

Visual Materials Session Review 2007

Session #: 406

Session title: MP-LP Comes Home to Roost: Applying the Greene-Meissner Recommendations Broadly Across an Institution

Number of VM Reporters contributing comments: 2

Reporter 1's VM experience level:

Archives Profession: 5-10 years

VM Specialization: Generalist. w/ significant VM

Reporter 2's VM experience level:

Archives Profession: 10+ years

VM Specialization: Major VM focus

Speakers:

Tom Hyry, Chair; Beinecke Library, Yale University

Monica Manny Ralston; Minnesota Historical Society

Cheri Thies; Minnesota Historical Society

Description from program:

The Greene-Meissner research on streamlined processing has prompted experiments in a number of archival settings. But can it be applied beyond its original focus – throughout an institution responsible for multiple types of collections? Archivists from the Minnesota Historical Society report on a year-long study of assumptions and procedures relating to processing archives, manuscripts, monographs, serials, and sound and visual materials in an attempt to economize processing while improving services to users.

Summary of session:

Three archivists reported on the year long study of applying the MPLP approach at the Minnesota Historical Society. Their overall question was whether it could be applied throughout an institution. They gave an overall description of MPLP, a background of the Minnesota Historical Society, and early findings of their self-study. They reviewed the rationale for a self-study and the methodology which is a three phase process. At the point of the presentation they had completed their self study and conveyed the lessons learned but could not yet answer or address the larger question of whether MPLP could be applied throughout the institution. The lessons learned were: Collection management is a continuum, processing is a set of building blocks, change is constant.

Focus was on self-study methodology and the institution's organizational context. Little in the way of outcome can be reported on to-date.

Session strengths:

Clear presentation, good mix of speakers each of whom spoke in small chunks of time. They stuck to the topic and it was timely in light of MPLP.

Speakers broke from the traditional approach of distinct papers, and tag-teamed a bit, alternating between the speakers. This made it easier for the audience to focus on often-dry discussions of methodology during a difficult late-in-day time slot.

How effectively did the session address the topic as proposed in the program?

Because of the unexpected length of time that it took the historical society to conduct their self study the presenters were unable to address the topic as proposed in the program. There were no significant conclusions and therefore no significant outcomes of applying MPLP to the institutions overall processing practice.

There was virtually no visual materials related content in the session, as the self-study has not yet resulted in changes to procedures that have yielded measurable results across format types.

Toward what experience-level was session geared?

Beginning to advanced.

What topics (broached or implied) merit further development in future sessions or articles?

Application of MPLP to an institution with mixed collections.