New Service Planning Team for the Illinois History and Lincoln Collections
Meeting Minutes

May 23, 2013
3:00-4:00pm
230B Main Library

Present: Lisa Romero (Chair), Betsy Kruger, John Hoffman, Beth Sandore, Karen Hogenboom (recording)

The team discussed the organization of the report, reviewed the draft outline distributed by Lisa, and talked about the points in the team’s charge.

The introduction to the report should be background about the history and uniqueness of the IHLC, possibly with an executive summary organizing our recommendations by the points in the charge.

We haven’t discussed administrative and organizational issues in detail: we need to look at IHLC as a center of excellence but also in context of what is happening in the rest of the library. How would the work of the unit relate to what would happen in a potential humanities hub, for instance? How can IHLC develop services collaboratively with other units and increase its visibility both inside and outside the library? Staffing is a limitation in pursuing this kind of work.

For the information literacy considerations mentioned in the charge, one team member should write a paragraph for the report, including quotes from the user interviews. The service profile envisioned in the charge is possible, but only with more resources.

The group discussed the resources necessary to process the backlog of manuscript collections and to process the collection as it grows. Using personnel in Archives and RBML is not feasible and a joint position with other special collections units does not seem feasible because of the inability to balance competing processing needs in several understaffed units.

The unit should be staffed by a full-time permanent archivist, a librarian, and two graduate assistants, at least for several years. The archivist and one GA would focus on processing the manuscript collections. The archivist needs subject expertise in Illinois history or Lincoln studies more than a library degree, and the GA could be hired using IHLC endowment funds for at least a couple of years. The archivist should have grant-writing experience, so that grant funding could be pursued to process the collections. NEH, Mellon, and IMLS are possibilities for this funding. An NEH Planning Grant could fund an assessment of the scope of the processing work, a physical conservation assessment, and a digitization pilot. The knowledge gained from this grant could be used to apply for an NEH Implementation Grant. The librarian and the second GA could work on the unit’s web presence and other outreach activities in
addition to the ongoing reference work that happens in the unit. This second GA could be a graduate hourly for a couple of years, until the web site was fully developed. Funding sources for graduate students should be reviewed after a couple of years to ensure that using endowment funds has not damaged the ability of the librarian to acquire collections for the unit.

The draft report should be complete by Tuesday, May 28. Betsy will write the collections section and Karen will write the services section. Lisa will request a short extension of the deadline for the report so that the group has a chance to revise.