Report of the LAUNC-CH Conference Committee, 2008 – 2009
"Rethink, Redefine, Reinvent: The Research Library in the Digital Age"
Submitted by Jill Sexton, chair

Members
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Summary
When the committee first met last fall, we reviewed the suggestions that came from last year's conference attendees and noticed many requests for sessions focusing on digital collections. At the same time, the focus of many all-staff meetings seemed to encourage staff to think about ways that the library can evolve and adapt to fit the changing needs of our users. The theme of redefining the research library in the digital age followed naturally from these suggestions. The conference breakout sessions focused on outreach and personalization of online content, exemplary digital projects, the changing workforce of research libraries, and next generation library systems. The conference concluded with a panel discussion of local efforts in digital scholarship.

Funding
Sarah Michalak and the University Libraries generously offered support of up to $5,000 for conference costs, of which $3239.96 was used. The SILS Alumni Association contributed $100. LAUNC-CH contributed $45 to find the Undergraduate scholarships and $1604.30 from general funds to underwrite the conference.

Budget
The committee again decided to fold the conference registration cost and lunch into one fee rather than breaking registration and lunch into separate expenses. Thanks to Sarah's generous donation LAUNC-CH was able to keep registration costs low for this year's conference. We charged a total conference attendance fee of $25 for full-time staff and $15 for students. This was the first year we reduced registration cost for students, and the reduced rate was well-received.

Next year's committee should determine early in the planning process if Sarah will still be able to contribute money to offset registration costs The actual cost of holding the conference at the Friday center is $40.22/person. If travel and administrative costs are factored in, the total cost of the conference rises to $48.58/person.

Following is a breakdown of all of the costs associated with the conference:

Item	Expense	Income
Friday Center	$7,240	
Postage	$5.46	
Rick Luce airfare	$130.70	
Rick Luce aotel	$488.92	
Rick Luce aonorarium	$300	
Reimbursement	$25	
Keynote dinner	$130.70	
Copies for conference packet	$217.70	
Folders, nametags	$206.78	
Total Expenses	$8745.26	

Registration and sponsorship		$3900
University Library		$3239.96
LAUNC-CH underwriting		$1605.30
Total Income		$8745.26

We had a total of 190 registrants of which 167 were attendees and 23 were speakers (LAUNC-CH covered the cost of the speaker's registration).

We implemented some cost-cutting measures this year in light of the budget situation. We felt that it would be irresponsible at this time to fund the customary speakers' dinner the night before the conference, which typically cost between $450-$700, depending on the number of board members and speakers who were able to attend. We instead opted to invite our keynote speaker and his wife to dinner along with Jill and Suchi (Conference committee chair and LAUNC-CH President). This saved several hundred dollars.

We also opted to forgo printing and mailing brochures, instead sending brochures via email. This saved about $250 in printing costs and postage.

Facilities
We discussed alternative venues for the conference this year, but the Friday Center was ultimately chosen because of its location, availability of parking, and past good experiences with the facility and its staff.

The Friday Center was booked for the Monday of UNC's Spring Break. We followed the example of last year's committee and did not book the large auditorium, but instead booked the Dogwood and Mountain Laurel rooms. We did receive feedback via the evaluations that the Mountain Laurel room was too small and some attendees had to stand for the sessions because there were not enough seats. We would recommend that next year's committee look into booking the Dogwood room and another room of comparable size.

Once again we saved money by bringing in library-owned laptops for speaker presentations rather than renting laptops from the Friday center.

Vendor Contacts
Nancy solicited conference donations from a selection of the library vendors from the 2008 vendor contact list. Copies of the letters can be found in H:\Launcch\Conferences\2009\Vendors 09. Letters were sent in January 2009; none of the vendors responded. Given the economic climate there really did not seem to be much rush to ask for monies; nevertheless, conference committee members probably should send solicitations earlier than this next year.

The SILS Alumni Association donated money to the Conference, so it is recommended that they be contacted again for donations for the 2010 Conference. A thank you note was sent after the conference.

Donors (Sarah Michalak and SILS Alumni Association) were publicly acknowledged in a flier in every conference folder.

Speaker Coordination

All members of the committee participated in this duty. After determining the appropriate speakers to invite for the conference's sessions, the duty of contacting individual speakers was divided up among committee members. Jill then circulated a template to use as the contact and invitation letter. Members personalized the letters and provided details concerning the session topics. The invitation letters were then emailed to potential participants. Following last year's recommendation, all contacts were made in writing in order to document the offer and minimize any confusion. This year's committee recommends that this practice continue.

