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Preservation Task Force Final Report to the Board

Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois

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**PRESERVING OUR RESOURCES:
A REPORT FROM THE CARLI PRESERVATION TASK FORCE TO THE CARLI BOARD ON
DEVELOPING A PRESERVATION PROGRAM FOR CARLI MEMBER LIBRARIES**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, local preservation efforts in Illinois have experienced great success. Although individuals have conducted training programs for local institutions and organizations, the development of cooperative preservation programming in Illinois has been nearly static since the mid-1990s. Not unlike other states, Illinois statewide preservation efforts were largely dependent upon un-mandated funding and individual personalities. The following paper recommends steps to be taken to develop a preservation program that will serve CARLI member libraries and outlines reasons for the success and failure of many cooperative preservation programs.

INTRODUCTION

The history of statewide preservation efforts is one marked by both spectacular successes and quiet failures. The challenges of coordinating and advocating for preservation efforts throughout a state are great. Distance, individual and institutional commitment, and funding have all played a role in the success and failure of these efforts. Despite being an early leader in the development of statewide preservation programs, Illinois' efforts languished. As a result, it remains one of the few states without either some form of statewide preservation program or representation by one of the regional networks of centers that promote preservation among member institutions. The resulting situation has left Illinois' collections severely disadvantaged when compared to those in other states. Currently, Illinois' libraries receive little attention in terms of advocacy or funding for preservation from the legislature or the State Library. Furthermore, because of the early demise of our statewide programming, the state's institutions do not qualify for the National Endowment for the Humanities' grants for Education and Training, which are no longer offered for statewide efforts.¹ At this point, the success or failure of a statewide preservation effort is completely dependent upon the commitment of its own institutions.

STATEWIDE PRESERVATION PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Efforts to meet preservation needs in Illinois are not new. The Newberry Library in Chicago has been a preservation leader since the 1970s. Other institutions developing early preservation programs in the state were Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Illinois State Archives, the University of Chicago, the Illinois State Historical Library, Northwestern University, and

¹ The National Endowment for the Humanities once offered funding for the development of statewide preservation programs. This program was in place during the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, they no longer offer support at a statewide level for preservation programs. Instead, their funding is only available for regional preservation programming.

Illinois State University. SIUC received its initial Library Services and Construction Act grant in 1981 to develop a model program in conservation and preservation outreach and training, providing technical leaflets, posters, disaster kits, training aids, consulting services, and workshops. In 1985, Bridget Lamont, Director of the Illinois State Library, created the Illinois Library Materials Preservation Task Force. The Task Force recommended legislation to fund a statewide preservation program, the formation of an Office of Preservation, supervision of the statewide program by regional library systems, a system of selecting and prioritizing treatment for the state's documentary heritage, the creation of one or more treatment centers in Illinois to provide conservation services, and the construction of mass deacidification facilities.

A state Office of Preservation was formed and components of the statewide program began functioning, but funding was cut in 1995 and the Office closed. Since that time, there have been no organized, sustainable statewide preservation efforts. The treatment centers and deacidification facilities were not established; criteria and procedures for identification and selection were not developed. Training and consulting in Illinois have been provided by individual preservation librarians, with funding provided through Library Services and Technology Act grants, through regional library systems, through the Illinois Cooperative Collection Management Program, or simply as labors of love. The demand for preservation services has remained high, as witnessed anecdotally by the waiting lists for most workshops, and more concretely by the results of the Illinois Statewide Preservation Survey Project completed in 2005.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND FAILURE POINTS IN STATEWIDE PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

In their white paper about the successes and failures of statewide preservation programs, Sherry Byrne and Tom Teper concluded that the patterns of success and failure are very consistent between programs, even if the programs themselves differ. Factors in the successes or failure of other programs include:

Successful preservation programs begin with:

- Leadership dedicated to developing a strong program
- An evolving state-wide preservation plan
- Permanent program staff with administrative support
- Steady or permanent sources of funding

Components that enhance and sustain a preservation programs include:

- Education and training workshops and consultations
- Outreach initiatives
- Grants that fund the program
- Grants that assist its members
- A website that is current and comprehensive
- Regular meetings of participating institutions
- Dedicated staff at a professional level

Program failures generally occur due to:

- Uneven or loss of funding during tough economic times
- Organizational burnout from lack of permanent staffing
- Stagnation from reliance on too few individuals
- Depending solely on volunteers
- Concentration on one type of institution, generally the larger academic libraries
- Overlap and duplication of larger programs like NEDCC and SOLINET
- Uneven distribution of benefits to member institutions

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ESTABLISHING A CARLI PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Both the 2002 white paper and the 2005 survey note that the two greatest barriers to the establishment of proper preservation programs in individual institutions are good information and adequate funding for training, supplies, and staff. It has been shown repeatedly that state programs without dedicated staff and dedicated funding do not survive over the long term.

