

## **Shaping the Future by Strengthening Membership**

Global Council: Year Three

Annual Plan

2011/12

Global Council as the members' representative body within OCLC's governance structure is one of the two main pillars which form OCLC's unique structure. Based on the voices of the members OCLC, as a non-for-profit company of global influence and activities, has committed itself to support libraries and librarianship worldwide in a sustainable manner in order to continuously improve services and products. Especially in times where challenge is the only constant, input from all the members is an element of support concerning research, development, and service agreements not to be overestimated.

In the last two years the structure of governance bodies has severely changed because of accentuating more and more global aspects of the whole company. With the new strong regional elements in the shape of the Regional Councils [Americas Regional Council (ARC), Asia Pacific Regional Council (APRC), Europe, Middle East and Africa Regional Council (EMEARC)], it is possible to widen the basis of different possibilities to deliver input and to give advice. Global Council then is the organizational element where the different opinions and ideas are brought together and are transformed into concrete proposals for further activities.

### **Members and Governance**

OCLC's governance structure is based on Global and Regional Councils as well as on the Board of Trustees. During the last years the necessary changes absorbed a lot of effort, especially in the case of Global Council in order to realize the different adaptations and transformations. Now this period lies behind us, and we are in the phase where we can concentrate on future directives and possibilities. Although the number of members now is more than 20,000, it will be one of the most important efforts to increase active participation and to strengthen the awareness. Membership must not only be a formal status but a constant process of revitalization. To support this process is one of the distinguished tasks of Global Council. Discussions, participation of external expertise and presentation of best practice models are suitable instruments.

With the decision to increase the number of Global Council face to face meetings from one to two per year, the way is prepared for giving more time and increasing possibilities to exchange ideas and to learn from each other. Therefore the preconditions for more intensive engagement exist and it now depends on us to take the chance. We as the delegates represent the different library types as well as the different regions and their cultural diversities. To recognize the common ground but also the differences and to transform this into reasonable input for the development of new services should be the central role of Global Council delegates. We should understand all our self-governance activities as a necessary and underlying basis, but our primary objective should be to give advice and to critically reflect OCLC's product and service portfolio.

## **Communication**

One of our most important goals for this year is the whole process of communication and how we can improve it. In a worldwide organization there are many different voices which must be channeled and formed into a supportive and constructive course of action. Already last year Global Council installed a task force which in the meantime delivered an impressive result. This will be the basis for our main topic at our November meeting. To organize Communication and the flow of information between the regional and the other existing governance bodies is a rather complex task which needs some strong rules and guidelines to guarantee the effective transport of messages. We should all focus on the improvement of this topic.

## **Planning Process, Product Development, and Service Implementation**

In a world where technology is one of the most important drivers and where OCLC has strongly to rely on successful progress also in this area, it is of great importance and value to get the necessary feedback steadily and continuously. Especially in a phase where we all are confronted with a real shift in technology (Cloud computing, Web based services), we as Global Council, in close connection with our Regional Councils, must be prepared for the delivery of the necessary input and the assessment of results. We also should reflect on steps and activities to increase our terrain by including more and more institutions outside the core library scene but with related interests like archives and museums, historical societies or further cultural heritage institutions. The huge increase of records in WorldCat, the shift into the world of “Web Scale Management Systems,” the implementation of “WorldCat Local” and all the other activities, require a total new understanding of future library services. This challenge must be supported and born by the members. Global Council should be one place where the consequences and results are disputed and brought into a straightforward process of constant improvement.

## **Conclusion**

Global Council is one of the core elements in OCLC’s governance structure. Quality and results depend on the delegates’ interest to accept their role as serious advisors, strong supporters and engaged people. We ourselves can determine what we want to be. It is in our hands to play a key role in OCLC’s further activities and to emphasize the value we can add to OCLC’s global engagement. With our work we have the chance to improve the conditions for libraries worldwide and we should work hard to fulfill our role in the name of the members who have elected us and in the name of the cooperative as a whole.

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