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Academic Art Museum and Library Collaborations: Current Practices and Future Directions

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Introduction

With support from an academic museum and library collaboration planning grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Oberlin College hosted the second Academic Art Museums and Libraries Summit from June 13 to 15, 2018. Held seventeen months after the inaugural event organized by the University of Miami, the second summit brought together library and museum leaders from eighteen US colleges and universities to continue exploration of deeper intra-institutional collaborations between academic art museums and libraries. Particular attention was paid to ensure that diversity was represented in terms of institutional mission and size in addition to the discoverability of collections. The teams represented a cross-section of American colleges and universities, including nine institutions that participated in the 2016 summit. The eighteen teams in 2018 came from public and private universities, private liberal arts colleges, and the oldest consortium of historically black colleges and universities. The teams also represented varying levels of development in library-museum collaboration, ranging from newly initiated collaborations to long-term partnerships.

The Allen Memorial Art Museum and the Oberlin College Libraries served as the hosts and organized the program and logistical services, with guidance and assistance from the Mellon Foundation and Oberlin's Office of Foundation, Government, and Corporate Grants. Additional support for the summit was provided by Oberlin College. Representatives from the Mellon Foundation, Samuel H. Kress Foundation, American Alliance of Museums, and Ithaka S + R joined the summit as observers.

Prior to the second summit, the invited teams submitted topics for discussion as well as descriptions of existing or proposed collaborative projects on their home campuses. The teams were asked to consider how their institutions have responded to issues and opportunities in the areas of diversity and discoverability. The material provided helped to shape the second summit's four plenary sessions and served as the basis for presentations by the participating institutions.

The summit's opening and closing addresses focused the proceedings on the enhancement of diversity and discoverability across academic libraries and museums. Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole (Oberlin class of 1957) — Director Emerita of the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian Institution, Principal Consultant at Cook Ross Inc., and Senior Consulting Fellow at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation — opened the event with a compelling charge to attendees to move beyond the policies of diversity, equity, and inclusion currently in place at their institutions to "do the work" of increasing diversity in their libraries and museums.

Dr. Cole noted that such diversity should be considered not only in terms of race but also in terms of the overall makeup of collections, citing the recent Mellon Foundation and Ithaka S + R survey of museum and library leaders about staff diversity. She laid out

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five reasons why having a diverse workforce makes good business sense: "1) Diversity initiatives expand the talent pool; 2) Diverse teams have more innovative ideas than homogenous teams; 3) Diverse teams make better decisions; 4) Diverse teams better serve their customer base; and 5) Diverse companies make more money." Beyond these reasons for fostering diversity, Dr. Cole argued that "reaching out across lines of difference to form authentic friendships and meaningful and productive collegial relationships in a workplace can be a source of joy." She also posited that libraries can learn from museums about public education, while museums can learn from libraries regarding access, and she emphasized the important point that having free admission "alone doesn't create a diverse visitorship."

Dr. Mia Ridge, Western Heritage Collections Digital Curator at The British Library, launched the second day with a discussion of the ways library and museum staff can use digital platforms to open their collections and enhance scholarship. She urged museum and library professionals to be thought leaders, not simply service providers, and shared examples of open-source repositories furthering research.[1] Dr. Ridge also advocated "partnerships without paperwork," given that contracts are not necessary for the use of open-source material; emphasized the vast reach of such materials, as they can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection; and urged participants to think about appropriate metrics for measuring impact of digital projects. A central theme of her talk was a reminder that library and museum staff serve not only scholarly audiences but also the general public and that important research is often done by those without advanced degrees, as evidenced by the work of genealogists and family historians.

To stimulate public interest in collections, Dr. Ridge suggested that museums and libraries sponsor "open calls" with awards, to encourage and recognize users for utilizing works for commercial purposes or in creative reuse, activities that can give institutions case studies and stories about how investments in digital technology have broad impact. She urged participants to make works and images available without requiring users to enter terms in a search field, the approach of the Cleveland Museum of Art's ArtLens Wall, a 40-foot, interactive, multi-touch screen that displays in real time all of the works from the permanent collection currently on view.[2] Given the strong appeal of such information displays to youth and the public, Dr. Ridge saw them as contributing to a "virtuous circle" that can make easier the recruitment of future staff and researchers and the publicization

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[1]   In one project, prints no longer in copyright were posted online, enabling discovery, based on image quality, of the order in which items in a series were created. In another, a crowd-sourcing project on playbills, readers filled in metadata such as titles, genres, and production dates. Dr. Ridge noted the challenges to open access, including that text recognition may not be adequate and that metadata should be created thoughtfully and thoroughly.