This committee believes it is imperative that the Statewide Preservation Program be headed by a professional-level Director, preferably one with extensive experience in administration and working with consortia. A sample job description has been provided in this report. Funding such a position is, of course, difficult. The most stable sources of funding among other statewide preservation programs are legislated at the state level, and this type of funding should certainly be sought aggressively. In the meantime, however, one of the major components of this position must be grant writing, with self-sustainability for the program as a larger goal. Ideally, some of the grants could support projects through re-granting resources in keeping with the New York State preservation grant model, which (a) insists upon partnerships between large and small institutions for some grants, and (b) provides mini-grants for basic preservation supplies for institutions to care for collections. The person in this position would also be responsible for outreach and coordination of training. Additionally, the Program Director could provide consultation services for both preservation and grant writing as a service to CARLI member institutions, and perhaps on a fee basis for non-member institutions.

An Illinois Preservation website should be established as soon as possible and be made freely available to the public. This website will serve not only as a clearinghouse for information for CARLI members, but also as an ambassador for our statewide preservation program to non-CARLI members. As the program expands, the website should prove beneficial for furthering the development of institutional buy-in among member libraries.

The website should include basic collections care information and suppliers, and links to funding agencies that offer preservation-centered grants. We also recommend the establishment of a statewide database of preservation professionals (conservators, binders, paper restorers, disaster managers, collections survey professionals, etc.) who provide services not only to institutions but to individuals as well. While the original version of the website may be put together by the Preservation Task Force or some other entity

appointed by the CARLI board, its maintenance should fall to the Statewide Preservation Program office.

Other activities:

- Cooperative negotiation and contracting for preservation-related services and supplies
- Cooperative development of a Digital Preservation Management program intended to benefit CARLI's proposed content creation activities; such a system might technically reside at one of the larger member institutions, but the storage would benefit all member libraries and provide a level of insurance for CARLI's developing content creation activities.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF A CARLI PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Continued development of CARLI's preservation program relies on two factors: stable resources and a consensus that sustainable progress will not be possible without dedicated support within a parent organization.

As was made clear in the recommendations of the OCLC Statewide Preservation Needs Assessment, a successful preservation organization would most likely consist of a director, assistant, grant/fund raiser and optional webmaster. Assuming that some of these functions would be partially fulfilled by others throughout the CARLI organization, we envision a team consisting of two members - a coordinator of statewide preservation programs and a field services officer – with auxiliary functions performed by other CARLI employees.

Given the myriad options available, why should the CARLI board endorse such an organizational model? We present three reasons:

- **Economies of Scale** – Although many larger institutions can justify the retention of a preservation officer, a conservator, and multiple staff members dedicated to preservation activities, many smaller institutions can not sustain that level of activity. Other states, notably Kansas, have explored the cooperative management of preservation activities at smaller institutions. While this has generally required the dedication of an individual based in a larger university, CARLI member libraries could benefit from the presence of one or two trained individuals that work for the members – coordinating and overseeing cooperative preservation projects, developing cooperative purchasing and contracting agreements, and contributing to local efforts such as disaster planning through low-cost consulting.
 - One key area in which an economy of scale would benefit many CARLI member libraries would be the development of a digital preservation management system that provides storage for digital content in a Trusted Digital Repository. While commercial examples of this exist (most notably OCLC), the potential for smaller institutions to enjoy access to the

same type of digital storage under consideration at many of the nation's largest research institutions currently remains beyond the reach of many member libraries.

