

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Dear CRL Global Collections Stakeholders –

I hope this finds you all well. As promised, here is my weekly update on happenings related to CRL’s global collections programs. A common expression in large organizations is, “this meeting could have been an email.” There is a lot of information in this email so I hope you agree with me that this should not be a meeting!

My onboarding continues at a fast pace. I’m learning a lot, and quickly, and continue to build a deeper understanding of CRL’s mission and culture. When I arrived, I thought the [Strengthening Global Collections](#) effort was broadly understood as it already included significant member engagement. I have since learned that many stakeholders are in a dramatically different space: at the town halls there were expressions of confusion about the plan and a general sense among the attendees that they felt distance from the process. Clearly, the former engagement was insufficient, and we’ll correct for this going forward. We will adjust the timeline as necessary to get folks on board, build a sense of belonging, and allow you, the community of experts, to meaningfully shape our collective outcomes. Although community engagement will take some time, I am confident that working together will allow us to achieve a better result.

Community Engagement

To balance the needs of slowing things down for more community engagement, while also not holding up important work, I am actively working to approve time-sensitive work as needed, while being careful not to greenlight anything that could get in the way of our larger long-term goals. Although my engagement plan currently emphasizes listening, it’s clear to me that we need to get going forward with tangible actions to move our programs forward. For example: I was able to connect with the chairs of SAMP and SAOA, Abhijit Bhattacharya and Ryan Perkins, last week, to move forward on an application from an important new institutional member of SAOA. There are still details to sort out about the formal organizational structure going forward but it’s clear we want to accommodate and facilitate these critical partnerships.

Financials

Quarterly financials for each program were distributed last Friday. Financials for the global programs are now fully harmonized with the routine reporting schedule of the CRL business office. CRL’s next quarter closes on March 31st, which means you can expect your next financial and activity report in late April to early May and thereon on a routine quarterly cadence.

Office Hour Learnings

My open office hours are proving to be an effective way for me to meet you and, I am discovering, for you to meet each other. If I only meet with each AMP/GRN individually, we might miss new opportunities to build new connections across our community. These open discussion groups are proving so productive that I am extending them indefinitely. The registration is still open at [this link](#).

I have already learned through my office hours of a fear that current AMP/GRNs are going to be dissolved into a single body for Global Collections. This was never the intention! The announcement of the Board ([link](#)) approving the restructuring specifically references the Sustainability Model, which includes Global Collections Divisions. I encourage you to read the brief announcement via that [link](#), which includes in bold text, “commitment to global collections and services,” “professional communities of practice,” and “broaden and diversify participation in CRL’s global collections activities.” The structure maintains overall geographic distinctions across multiple groups that in many ways parallel the current structure and provides for future adjustments. Beyond that, we are recommitting to actively building the CRL collective collection that will enable all members to rely on a central repository as the base of their international collections while focusing locally on digging deeply into collections tailored to their local research needs and collection emphases.

Further, each AMP/GRM/program will play an active and deliberative role in determining its own future. This is a baseline assumption in the process, and actively captured in the charge of the [Global Collections Implementation Advisory Task Force](#) which includes member representation and CRL staff representation, and which will communicate with each group to inform our collective future.

Leadership Meetings

I am still in the process of reaching out to the leadership of each group. I have my first meeting with a full AMP/GRN group this Friday, as I meet with the [German-North American Resources Partnership](#) (GNARP). (I recently learned that German is the second most well-represented language in CRL’s collections, and that CRL holds one of the largest collections of German dissertations in North America.) The annual meeting for the [South Asia Materials Project](#) (SAMP) is on my calendar for March 15th and the annual meeting for [Collaborative Initiative for French Language Collections](#) (CIFNAL) is also on my calendar for March 22.

The more I learn, and the more of you I get to know, the more excited about what we will achieve working together. All the challenges I have seen so far are eminently fixable!

Kevin