In early February, follow-up letters were sent to all confirmed speakers. The letters detailed the following information: confirmation of date, time, room, and topic; A/V needs?; and registration (free) and lunch information. The letter also requested a brief biography (for introductions, registration packets and the web site). All bios were then added to the H:\LAUNC-CH folder for easy access for committee members.

After the conference, each committee member sent thank you emails or hand-written notes to each of the speakers, expressing sincere appreciation.

Brochures
The brochures from this year's conference were created based using the saved file from last year, but format changes were made to accommodate procedural changes. As a committee we decided that we did not want to print and mail brochures out to perspective participants.   The committee made this discussion based on the cost of sending the brochure out vs. the convenience for attendees and the ecological impact of printing so many sheet of paper that are not used. Because of the amount of perspective attendees who have email and can easily print an attachment, we felt that the cost of sending the brochures and the ecological impact of printing the brochure outweighed any convenience for the attendees.

Because all the brochures were sent out as PDFs attached to emails, we wanted to make them easy to print for participants. The brochure was redesigned to fit a letter size paper and extended to three pages. The first two pages were the informational part of the brochure and the 3rd page was a printable registration form. Since the brochure was emailed out to participants, in the future, this form could be made into a PDF form, so participants could enter their information and then print it out.

Publicity
The conference was publicized on the LAUNC-CH website, Library Line, and across the campus and state via various local and state listservs. Promotional emails also were sent directly to many colleges, universities, and community college libraries. Fewer than twenty brochures were mailed by post. A contacts list can be found in H:\Launcch\Conferences\2009\contacts_2009.doc.

Since a good amount of conference attendees came from non-UNC Libraries, and evaluation results from last year's conference showed that approximately 2/3 of attendees found out about the Conference via email announcements, it is recommended that LAUNC-CH continue to use email as the primary means of promotion and publicity for next year's conference.

Lastly, the University Gazette carried a blurb about the conference. Blurbs for print should be vetted by Judy Panitch.

Program

Our Keynote Speaker was Richard Luce, University Librarian at Emory University. Before coming to Emory, Mr. Luce was the director of the library at Los Alamos National Laboratory. He is a noted speaker in the areas of E-science and digital scholarship.

Breakout session speakers included: John Bythe, UNC-Chapel Hill SILS; Richard Cox, UNC Greensboro; Jean Ferguson. Duke University; Stephen Fletcher, UNC-Chapel Hill; Kevin Gilbertson, Wake Forest University; Chad Haefele, UNC-Chapel Hill; Noah Huffman, Duke University; Jill Katte, Duke University; Lynda Kellam, UNC Greensboro; John Little, Duke University; Erik Mitchell, Wake Forest University; Rickard Murray, Duke University; Derek Rodriguez, TRLN; Will Sexton, Duke University; Jacqueline Solis, UNC-Chapel Hill; Kim Vassiliadis, UNC-Chapel Hill; and Megan von Isenburg, Duke University Medical Center Library.

We ended the day with a panel discussion on Digital Scholarship. Panelists included: Bobby Allen, UNC-Chapel Hill; Zari Kamarei, UNC-Chapel Hill; Cal Lee (UNC SILS); Sylvia Miller (UNC Press); and Will Sexton (Duke University).

Conference Packets
Conference packets contained a conference schedule and a map of the Friday Center, a list of conference attendees, an evaluation form, and speaker biographies. We also included a half-sheet recognizing and thanking our sponsors, and recognizing the 3 recipients of the LAUNC-CH undergraduate scholarship. We also included a flier soliciting proposals for the LAUNC-CH Research Forum.

The entire committee participated in stuffing folders, and Kurt and Nancy assembled the nametags the week before the conference.

Undergraduate Scholarship
In early spring, Tiffany Allen approached me with a request from the Library's Diversity committee. The Diversity committee is considering ways to encourage undergraduates to consider a career in librarianship. They are especially interested in attracting individuals with diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives to the profession. They proposed offering a scholarship to attend the LAUNC-CH conference to outstanding undergraduates who work in a library on campus.

The LAUNC-CH board agreed to sponsor the scholarship, and we put out an announcement in late February seeing nominations for the award. We awarded three scholarships to undergraduate student staff: Hazel Gooding, Law Library; Matthew Karkutt, NCC; and Kami LaBerge, Music Library.