[2]   See http://www.clevelandart.org/artlens-gallery/artlens-wall for additional information about the Wall, which is designed to orient visitors and make visits more personalized.

of collections. In conclusion, she noted that while infrastructure is important, it is people —
and their encounters with art and texts — who matter most and it is the interaction of
systems, processes, and people that will change the library and museum fields.

Both Dr. Cole and Dr. Ridge encouraged attendees to imagine how they could leverage
their collaborations to improve the diversity of their institutions and the discoverability of
their collections to encourage students, faculty, staff, and the community at large to engage
with their institutions in new and innovative ways. Their comments set the stage for the
summit's presentations by campus teams, which were organized into four plenary sessions
centered on aspects of diversity and discoverability:

Constructing Narratives through Object-Based Teaching
- Atlanta University Center
- University of Miami
- Smith College
- University of Utah

Interactive Learning with Objects
- Cornell University
- University of Kansas
- University of Oregon
- Vassar College
- University of Washington

Fostering Community and Encouraging Dialogue
- Colby College
- Northwestern University
- Oberlin College
- Princeton University
- Skidmore College

Digital Transformation of Cultural Heritage Objects
- Dartmouth College
- Indiana University
- University of Notre Dame
- Yale University

This white paper reports on the findings of the summit and suggestions for future work.
Section one describes collaborative activities and practices underway at the academic art
museums and libraries that were highlighted in the plenary sessions. The second part records
thoughts of summit participants on challenges to collaboration at a local level and beyond.
Section three discusses strategies for expanding library and museum collaborations into the
future, while part four concludes with a vision for moving such collaborations forward.

I. Current Collaborative Activities and Practices

Although the institutional teams were divided into four plenary sessions and given broad topics, several distinct collaborative activities and practices emerged throughout the presentations and discussions, as described below:

Engaging Faculty and Students in Collections Work

The heart of collaboration for academic art museums and libraries lies in helping students, faculty, and staff work meaningfully and creatively with their holdings. Many of the institutional participants described how their joint efforts are meant to bring greater numbers of faculty and students into contact with collections and deepen that work to support student and faculty learning, scholarship, and creative activities.

Several institutions have formalized programs to engage faculty with collections and incorporate these resources in their courses. These initiatives often include: 1) creation by library and museum staff of collection teaching materials that can be used by faculty (Cornell University); 2) organization of professional-development workshops and other opportunities to prepare faculty to engage with materials as part of their pedagogy (Atlanta University Center, Northwestern University, and Vassar College); and 3) curriculum-development grants to incentivize collections use (Oberlin College, University of Oregon).

Academic art museums and libraries are also taking advantage of an increased emphasis in higher education on experiential and multi-disciplinary learning to integrate collections experience into student work and to encourage engagement with collections beyond the traditional modes, with a particular emphasis on student-designed projects. At Oberlin, for example, students in an English senior seminar, mentored by two faculty from different departments, curated a museum exhibition that featured objects from the College's art and science libraries, special collections, and museum. Subsequently, students in a Comparative American Studies course collaborated with the digital initiatives librarian to develop a seven-part, Omeka-based virtual exhibition inspired by and responding to the physical exhibition.

Innovative teaching, instruction in collections research, and internships and fellowships in museums and libraries not only help students incorporate collections work into their academic efforts but also encourage them to explore the library and museum fields as possible career paths. Methods of reframing collection objects, such as the re-creation of wall murals from a pre-Columbian context at Skidmore College, can result in new teaching tools that shift student engagement from traditional modes of research into exploratory modes that foster new and diverse ideas. New initiatives in which libraries and museums are working together, with students and faculty, have also resulted in the joint publication of catalogues and other materials that serve both as new scholarship and as tangible results documenting shared aspects of collections and exhibitions research.

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Fostering Community through Collections Work

While many of the collaborations between academic museums and libraries occur for the benefit of students, faculty, and staff of the higher-education institution, participants also recognized the vital role that these libraries and museums have in the wider community. They discussed how collaborative work can engage community members and promote dialogue on local and global levels.

