

# OCLC Members Council May 2003 Library Group Report

**Name of Group:** State Academic Libraries II

**Recorder:** Susan Olson

**Attendees and observers:**

Stephen Rollins, University of Alaska, Anchorage (OCLC Western)  
Charles Kratz, University of Scranton (PALINET) and Members Council Executive Committee liaison  
George Needham, OCLC Liaison  
Cliff Glaviano, Bowling Green University (OHIONET)  
Judith Sessions, Miami University (OHIONET)  
Ken Bierman, University of Nevada -- Las Vegas (Amigos)  
Hennie Viljoen, University of Stellenbosch (OCLC PICA)  
Dianne Man, Johannesburg (OCLC PICA)  
Paul Dumont, Dallas County Community College District (Amigos)  
Brad Baker, Northeastern Illinois University, OCLC Board of Trustees  
Bill DeJohn, Executive Director, MINITEX  
Cathy Wilt, Executive Director, PALINET

**Topic One**

**How can Members Council most productively provide OCLC with future environmental trends for the various types of libraries?**

**What are the 3-4 most valuable and useful techniques to gather input?**

The group discussed various modes of input and ranked top three sources of input as:

- a. Members Council
- b. Networks
- c. Focus Groups

**Identify other means to gather feedback on products and services.**

Other sources which received some votes as "top source" included the OCLC Board of Trustees, OCLC Users Groups, market research, library associations, standards committees, library visits and consortia. Other sources discussed, but not considered "top," included pop-up surveys, OCLC's new Web site, electronic discussion lists, usability testing, and sales/market penetration data.

**Comments:**

- Information needs to be targeted. Too much information masks meaningful information.
- Sometimes pop-up surveys can be a nuisance, especially if not well designed or if adequate response time is not provided. Several felt that the recent e-learning survey was difficult to do online, as it required the involvement of several folks to complete. Charles Krantz noted that in his work with assessment he has found that students generally like pop-up surveys.
- Some networks do not have regularly scheduled network meetings. We need to find out how users of those services can communicate with their network. Delegates outside of the United States noted how difficult it was for them to communicate with their Service Center or with other members of the Service Center given the geographic distances involved.
- Delegates noted the importance of communication with other non-OCLC consortia, such as OhioLink and OPLIN in Ohio.
- OCLC clarified that some OCLC Users Groups are entirely independent of OCLC. Some, but not all, have OCLC staff liaisons.

## Topic Two

**Evaluate the written responses from SLT members on Members Council concerns. Is this approach working and how could it be improved?**

This process is useful and should be continued. It will be useful in orienting new delegates and transiting from one Members Council year to another. Suggestions for improvement were:

- Focus the questions more sharply. Sometimes the answer does not seem to match the question, but the question is also somewhat vague. Sometimes the question does not provide the needed context to really understand the question. (George Needham noted the role of the OCLC liaison is to help clarify questions for SLT members.)
- Highlight key questions/information. The questions and responses to date seem fairly routine suggestions for improvement. Is there some way to focus on new thoughts?
- Prefer to obtain responses from the SLT sooner so the response can be considered for discussion at the next meeting. (George Needham noted that the overall schedule for comments and responses might make it difficult to provide responses sooner.)
- Add the source of the comment (Interest Group or Library Group) so that the source can be asked if the response is adequate and/or asked to clarify the question.
- Some sentiment in favor of the face-to-face review of key questions that has been done at some previous Members Council meetings. (The “what OCLC has learned” report.)
- Add ability to follow-up if the response is not adequate.

## Topic Three

**What are the key trends affecting libraries on a national, regional and local level?**

- **What do the terms regional and local environment mean to your group?**
  - Local – campus, multi-type group, no overnight travel required
  - Regional – state, multi-state, consortia
- **Define the top 3-4 most important influences on your library’s operations?**  
(The top 3-4 influences are underlined.)

A decline in purchasing power is affecting all levels.

- **At the national level**
  - Distance education/e-learning
  - Outcome-based assessments
  - Monitoring of information use (Internet filters, Patriot Act, copyright)
  - New methods of scholarly communication (SPARC, D-Space)
  - Movement away from faculty status for librarians; MLS no longer required for some positions.
  - New service models – the information commons, joint use librarians
  - New information delivery models – “My Course” (deliver course information sources via BlackBoard, etc.), Portals, Courseware
- **At the regional level**
  - Cooperative licensing
  - Digital libraries
  - Resource sharing – books and bodies
  - Regional groups key consortia
  - Reduction in regional funding/increase in charge-backs
  - Universal borrowing card – changes ILL to circulation
  - Reluctance in funding off-campus training
- **At the local level**
  - Declining purchasing power/need to identify core services
  - Librarians as teachers/liaison with faculty
  - Adding information technology/e-services
  - 24/7 – expectations for 24/7 service
  - Funding targeted to specific disciplines
  - Bandwidth

## **Topic Four**

Identify the:

- 2 or 3 most significant issues discussed in this meeting.
  1. E-learning – OCLC needs to help place libraries in the midst of this environment.
  2. Positive return on purchase price – OCLC services and products need to clearly explain how they provide a positive economic return. Very important for new services to save libraries money. Major advertising points should be how this service enables the library to create a positive economic return.
  3. Outcome-based assessment – Share best practices, case studies, clearinghouse
  4. Relationships with OCLC and the networks are no longer as critical as those with regional cooperatives like OhioLINK and GALILEO.
  5. Brokering 3<sup>rd</sup> party not as critical as formerly.
  6. OCLC needs to be earlier in adoption cycle of new technologies/services.
  
- **Most urgent issue(s) to communicate to the Executive Committee and SLT**
  - Top three underlined above.
  
- **Issue to be discussed by full Council (if there is one)**
  - No issue identified