- The prospect of providing support for smaller institutions throughout the state is clearly illustrated by the Illinois Statewide Preservation Survey Project. Of the academic institutions responding, fully 69% of the institutions indicated possessing collections of under 250,000 volumes. While all institutions feel the pinch of tight budgets, smaller institutions, where librarians are more likely to wear multiple hats, are likely to find themselves harder-pressed to find funding and time to support training. This conclusion is reinforced by the survey, which indicated that significant numbers of academic institutions in Illinois find registrations and travel costs to be too expensive (53% and 49%), are pressed to spare staff time (32%), and find that needed workshops are not offered in Illinois (34%).
- **Potential for Cost Recovery Efforts** – A single experienced field services officer could provide training, assist smaller institutions with preparing grants, conduct preservation site surveys (for free or a reduced fee for CARLI members as well as others), and develop education and training grants for submission to the State Library. All of these activities could develop income for the CARLI organization that would help to offset initial expenses. For example:
 - A single NEH Preservation Assistance Grant may total \$5000 and be used for consulting, supplies, or services. By assisting institutions in preparing successful applications, CARLI could benefit from the consulting fees (typically around \$1,000 - \$1,200/day for a three-day site survey).
 - Cooperative purchasing or binding contracts for smaller institutions could benefit the institutions by giving them the buying power of larger institutions. Some amount of the savings could be routed to CARLI in the form of a small surcharge.
 - A CARLI training grant coordinated last February by UIUC provided \$5,000 for two workshops with 40 participants each. This covered registration, packets, fees/travel/lodging for a consultant for two days. Lunch and coffee were covered by UIUC, Northwestern, Chicago and Illinois State. By providing the training service directly, CARLI could realize significant savings.
- **Commitment to Cultural Heritage** – Clearly, CARLI member libraries value their holdings. Millions of dollars in state, federal, and private money are spent every year to acquire collections for these institutions. Yet, their commitment to preservation is both under-reported and under-represented. Illinois once led the nation in the development of statewide preservation efforts. But, the commitment to preserving the vast resources held within its many libraries remains locked in a very localized model with little cooperation among institutions. The benefit of

starting late is that CARLI can learn from the mistakes of others, adopt successful strategies, avoid past failures, and develop a program that, in many ways, goes beyond other states. The development of a CARLI Preservation Program will demonstrate a commitment to preserving cultural heritage among its member libraries that would appeal to prospective donors and granting agencies.

During FY07, it is our belief that CARLI should take the following actions:

- Authorize funding for hiring a Preservation Programs Coordinator
- Name an advisory committee to oversee the continued development of the program with responsibility for this committee's action vested in a CARLI staff member. Initial actions include:
 - Drafting position description for a Preservation Programs Coordinator
 - Conduct search for individual
- Support training activities already scheduled:
 - Workshops are currently scheduled for July
 - A second round of workshops has been discussed for the fall
- Retain Preservation Programs Coordinator by end of FY 07.

From the beginning of FY08, it is our belief that the advisory committee's direct role in statewide preservation efforts and the seed monies needed for training will both diminish as the program shifts from being an ad hoc effort to being part of a larger planned effort. While the committee would like to provide guidance, assistance, and support, it is our belief that the committee's role would primarily become that of a silent partner in developing a larger consortia-wide program.

CONCLUSION

The role of preservation in research and academic libraries is changing. The shift in user demands and collections is changing the role that many preservation and conservation programs assume within their institutions. Yet, some elements of preservation remain largely unchanged – the care for our investment in cultural resources, the concern that activities are undertaken in a cost-effective and efficient manner, and the long-standing tradition of collaboration. Although strong in collaboration and initially strong in developing cooperative preservation programming, Illinois has lagged behind in caring for its cultural resources. This paper's recommendations outline an opportunity for CARLI to enhance the state's reputation for collaborative activities and rekindle its early successes in developing preservation programming.

APPENDIX I: INITIAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

A thumbnail sketch of the program's initial resource requirements would include the following:

- FY07:
 - \$10,000 for contracted training,
 - \$5,000 for developing preservation-related literature, postage, etc...
 - Funding to support a search for the Preservation Programs Coordinator
- FY08:
 - \$65,000-\$75,000 in personnel costs for Preservation Programs Coordinator, plus benefits
 - \$10,000 (recurring) in funding for publicity, posters, consulting, etc...,
 - \$2,000 in professional development support
 - Funding to support travel throughout the state for workshops
- FY09:
 - \$40,000, plus benefits in personnel costs for the Preservation Field Services Officer

APPENDIX II: PRESERVATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Position: Preservation Coordinator

Responsible To: Executive Director, CARLI

Job Summary:

Responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive program of preservation program for the CARLI library consortium that may include education and training efforts, purchasing agreements, consulting and grant-writing. The successful candidate will develop long-term preservation goals, staff preservation education, and other key areas.

Responsibilities:

- Leads and manages the consortium-wide preservation program
- Develops preservation standards
- Assists institutions in developing disaster planning and response programs
- Develops and implements preservation training programs
- Develops grant proposals in support of preservation activities

Qualifications:

- ALA accredited master's degree in Library and Information Science, or equivalent advanced degree in preservation administration or conservation; or equivalent knowledge or specialized training in the field of preservation and conservation
- Minimum 3-5 years experience in a comprehensive preservation program
- Knowledge of emerging preservation technologies, national preservation standards, guidelines, and trends
- Knowledge of disaster planning
- Experience with long and short-term planning for preservation
- Effective organizational and management skills
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Highly desirable:
 - Experience with writing grant proposals to support preservation efforts
 - Experience working with a state-wide consortium