Fostering community through collections engagement occurs on-site at museums and libraries as well as off-site. Libraries and museums serve as community spaces where the public can gather, and where both campus constituents and the broader community can interact. Museum and library staff are using shared materials and sponsor joint events and activities to engage the community in dialogue around local, national, and international issues. These gatherings also give voice to diverse cross-sections of the community, providing space that encourages more "town and gown" engagements.

Collections work is also being brought into the community, offering new modes of learning and fostering dialogue among people in their own spaces. Central to this are projects that bring collections work into local schools. Integrating visual literacy into curricula while focusing on thematic areas of interest to the community that align with state and national learning standards can help K-12 students develop critical-thinking skills, engage in different forms of learning, and explore topics of community interest, as evidenced by initiatives at Colby College and Princeton University. At the undergraduate level, an innovative initiative at the University of Kansas pairs a book and artwork for reading, viewing, and discussion by students and faculty, with inclusion in classes and programs encouraged as a shared educational experience. For the 2015-16 academic year, for example, *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway and *Self-Portrait* (1914) by Otto Dix were selected. Such initiatives can drive campus conversations in ways that are cross-disciplinary and that provide a shared sense of community.

Sharing Collections, Space, Staff, and Resources

Another key tenet of library and museum collaboration is cross-institutional sharing. This most commonly occurs in the context of exhibitions, typically through the loan of library holdings to museums, although in some cases museum materials are loaned to libraries. This form of collaboration tends to be episodic and based on the needs of particular exhibition projects, but other forms of sharing are formalized and sustainable. Participants from Yale and Oberlin noted that collection-sharing can also include scanned or digitized images in instances, for example, where object fragility or policies exclude the possibility of works being shared in their original form. Another means of collection-sharing could be co-ownership of works or entire collections (participants from the University of Washington commented on one such), although the complexities inherent in this type of an arrangement need to be taken

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into account, with perhaps a provision for ownership to sunset, with the work(s) eventually transferred to one entity.

Several participating institutions that received museum-library collaboration grants from the Mellon Foundation are creating shared spaces and staff positions. Joint spaces include teaching facilities, storage for collections, and conservation and preservation labs. Several campuses have hired or are hiring postdoctoral scholars, conservators, or cataloguers who will be jointly appointed to the library and museum, while limited-term fellowships, including in conservation or campus engagement, are already being offered at the universities of Miami, Notre Dame, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. It was acknowledged that the complications inherent in such positions (which range from joint reporting to whether the museum or library affiliation is listed on business cards) must be carefully considered and managed. Conservation was mentioned by multiple institutional representatives as a critical area, since works cannot be used if they are not in a proper state of preservation. Digital preservation was discussed as one — although not necessarily the most-desirable — way of potentially circumventing this problem.

Finally, libraries and museums are sharing resources, including but not limited to staff expertise, budget allocations, and digital platforms, to bring the two collections and campus entities into greater contact. Sharing of staff expertise can productively come about through informal meetings or participation in more structured joint projects, and it was acknowledged that greater interaction between museum and library staffs, whether formal or informal, is desirable. The sharing of budget allocations is not widespread, and when it occurs is typically tied to a specific joint project. The sharing of digital platforms is discussed more extensively below.

Developing Collaborative Digital Platforms and Programs for Museum and Library Collections

All participants referred in some way to the desire to create and expand digital platforms and programs that highlight and simplify collaborative collections work. While a fully integrated discoverability platform that allows users to search the entirety of a college or university's collections at one time may not yet exist, several participating institutions are undertaking digital projects to lay the foundation for such a platform. These initiatives, thanks to shared expertise and resources, help libraries and museums engage faculty and students and the community through collections work. Participants found it useful to hear about projects at various stages of implementation and additionally noted that it is important to consider such matters even without the immediate possibility of major funding for them.

Expanding collaborative digital platforms and programs for museums and libraries will typically require greater formalization of the relationships between these entities. As

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some participants pointed out, the digital presence of academic libraries can often be more advanced than that of academic art museums. This means that the expertise of library staff can be leveraged to introduce museum metadata to the library discovery system to make both collections more searchable. Such sharing of expertise can lead to the creation of new workflows, so that both museum and library staff are able to help sustain digital collections. The integration of library and museum collections into existing discovery platforms – along with the creation of dedicated, joint platforms for discovery, preservation, and exhibition — results in forward-looking partnerships that foster access to and interest in the the full range of campus holdings.

