faculty (80% vs. 63%); internal graduate students (73% vs. 56%); staff (73% vs. 56%); internal undergraduate students (67% vs. 44%) and outside undergraduates (60% vs. 44%).

Services for users. The libraries and archives that were surveyed provided a range of access points and services for researchers. Significant differences between services identified in the 2009 and 2010 survey are noted. The most widely offered services included:

- Phone and e-mail reference (100%)
- Consultation (87%) (down from 100%)
- Library instruction for classes (87%) (up from 69%)
- Educational programs by staff (87%)
- Tours of collections (67%), exhibits (60%), and facilities (60%)
- Reading room access (93%)
- Patron accessible computers (80%) (down from 100%) and wireless 87% (new category)
- Interlibrary loan (60%) (down from 75%)
- Scanning and/or digitization (93%) (down from 100%)
- Photocopying (93%)
- Tools such as paper, book rests, and magnifiers (93%) (new category)

Less common services for researchers included the following:

- Education programs by research fellows or visitors (47%) (down from 62%)
- Digital scholarship support (53%) (up from 38%)
- Copyright and intellectual property consultation (53%) (up from 38%)
- Purchase requests (40%)
- Electronic equipment check out (including digital cameras, scanners, or laptops) (33%)
- Grants or fellowships for researchers (33%) (new category)

Publication – in the form of newsletters and monographs – was an additional service to researchers noted by one respondent.

Assessment activities occurred at most of the libraries and archives surveyed – in fact, 79% of them assessed their services for scholars. In most cases assessment involved collecting statistics on use of collections and services, including instructional sessions. One respondent used LibQual; and three respondents conducted surveys and interviews with users. One respondent had conducted a survey specifically about finding aids. Another described a "User Profile and Satisfaction Survey" and the information the survey generated about users, services, and the particular ways the library "connects with a variety of audiences" (e.g. how they find their way to the library).

Project development. References for the grant application – individuals who wrote letters of recommendation for the project – were selected based on 1) their subject expertise (67%); and 2) their knowledge of specific collections targeted for the grant (47%). These numbers are down from 2009 when 100% of respondents said they selected referees based on their subject expertise and 69% said they were selected because of their knowledge of the targeted collections. Nevertheless respondents described their referees as "top scholars in the field" who would "add weight to the argument of our collections scholarly value." Other criteria for selecting references included having a Ph.D. or terminal degree (33%) and previous experience working closely with librarians or archivists involved in the project (27%). Only one library/archive (7% of total respondents) identified knowledge of cataloging technologies or metadata as a determining factor.

9. To what extent were scholars involved in the following project planning activities? Select one of the four options and, when possible, please explain the nature of the involvement in the comment space provided.

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	NO INVOLVEMENT	MINIMAL INVOLVEMENT	SOME INVOLVEMENT	INTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT
Selection of hidden collection(s) to process	6 43%	2 14%	5 36%	1 7%
Drafting of grant proposal	6 50%	2 17%	3 25%	1 8%
Selection of technology to support the project (e.g. archival management software)	10 71%	1 7%	2 14%	1 7%

10. To what extent are scholars involved in the following aspects of project execution? Select one of the four options and, when possible, please explain the nature of the involvement in the comment space provided.

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	NO INVOLVEMENT	MINIMAL INVOLVEMENT	SOME INVOLVEMENT	INTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT
Training of catalogers	10 71%	1 7%	3 21%	0 0%
Cataloging/processing of collections	9 64%	0 0%	5 36%	0 0%
Project oversight	10 71%	2 14%	1 7%	1 7%
Project outreach (lectures, exhibits, publications, conference presentations, etc.)	2 17%	3 25%	5 42%	2 17%
Project review/evaluation	3 27%	5 45%	3 27%	0 0%

As indicated in the tables above, scholars had varying degrees of involvement in the identification of targeted of collections, the drafting of the grant proposal, and the selection of technology. "No involvement" was the most common response, and no institution involved a scholar intensively in all three areas. Scholars were primarily involved in: 1) project outreach; 2) selecting hidden collections; 3) project review/evaluation; 4) drafting the grant proposal; and 5) cataloging/processing collections and training catalogers. 93% of respondents said that scholars would not be involved in the project itself. When involved, scholars were likely to help in the initial stage (identifying collections) and the final stage (outreach). The figures in the tables above are strikingly similar to the figures from 2009.

Some respondents commented that they employed scholars as librarians and archivists and that scholarly demand had helped them to identify collections and/or themes for the project. In at least one case scholars were involved in assisting with vocabulary and reviewing catalog records and finding aids, providing oversight and quality control, promoting collections in their classes, and participating in outreach programs (e.g. "lectures, exhibits, publications, conference presentations, course offerings, tours"). Similarly, another respondent referred to continuing the current practice of collaboration between faculty, librarians, and archivists for lectures, exhibits, publications, and conferences. Other outreach efforts described included presentations at colloquia, presentations for visiting scholars, integration into professional development programs for secondary school teachers, and academic seminars. Another project drew on scholars to recommend readings for project archivists. And in two cases the creator of the collection or their family members provided consultation for the project.

All respondents identified increased scholarly interest in, and use of, targeted collections as a "success factor." Other factors included an increased number of requests for information about the targeted collection (87%); increased use of targeted collections, visits to the project website, and publicity (73%); and adoption of project technologies and/or methods of cataloging, use by scholars or students involved in the project, and use in creative works (67%). Respondents also commented that an improved understanding of their collections would improve services to scholars, as well as enabling them to build on their success for further acquisitions, processing, and digitization. One respondent noted that the participation of scholars at their institution was "critical to the success of the project," in part because of their knowledge of related collections within the institution and at other repositories.

Some Resulting Questions

1. When are recommenders involved in projects? Is this involvement proving helpful? What are the gains and/or challenges?
2. What kinds of programming seem to encourage scholarly engagement? (e.g. the Fellows Program at the Center for History of Medicine, book talks at Amistad, Rotating exhibits of scholarly works at Emory)
3. What methods of library instruction seem to most effectively engage students and faculty? What role do faculty play in these sessions?
4. What sorts of assessment methods and tools seem to generate meaningful results? What, if any, useful information have statistics, surveys, and interviews generated?
5. What methods do staff use to track the outcomes of their interactions with scholars? (e.g. patron databases, publication lists, searching Google Books for references to the archive/collection, etc.)
6. What kinds of communication strategies seem encourage scholarly engagement? (e.g. participating or hosting subject conferences, class presentations, email discussion lists, social networking tools)
7. What types of spatial configurations seem to facilitate scholarly engagement? (e.g. desk space for fellows)
8. What kinds of staffing models for cataloging projects seem to accommodate scholarly engagement? (e.g. team processing at Emory, interns at Amistad)
9. What cataloging procedures seem to result in the timely and effective production of records for scholarly use?
10. What kinds of studies are being done to determine the best balance of "MPLP" expediency and the quality of description needed to facilitate most scholarship? (e.g. Getty, Center for the History of Medicine)
11. What administrative models might encourage scholarly engagement? (e.g. Advisory Boards at Woodruff and Amistad)