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South Asia Cooperative Collection Development Workshop 2013 Summary Report and Outcomes

The 4th Annual South Asia Cooperative Collection Development Workshop was held in Madison, WI on October 18th. The theme of this year's workshop was communication and the intent was to address how we communicate the successes, value, and impact of our work, both within our own cooperative structure as well as externally to faculty, administrators, and the library community.

Building upon the 2012 workshop regarding local specialization, and focusing on the overarching themes of national needs/local justification, innovation, outreach, impact and challenges, two participants gave lively, illustrated reports on their declared range of niche collecting efforts:

- Mara Thacker, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, described her efforts at identifying, tracking down and acquiring South Asian comic books.
- David Hirsch, UCLA, explained his work in developing a collection of diasporic Jewish materials from South Asia.

These in-depth presentations demonstrated the complexities in creating these niche collections, ranging from identifying a need to working with user and donor communities, the value of acquisitions trips in acquiring unique materials, the resultant negotiations with our respective technical services departments, and finally the need for outreach and publicity. Furthermore, they allowed all cooperative members to become aware of local strengths that benefit the "national collection" and upon which we call can rely.

The workshop also called upon participants to articulate and re-craft a vision statement for our group. Highlighted among the concepts were

- a compulsion "to go beyond the routine practices of collection development to uncover the obscure, the ephemeral, the neglected works and archives that will help change the shape of future research"
- a need for "simultaneously increasing access to traditionally collected areas through digitization while expanding to include previously less commonly collected materials"
- an appreciation for "an increased knowledge and appreciation of the holdings of other libraries"

- a recognition that our group is “a mechanism that allows South Asia subject specialists to work together, build a professional community, and have important conversations about the state of local and national collections”

A small working group was formed to draft a new vision statement for our collective and will be distributed in 2014.

Finally, the workshop enabled a discussion about our current collecting practices and procedures, most tangibly in light of our participation in the Library of Congress Cooperative Acquisitions Program for South Asia (SACAP). A second small working group was formed to communicate overall concerns and hopes to our colleagues at LC.

2013 Participating Institutions

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Princeton University
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Chicago
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
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University of Minnesota
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