Although enhancing discoverability and preserving digital resources may contribute to faculty and student engagement with collections, the creation and expansion of digital platforms specifically designed for collections engagement contributes to their greater use, and has significant impact, as is the case at Atlanta University Center, Cornell University, and Smith College. Digital exhibitions make collections more visible and generate interest, while the integration of digital collections into teaching and learning platforms bring museum and library resources directly into the increasingly digital learning environment.

The creation of digital surrogates for collection materials can also affect how the community beyond the campus interacts with the library and museum. Integrating digital surrogates in teaching in local schools can bring children and youth in contact with collections in ways not previously possible. Connecting the local discovery system with a public search engine can also ensure that community members – both near and far — have access to collections. To expand such public digital access, institutions will need to determine both how the digital collections will be preserved and how the accompanying use agreements will be negotiated.

One institution placing particular emphasis on integration of library/museum data is Indiana University, the president of which is a former chief information officer. The president convened a summit with representatives of more than 50 collections across the university and is working to create an information technology (IT) structure for collections with online image and discovery systems incorporating metadata. Yale University has a cultural heritage group on campus comprising staff from various collections, including museums, libraries, and archives. It was noted that a strong IT presence is essential to the effectiveness of the group, which has set digital preservation and digital-asset management as its first priorities. Four of the entities involved are jointly funding a position in the digital services area. A future project will be the "holy grail" of an integrated discovery system, which will require both shared technology and standards.

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II. Challenges

Challenges Related to Professional Vocabularies and Institutional Cultures between Libraries and Art Museums

It was widely acknowledged that the many differences between academic museums and libraries — whether varied organizational or reporting structures, sizes, and missions — can create both challenges and opportunities for collaboration. Summit participants expressed strong interest in expanding the sharing of ideas and expertise among library and museum staff members at all levels. This can occur in multiple ways, including regular joint meetings, collaborative curricular work with faculty and students, informal social events, and larger-scale projects.

One major structural initiative would be the creation of a universal discovery system. Participants uniformly spoke of the desire for a universal discovery system that can pull from all campus collections in a single search. For such a discovery system to be possible, however, the description and metadata standards for museum and library collections must be brought into accordance with each other.

Another difference between libraries and museums lies in their emphasis on textual versus visual literacy. While students are typically exposed to and develop textual and mathematical skills throughout school and college (as evidenced by course assignments and exams, standardized tests, etc.) they are often less prepared in terms of visual literacy, despite growing up in a culture which, particularly through its dependence on screens, is image-saturated. Museums, special collections of libraries, and archives can address this need by connecting real objects with digital scholarship, and helping students learn to analyze, contextualize, and interpret images.

Academic libraries and art museums are starting to bridge this cultural divide by encouraging the sharing of expertise, space, and staff. The Notre Dame team raised the question of how to catalogue a book with text by an author and illustrations by an artist, underscoring the need for curators and librarians to agree on principles and procedures. Inter-campus sharing fosters connections and conversations that might not otherwise occur, creating common ground from which additional collaborations can develop. Shared appointments allow staff members to become immersed in the workplace cultures of both the library and the museum and provide helpful insights into the commonalities and the incongruities of the two operations. Such appointments bring logistical challenges, but best practices for them will develop as they become more common.

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New Demands from Digital and Material Collections

The participating institutions have all responded to the demand for digital collections in some manner. With such collections in place, they must now meet the accompanying demands regarding preservation and intellectual property. A joint preservation platform like the one being developed at the University of Notre Dame offers a model for meeting preservation needs for digital objects from museums and libraries. While variances in digital collection sizes and a lack of resources may make such a platform beyond the reach of all campuses, library and museum staffs can nonetheless work together to share ideas and create local best practices for preserving digital collections.

Museums and libraries will also need to address the intellectual property concerns that arise from the creation of digital heritage collections. As Dr. Ridge indicated in her address, one way to ensure that collections-based scholarship expands is to make digital surrogates open-access. Doing so will allow users of all types to engage with collections and undertake new research. It will also encourage institutions to address intellectual property questions that are arising as the digital sphere grows. Because libraries and museums may view intellectual property concerns differently, a cooperative approach to addressing them is critical if joint digital collections are to be developed and maintained.

