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Serials & E-Resources News

Report on the Acquisitions Institute at Timberline Lodge

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The Acquisitions Institute is hosted at the Timberline Lodge, located on the side of Mt. Hood in the Cascades at 6,000 feet above sea-level. In May 2013, approximately 80 librarians, vendors, and publishers attended this event. Even though the Lodge is in a remote location about 1-1/2 hours outside Portland, the long trip from Michigan was well worth it. The mountain views are breathtaking; the Lodge is unique and full of interesting furnishings and decorations with spartan, yet modern guestrooms. The food, drink, and entertainment were outstanding.

The organizers are four librarians who worked on putting together this conference for years while the Institute has been held 13 of the last 14 years. Compelling proposals and speakers are actively sought out by the conference organizers, and the meetings strongly focus on collections. The keynote speech, "Beyond Measure: Evaluating Libraries", delivered by Chris Bourg (AUL for Collections at Stanford University) proposed new ways of evaluating collections and especially for their diversity. Bourg acknowledged the importance of valuing libraries for librarians, publishers, and vendors, who are all concerned about diminished collections, funding, and public or institutional support for libraries today. Bourg encouraged us to consider beyond the typical metrics and asked us to use idealism and core values such as diversity, preservation and social responsibility and encouraged us to explore

nurturing them through our collections. Ultimately, the things that our communities truly value libraries for aren't always quantifiable. Are we prepared to diversify our purchasing and collaborate together to strengthen collections? Can we seek out new constituents and supporters and serve their needs?

For the rest of the conference, sessions featured practical results and concrete ideas, but infused them with idealism and noble purposes. We heard about how consortia develop their collection management strategies as well as several other states and regions. Each entity had their own process of planning, implementing and evaluating, and they were all quite different from each other.

Librarians, publishers, and vendors discussed current issues in the acquisition of e-books, databases, serials, and even mobile applications. We learned new things about traditional topics that are familiar to those who work in library acquisitions including identifying and preserving unique print collections, relocating the print collection during remodeling, the influence of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on electronic resources, allocating budgets by formulas, assessing the impact of library collections on undergraduate education, and holding down the costs of purchasing and processing serials.

I felt inspired by the keynote speech, and I believe my fellow attendees did as well. Presenters and audience members often referred to ideas addressed by the keynote speaker. One of the attractions of a relatively

small conference is that participants attend the same sessions, and as a result, there tends to be more discussion, including opportunities to informally exchange ideas. From what was said by veteran attendees, Timberline offers the opportunity for a free and open exchange of opinions and ideas—and snow!