This program was well received and we recommend continuing it next year.

Registration
Registration for the 2009 Conference went smoothly, although we continue to hear from registrants that they would like to be able to register and pay online via the LAUNC-CH website. Advertising for this year's conference seemed to be very effective, as evidenced by the number of registrants and the diverse institutions they represent.

Registrant Breakdown:

175 registrants in attendance.
- 2 registered on-site.

- 3 student award-winners.
- 10 graduate students.
- 11 CALAs.
- 23 speakers.

15 registrants not in attendance.
- 3 gave advance notice of their absence.
- 2 absentees never paid.

7 people waitlisted.

Institution Breakdown:

Charlotte AHEC: 3
Duke University: 16 (incl 6 speakers)
- Divinity School: 1
- Law Library: 5
- Med Center: 5 (incl 1 speaker)
ECPI College of Technology: 1
Elon University: 7
Emory University: 1 (speaker)
Johnston Community College: 1
McDougle Middle School: 1
Mount Olive College: 2
National Humanities Center: 2
Natl Inst of Environmental Health Sciences: 2
North Carolina State University: 9
- NC Live: 1
North Carolina A&T State University: 1
North Carolina Central University: 1
North Carolina Department of Labor: 1
North Carolina Medical Society: 1
Rex Healthcare: 1
Smith Middle School: 1
TRLN: 1 (speaker)
UNC-Chapel Hill: 59 (incl 5 speakers)
- Carolina Population Center: 2
- Dept. of American Studies: 1 (speaker)
- Health Sciences Library: 7
- Law Library: 2
- NC Collection: 3 (incl 1 speaker)
- SILS: 22 (incl 2 speakers)
UNC Greensboro: 4 (incl 2 speakers)
UNC Press: 1 (speaker)
Unaffiliated: 1
Wake Forest: 7 (incl 2 speakers)
Wingate University: 1
YBP Library Services: 1

Recommendations

- If the Friday Center is booked for next year's conference , opt for two larger rooms instead of the Dogwood and the Mountain Laurel Room

- In an effort to squeeze in more time for the breakout sessions, we shortened lunch to one hour instead of an hour and a half. This felt rushed and did not leave enough time for networking. We recommend lengthening the lunch again to at least 75 minutes.

- Continue the trend toward reducing the amount of printing and mailing for the conference. Rely instead on email and the LAUNC-CH website for publicity.

- Include brief session descriptions in the online conference brochures

- Continue to advertise conference actively at smaller local colleges and universities

Evaluation Results
Evaluation questions asked attendees to rate the sessions on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent.

Speaker sessions	Presentation	Usefulness
Keynote: Richard Luce	4.0	3.6
Outreach and personalization	4.4	4.5
Digital projects	4.4	4.2
Changing workforce	4.0	3.6
Next generation library systems	3.9	3.6
Panel: digital scholarship	3.9	3.7

Conference overall	
What is your overall evaluation of the Conference?	4.2
Based on advance announcements, how well did the Conference meet your expectations?	4.2
Please rate the Conference location and its facilities.	4.8
What is your reaction to the number of concurrent breakout sessions?	3.2
What is your reaction to the topics of the breakout sessions?	4.2

How did you find out about the conference?	
Magazine/newspaper	0
Friend/colleague	12
E-mail	54
Other	2

Suggestions:
More interactive sessions, how libraries can better work with IT departments, what is being taught or should be taught in library school, include session descriptions in conference packet (this was a mistake on our part- not intentionally left out), shorter sessions, library spaces (coffee shops), HSL stuff, diversity.

To quote a few responses:
"The most engaging [LAUNC-CH conference] I've been to, and I've been to more than 10"
"One of the best keynotes I've heard at a LAUNC-CH conference"
"Give this one again in 5 years"
"Relevant topics that matched the program description"
"Good time management by moderators" ☺
"All sessions were informative and thought-provoking... but the comments from Rick Luce lead to an 'ah-ha' moment where I began to imagine what the library transition from 'collecting' commercial material to curating collaborative systems and data sets might look like and how it could proceed"

A few generalizations:
People seemed to love or hate the keynote; they either found Luce very stimulating, or had trouble finding relevance in his talk for their own work. People frequently commented that they would like shorter sessions, and several mentioned that they loved the facilities and enjoyed the opportunities to meet with colleagues. A number of folks also named Bobby Allen specifically as a highlight or favorite speaker, though the panel overall was one of the lower-rated sessions.