Even as digital collections are creating new professional-development challenges for museum and library professionals, curators and librarians often lack the training and knowledge of materials and preservation practices to work most effectively with conservators to maintain material collections. Further training on the physical — and digital — qualities of works should be prioritized. Joint curatorial/conservation projects that involve undergraduates and expose them to this work could also be emphasized. It was noted that graduate conservation programs generally require students to undertake a year-long internship in conservation before beginning a master's-level degree in the field as well as to take part in internships after completing two years of coursework. Academic libraries and art museums offer ideal locations for such experiences, including, with regard to paper conservation, training that brings together and serves both museum and library staff members and collections.

Finally, institutions must consider the importance of the "authenticity of the real." It is therefore essential that museums and libraries continue to promote the inherent value of the actual objects in their collections and the work that can be done with and through them, even as they embrace digital images and their uses.

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Overcoming Western Hegemony in Institutional Practices

Many institutions — within and beyond the academic sphere — are grappling with their practices having historically reflected western hegemony and colonialism. Collections policies, metadata schema, wall text, space allocations and naming, and even signage can all point to the lasting impact of western cultural norms on the institutional practices of academic libraries and art museums.

A further challenge relates to emergent issues around cultural property and provenance, issues that have been widely discussed in the museum field over the past several decades. Given this long history, and the protocols that have been devised by such bodies as the AAMD, museums can share information with partnering libraries about best practices for collection building within the museum field, recognizing that approaches relevant to museums may not be so for libraries. Similarly, libraries, with a long history of cataloguing diverse types of materials, may guide museums on best practices relating to cataloguing and metadata. Collection gifts and acquisitions may include a mix of material traditionally handled by libraries (books, journals, maps, manuscripts, and archival collections) as well as museums (art, artifacts, and other objects of cultural, historic, or scientific importance). Both museums and libraries consider a range of factors when assessing whether to accept and/or accession any new work or works, including when they are part of a larger, more-complex collection. Such factors include, among others, authenticity, provenance, condition, and relevance to mission.

Compliance with state, federal, and international laws as well as professional best practices are also paramount, as are the parent organization's protocols in the case of nested institutions. However, reflecting core organizational and historical differences, libraries and museums have developed somewhat-different protocols governing acquisitions and public access based on various legal frameworks around these categories of materials. In considering whether to accept or acquire a complex collection, then, best practice requires consultation between museum and library specialists and with other relevant experts at the institution on the faculty and in the administration, including the general counsel. Outcomes will vary based on the collection composition and characteristics, institutional risk tolerance, the result of these local discussions, and the interplay with potential donors or sellers. The key to success in such collaborations is respectful, engaged, and informed dialogue across the academy prior to the decision to acquire a particular collection.

Challenges also arise in areas of trauma for current campus constituents in relation to building names, murals, stonework, stained glass, or monuments to those involved in colonialism, the slave trade, or westward expansion in North America. Visual and textual collections should be diversified — or the diversities inherent in them brought to the fore — by library and museum professionals to aid in constructive dialogue on

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these sensitive matters. In certain cases, works with problematic histories or subjects may be transferred from a public site to a museum or library, so that they can be contextualized and used in teaching. Museums and libraries are generally perceived by the public as places that can lead conversations on important issues and foster constructive dialogues around race, gender, sexuality, religion, power, history, cultural patrimony, ownership, the interfaces and differences between material and digital works, and other topics that can connect students, researchers, and community members to collections and one another.

It was also acknowledged that library and museum professionals have a responsibility to be clear about "who is speaking" — what has been collected, by whom, when, and why — and that faculty are important partners in providing broader cultural, historical, and social contexts in these conversations. As the participants from Dartmouth University discussed, this responsibility to be clear about "who is speaking" will become even more vital with the development of shared discovery platforms that draw from the full range of materials and perspectives represented in libraries and museums.

These ideals led to a robust conversation among summit attendees about how museums and libraries frequently contend with lost, marginalized, and complicated narratives through their collections and spaces, with spaces broadly defined as both physical facilities and virtual presence on the internet. Participants also asserted that expertise in these domains can be more fully leveraged on their respective campuses. For example, many institutions have been rocked by powder-keg issues involving named spaces, statues, and monuments that are reflective and celebratory of non-inclusive histories, whether local, national, or international. Summit attendees expressed a readiness for libraries and museums to assist their campuses in creative, intellectual wayfinding that can situate a painful, discriminatory past within a hopeful, ascendant future.

