Southeast Archives Education Collaborative S·A·E·C

6th Report from LSU to IMLS on the SAEC Project

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Institution: LSU
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***Calendar Overview**:*

Sept. - May 2005	Normalcy:	Run classes, evaluate (3rd / 4th)
Sept. - May 2005	Evaluation:	Evaluate full program

Problems:

In June, 2005, Dan Barron, Director of the School of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina, emailed me to say that SC would not continue in the collaborative after the original grant period because the finances did not work for them. Connie Schulz, on a Fullbright Scholarship in Italy, could not intervene on behalf of SC's Public History program, so SC/SLIS's decision to terminate its continuation effectively removed them, as well. The partners lamented the decision, but immediately decided to go on without SC, with hopes of bringing in a new partner. Given that we had been granted a one-year, no cost, extension, the partners recognized an opportunity to find a new partner with grant money to smooth the transition. Therefore, I immediately asked LSU's Office of Sponsored Programs to cancel the SC contract.

The partners met and established a criteria for new partner: We reviewed our list of criteria for a new partner once more time and reaffirmed it:

* Must be part of a Master's program in LIS or Public History.
* Must have Internet 2 connection.
* Must be big enough to have something to offer us, but small enough to find us attractive.
* Must be Carnegie I (Extensive) or II (Intensive) - Extensive preferred.
* Must have a "champion" for the program - though not necessarily an archives educator.
* Must be in the eastern or central time zones, but not an instructional competitor in our own state.

Though it was not formally agreed on, the sentiment ran to the "southeast" as defined by the Mason/Dixon line, the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

With that in mind, our GA and I immediately surveyed the universe of LIS and PH programs to establish which school we would approach about joining us. Distance eliminated a fairly large number. Size eliminated others: some programs were too large; we would have nothing to offer them. Others were too small; they would have nothing to offer us. In the end, we approached the Public History program at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), asking if they would meet with us in September to discuss the details of joining the collaborative. They readily accepted.

At breakfast with Phil Bantin, of Indiana University, during the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, the topic of SAEC came up. He expressed interest in the concept and suggested he could offer his class in Electronic Records if IU joined. An informal poll of the partners found no resistance, so we invited IU, in the person of Bantin, to attend the September meeting as well.

Activities Initiated and Completed:

Management

We ended our contract with SC and found two new partners.

I re-wrote the budget to reflect the change of personnel and course responsibilities, as well as SC's departure from the collaborative.

We moved our annual meeting to September, initially planning to hold it in Louisiana. Given its date in mid-September, we moved it from Baton Rouge, then engorged with Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts, to Lexington, Kentucky. At that meeting, we refined two documents we had begun the previous year: a Letter of Agreement among what the five partners to continue our collaboration after grant funding expires, and a set of Guiding Principles which clarify how we do things. (See accompanying documents)

Course Delivery

We delivered our fourth semester of classes.

In light of SC's departure, we've switched from NetOffice, which SC supplied, to HorizonLive from Auburn as our support software class interaction. We started our fifth semester of classes. Our student population has now reached nearly 140.

The faculty of the five Archives 101 classes will meet in Lexington in mid-Nov. to harmonize the classes once again.

Evaluation

Students filled out the end-of-semester evaluation; the results strongly mirror earlier evaluations.

Instructors wrote detailed reports about their experiences.

Auburn will also supply the Flashlight account for the end-of-semester evaluation software, which SC had supplied.

Dissemination

As a panel at SAA, I had an informal discussion of the experiment from the students' point of view with three former students (one LSU, one UK, and one SC). As students have been on paper, they were overwhelmingly positive. Two other students attended the program and contributed their perspective, equally positive. Both Phil Bantin, of IU, and Ellen Garrison, of MTSU, sat in the audience.

We have begun to look for professional designers to develop a new web page and brochures.

Activities Initiated and Still Ongoing:

In the past six months, we have continued some activities and have initiated others:

Management

We continue our monthly e-meetings.

Course Delivery

We continue to use interactive compressed video over Internet 2 as our mode of delivery. Andrea Milam remarked at the annual meeting that research on Web-based classes has begun to show that it works well for low-level cognitive processes, but for higher processes, traditional classroom interaction seems to work better. Compressed video offers that interaction/discussion that Web classes struggle with.

Evaluation

I continue to chip away at a more refined analysis of the end-of-semester evaluation data, using SPSS. I'm looking for institution- and/or discipline-based differences. So far, I find none.

Dissemination

We continue to post these reports, and other information on our Web page.

Problems:

None not discussed above.

Comments:

We spent a lot of time at our annual meeting in Lexington discussing the "community" nature of this collaborative, as we looked at it in light of the WISE experiment that has sprung up. We affirmed that we have created a community and prefer to function as such. In that light, we have done well to address the changes over the last year mindfully.

Our personnel has changed remarkably. Joe Turrini is gradually replacing Jeff Jakeman, though Jeff continues to contribute to our discussions in meetings. Andrea Milam can no longer attend meetings as regularly as she once did, but she comes when she can. The loss of SC and Bob William's retirement removed him and Connie Schulz from our discussions. We miss their wisdom and cheer. We received a great deal of support from the SC technical unit, but Auburn has taken up the support SC provided.

The addition of IU and MTSU means we have a whole new group of technical people to bring into the fold, along with faculty and administrators. Both the new partners appear to work with very supportive technical units, and the new faculty have welcomed and embraced the Guiding Principles.

The hardest part of the new collaborative comes as we put together our course offerings. We have decided to continue with two classes each semester. When SC participated, the students came from both an LIS and a PH program, but we scheduled only one class from the university. Each of the four partners offered a class each year, making reciprocity easy. The new collaborative has the same mix of three LIS programs and two PH, but from five schools. Arranging a schedule during which partners give and receive classes equally will require establishing a five-year rotation during which each school offers classes only four of the five years. We started with the first three of the years, and will grow it over time.

Through this time of change, the partners have re-affirmed our commitment to consensus in our decision-making process and collaboration in the truest sense of the word.

Submitted by:
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