

TO : The LAUC Review Committee
From: Jacob Nadal (Preservation Officer, UCLA)
Date: 13 Monday 2009
SUBJECT: Application for LAUC Presentation Mini-Grant

A. Summary and current status of the research project/activity

I am applying for a \$500 Presentation Grants, to assist with the costs of travel to the American Library Association Conference, to present my research on preservation survey methodologies at the meeting of the Preservation Administration Interest Group.

The methodology was initially developed to allow rapid assessment of collections at The New York Public Library, where I served as Field Service Librarian in the Preservation Division. The research involved in developing a more broadly applicable tool has been carried out within the classes I have taught as a Visiting Professor at the Pratt Institute School of Information and Library Science (New York, NY) and the Indiana University School of Library and Information Science (Bloomington, IN). I am conducting a final test of the methodology using the collections at UCLA and have drafts of a report of the survey results and a methodology paper in progress for future publication in peer-reviewed journals.

B. Timetable for the activities to be funded:

Research and refinement of the survey tools and preparation of articles for peer-review will continue through (calendar year) 2009. Presentations will be given in June 2010.

C. Budget

Airfare (BUR to):	\$250
Lodging (2 nights; partial cost):	\$250
TOTAL:	\$500

D. Status of the Applicant: I am a non-represented librarian

E. Abstract/Summary

A primary functions of library preservation is to acquire and interpret data about the condition of the collections. The sheer size of the collections at most research libraries poses a significant obstacle to this, even before taking into account the number of distinct buildings and sub-collections that should be considered. Obtaining a comprehensive and unbiased view of the preservation needs of a collection can stretch the capacity of libraries with dedicated preservation staff, and generally exceeds the capabilities of the majority of libraries, where a lack dedicated staffing for preservation is the norm.

To overcome this problem, a new survey methodology is proposed. This methodology uses an extensible data model to collect a set of standardized data elements. These core elements were selected after a thorough literature review and evaluation of a series of trial surveys using a wide range of methodologies at several libraries across the United States.

Surveys can be examined in terms of the number of questions asked and the amount of unique data that can be selected in response to those questions. Many preservation surveys consist of dozens of questions and possible answers in a variety of formats. This makes analysis of individual surveys complex, let alone comparison of one survey to another. A great deal of the data collected in these surveys is also *descriptive* of individual items, rather than *diagnostic* of preservation issues.

The proposed methodology uses 15 mandatory questions and 4 types of standardized data. An additional 7 questions are recommended, but not be necessary in all applications. This approach provides several key advantages:

- Reduced training and expertise required of surveyors, to enable more options for data collection
- Faster survey times, to facilitate ongoing assessment of preservation efforts, throughout the life cycle of the collections
- Limited duplication of effort between collection-level surveys and item-level treatment decisions
- Ability to augment the core survey with questions that target new priorities or collection-specific needs, while still contributing to a central pool of critical preservation data

The resulting survey has been packaged into an online web application and a set of Excel templates. Surveys based on this methodology can commence immediately. The standardization of the survey data also facilitates automation of certain parts of the data analysis.

F. Sponsoring organization of the conference.

American Library Association (ALA),
Assoc. for Collections and Technical Service (ALCTS),
Preservation and Reformatting Sections (PARS).

Presentation will be at the meeting of the Preservation Administration Interest Group (PAIG), which serves as the plenary session for PARS at the ALA conference. Pat Morris is chair of PAIG for 2010:

Patricia Morris
Faculty Director, Preservation
Libraries, University of Colorado at Boulder
303-492-3849
Patricia.Morris@Colorado.EDU

G. Description(s) of any funds that have been requested from other sources.

The remainder of travel funds will be supplemented by my FY 10 professional development allowance.