The leadership and staff of academic libraries and museums have, in many aspects, learned how to face these challenges and leverage them to support evolving curricular needs and directions. For example, elevating representation of people of color, women, LGBTQIA individuals, and persons with disabilities within collections has become an emerging social justice theme in academic museum and library work and directly supports teaching, scholarship, and creative activities on US campuses. Consulting with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) experts is also of high interest. Advancing more culturally competent practices — including review and reflection of what is communicated by signage and promotional materials in order to signal openness to all people — is ongoing work. In sharing best practices and identifying areas for future work, summit participants confirmed a commitment to disentangling from practices that undermine DEI efforts.

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III. Strategies for Growth

Continue to Grow Together and Prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Learning from campuses already engaged in diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion initiatives can help institutions determine how they would like to structure their own efforts. In addition, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, a division of the American Library Association), American Alliance of Museums (AAM), Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation have embarked on important work to advance DEI.[3] Several of these organizations are hosting diversity fellowships, as is a major initiative funded by the Ford Foundation and Walton Family Foundation to diversify art museum leadership.[4] These programs serve as a step beyond entry-level, limited-term residencies by seeking to address specific pipeline challenges within museums and libraries, such as pathways to decision-making roles and fostering communities of practice and mentorship.

These programs along with American Library Association recommendations on diversity and cultural competency standards can serve as inspirational blueprints from which libraries and museums can craft policies and guidelines.[5] However, the willingness to reframe diversity recruitment and retention strategies is essential to the success of participating libraries and museums and their home institutions. Summit attendees concurred that their institutional missions, core values, and high-impact practices are fundamentally linked to student success and that diversity and equity fuel student success. A long-term focus on increasing compositional diversity in staffing is critical to student achievement.

Summit participants also acknowledged that faculty and staff should be open to learning from students, with a shared sense of authority important and beneficial at times. Libraries and museums can provide opportunities for conversations that

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3   See the ACRL Diversity Alliance (http://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/diversityalliance), the AAM Fellowship Program for Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (https://www.aam-us.org/programs/diversity-equity-accessibility -and-inclusion/call-for-fellowship-applications/), the AAMD paid internship program for minority college students (https://news.artnet.com/art-world/paid-college-internship-aamd-1316771), and comprehensive surveys on staffing in art museums and in libraries by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (https://mellon.org/media/filer_public/ba/99/ba99e53a-48d5-4038-80e1-66f9ba1c020e/awmf_museum_diversity_report_aamd_7-28-15.pdf; https://mellon.org/media/filer_public/0d/6c/0d6cc844-ca38-427a-a259-08d0478f2973/20170830-mellon-sr-report-inclusion-diversity-equity-arl.pdf).

4   See https://www.fordfoundation.org/the-latest/news/ford-foundation-and-walton-family-foundation-launch-6-million-effort-to-diversify-art-museum-leadership/.

5   The recommendations from the American Library Association can be found at http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/diversity.

may be well beyond individuals' comfort zones. This can be the case especially when examining charged histories relating to colonialism, the slave trade, the Civil War, or western expansion in North America.

Establish and Maintain a User-Centric Approach to Collections-Management Strategies

To serve the needs of the academic campus, the views and opinions of various stakeholders must be taken into account when launching collaborations between academic art museums and libraries. Institutions that listen and respond to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and broader audiences will be better equipped to create partnerships with long-term impact. By engaging with constituents throughout the establishment of collaborations, library and museum staff will be able to respond to identified needs and ensure that resources are used efficiently. Reflecting this, colleagues at the University of Kansas stressed the need to think not just about objects but rather about the people using the objects.

Colleagues from the University of Oregon and Yale University emphasized that before starting any project, it is essential to question its goals broadly before moving to discussions of technological underpinnings. It was also noted that best practices for discovery need to be documented as the work proceeds and that users should be informed of the limits of collections. The latter could be done through maps of websites as well as through other informational materials so that users know what is represented as well as what is not.

It was also noted that institutions must begin more fully to consider users with disabilities. The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago provides a model of access for visually impaired web users, thanks to a system called Coyote that provides descriptions of images on the website.[6] Such descriptions may also be of interest to sighted users. Colleagues at the Atlanta University Center noted the development of a Google Chrome extension called "Funkify," which provides a means of seeing how websites are experienced by people with various abilities and disabilities.[7] An AAM colleague noted that WAVE (web accessibility evaluation tool) can be used to evaluate web content for accessibility.[8]

These programs along with American Library Association recommendations on diversity and cultural competency standards can serve as inspirational blueprints from which libraries and museums can craft policies and guidelines.

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6   Information about the Coyote software can be found at https://coyote.pics/. Information about the development of the software and its use by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago can be found on the MCA Stories page at https://stories.mcachicago.org/2017/10/16/coyote-describing-images/ and on the MCA Blog at https://mcachicago.org/Publications/Blog/2016/07/Reading-Images.

7   The Funkify simulators include a cognition simulator, a dyslexia simulator, a motor simulator, and a vision simulator. More information about the extension can be found at https://www.funkify.org/.

8   The WAVE tool evaluates websites for accessibility errors such as missing alternative text for links and images, missing labels for forms or search bars, and redundant links. The tool can be found at https://wave.webaim.org/ and is also available as a browser extension.

IV. Moving Forward

Within the broad categories of discoverability and diversity in the context of academic museum and library collaboration, the following themes emerged:

- Expanding public engagement, in some cases as a consequence of reduced state or other funding or as a way to highlight and share holdings that relate to core institutional values;
- Engaging with collections beyond traditional areas of stewardship, through, for example, the re-creation and reframing of collection objects as learning tools or through housing press and new media such as Twitter or Instagram posts;
- Taking account of budgeting, reporting structures, organizational charts, and competition for funding and donors among museums and libraries;
- Encouraging museum and library staffs to work together productively, acknowledging differences between working environments;
- Continuing discussion of issues regarding provenance and acquisition of materials, and the ways in which museums, libraries, and institutions can learn from each other and develop best practices;
- Considering where academic libraries and museums fit in and contribute to national dialogue around higher education and its importance for the nation's and the world's future;
- Being cognizant of the tension between serving as a town-hall space for the public while recognizing the need to teach with collections and use expertise to support student and faculty learning, research, and creative endeavors; and
- Working closely with institutions' administration and public affairs departments to show how museums and libraries are active partners in the development of programming serving the broader community and in communicating the impact of the institution.

The summit underscored the benefit of leaders of academic museums and libraries meeting together — across the two fields and with colleagues from institutions both public and private, small and large — to examine shared challenges and opportunities, disseminate best practices, and identify priorities. As work continues at each institution in light of local collections, curricular and other needs, structures, and resources, these efforts benefit from national perspectives and insights from other campuses. Should future summits be held, areas of strong interest are: 1) discoverability, including through a unified search platform, and effective approaches to improving search functions in the absence of such a platform; 2) equity, diversity, and inclusion in such areas as holdings, acquisitions, curricular and programming initiatives, staffing, and facilities; 3) issues around long-term preservation of collections and the information about them, whether in tangible or digital forms; and 4) the important role libraries and museums can play – in partnership with

faculty — in fostering meaningful, productive interactions across campus and between campus and the general public through object-based learning and exhibitions, both physical and digital. Future gatherings would also benefit from more time for discussion, potentially with small-group conversations in response to thematic prompts and then reporting of discussions to the entire group. The numerous institutions that participated in the Oberlin College summit, as well as those that took part in the 2016 summit hosted by the University of Miami, are deeply grateful to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its leadership and efforts to deepen collaboration between academic libraries and museums, and look forward to continuing the productive dialogue and work underway and to identifying future synergies.

Oberlin College and Conservatory educates students for lives of intellectual, musical and artistic rigor and breadth, sustained inquiry, creativity and innovation, and leadership. It seeks to offer a diverse and inclusive residential learning environment encouraging a free and respectful exchange of ideas and shares an enduring commitment to a sustainable and just society. https://www.oberlin.edu/

The Allen Memorial Art Museum — open free of charge to all and founded on the belief that the study and appreciation of high-quality original works of art is an indispensable part of an excellent liberal-arts education — acquires, preserves, exhibits, and interprets its collections to promote the highest standards of visual literacy and to encourage multi-disciplinary inquiry. http://www2.oberlin.edu/amam/

The Oberlin College Libraries (OCL) believes in preparing students for global leadership through the promotion and advancement of all forms of literacy while fostering transdisciplinary pathways of research excellence and achievement for faculty. We enable the public to learn alongside the campus community in each of the OCL's four locations. http://www2.oberlin.edu/library/

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