

Tips on Program Planning for CARL Interest Groups

Panel presentation and discussion, 23 February 2007

CARL South Regional Meeting, CSULA

By Judy Lee, CARL IG Coordinator-South

[Based on notes by Heidi Hutchinson & Judy Lee (both UC Riverside);
completed and corrected June 2007, revised November 2007]

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Panelists-

SEAL (Science and Engineering Academic Librarians):

Marcia Henry (CSU Northridge)

Lise Snyder (UCLA)

DIAL (Diversity in Academic Libraries):

Valeria Molteni (CSU Dominguez Hills)

Judith Samuel (California Lutheran University)

SCIL (Southern California Instruction Librarians):

Deborah Moore (Glendale Community College)

Debbi Renfrow (UC Riverside)

Note: These interest groups (IGs) utilize many of the same practices. The speakers tried to reduce unnecessary overlap and duplication.

- ❖ The following CARL members generously offered themselves as resource people for consultation on CARL IG programs and can be reached at:

Deborah Moore, Glendale Community College, (818) 240-1000 ext 5759, dmoore@glendale.edu

Lise Snyder, UCLA College Library, (310) 206-4474, lsnyder@library.ucla.edu

Teresa Omidasalar, CSULA, (323) 343-3996, tomidsa@calstatela.edu

This was an informative and useful program followed by contributions and free-flowing discussion. Thank you to the presenters and all those who made suggestions and participated in the conversation about program planning!

Science & Engineering Academic Librarians (SEAL)

❖ Program topic

- Propose a program that at least 75% of your IG members will want to attend.
- If you can't agree on a program as a group, don't go forward with the idea.

❖ Timing

- Schedule your program at a time with the fewest conflicts for your membership.
- Do not schedule a program on the weekend (unless it is a "fun" outing, like the SEAL Excellent Adventures series).
- [IG Coordinator Note: Check the CARL Events Calendar in advance of your planning for possible conflicting dates <http://www.carl-acrl.org/Events/index.html> . Once your group decides on a date, send an email to the CARL President, your regional VP, and your regional IG Coordinator to check for other potential conflicts and make them aware of your intent. The *CARL Interest Group Program Planning Manual* can be helpful for you, too. <http://www.carl-acrl.org/Documents/ProgramPM.pdf>].

❖ Venue

- Find a good central place that is easy for most members to travel to.
- But also be mindful of where your members are (e.g., hold some programs in San Diego for those members); move your venue around to attract a variety of attendees. [This could help expand your membership base.]
- Places mentioned: CSU-Fullerton (site of the first CARL South Mini-Conference); facilities at CSU-Northridge.
- [Group discussion: The CARL Mini-Conferences were also suggested as a venue, particularly for groups wanting to put on a session/program that would not fit a half- or full- day format.]

❖ Costs

- Keep your costs reasonable, but be realistic. Try to make enough money to cover the least number of people you anticipate coming to your event.
- You must at least break even; don't charge the members too much, but enough to get back your investment. A profit is always appreciated by CARL.

❖ Balance & Publicity

- Consider the kinds of programs your group would like to put on and keep a good balance among them.
- SEAL sponsors two kinds of programs a year: an "Excellent Adventure" which includes a field trip that covers some aspect of science, and one of a more professional nature (more academic, more cerebral).
- Publicize early and often. Consider publicizing at other venues & events.
- Compile a list of places to advertise
- [Group discussion: It was suggested that this compilation be put on the CARL website for all IGs to share; it was later also suggested that the various IGs work together to compile a list of good, congenial, convenient places to have programs, and place that on the CARL website as well. Vicki Rosen plans to send out a survey to CARL North liaisons asking them to describe their campuses' suitability as program venues.]

Diversity in Academic Libraries (DIAL)

❖ Programming

- Past programs have included speakers and panelists.
- Other programs include site visits and tours within the Southern California area

❖ Program Practice

- DIAL tries to keep its programs on Fridays and to offer refreshments. If you keep the program to a half day, you can save money by offering breakfast snacks instead of lunch.
- Always give time for discussion at the program. (Build this time into the program.)
- Registration information is offered online; the form can be printed out and sent to the designated organizer along with payment.
- Use evaluation forms to get participant feedback.
- After the program, links to relevant presentations or materials are posted to the DIAL website.
- DIAL has found useful tips and information on first steps to take from the *CARL Interest Group Program Planning Manual*.

Southern California Instruction Librarians (SCIL)

❖ Nature of the Organization

- SCIL has a background of having been an independent organization with experience in and a tradition of program planning prior to affiliating with CARL in 1999/2000.
- SCIL is fortunate to have a fairly large membership (=audience base) and a dedicated Steering Committee to carry out its regular annual programs: SCIL WORKS (an annual Open House normally held in Jan.-Feb.; similar to the CARL Mini-Conference; proposals are solicited and selected for presentation) and a full-day program/workshop (usually held in Spring, and often led by a presenter from out-of-state). Having this reputation for consistent programming is helpful; people look for these programs (audience expectation/anticipation).
- Regular business meetings are held approximately every 6 weeks during the academic year (but not summer) and draw a fair number of participants. Although much of the business concerns planning and work on SCIL's annual programs, there are opportunities to network and contribute to and learn from the round robins.

❖ Partnering with others

- Work with another CARL IG or another professional organization outside of CARL with relevant interests to your IG.
 - SCIL has successfully partnered with others locally within CARL (e.g., SEAL, ABLE) and outside of CARL within the state [e.g., with CCLI – California Clearinghouse on Library Instruction – for a CARL Pre-Conference (Asilomar)].
- Work with other organizations on a national level for larger endeavors, which can be good opportunities to bring outside programs to California. These partnerships can be rewarding and positively reflect back on the larger CARL organization. [IG Coordinator note: Consult with the CARL Executive Board in advance on these sorts of endeavors to see what might be possible.]

Southern California Instruction Librarians (SCIL)

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- Coordinating with the CARL Executive Board, SCIL worked with ACRL's IIL (Institute for Information Literacy) to bring their Regional Immersion Program to California (first one to be held here).
- SCIL also consulted with the CARL Executive Board and worked with LOEX (Library Orientation Exchange) to bring the 2007 annual LOEX Conference to California (a first for LOEX and for SCIL). CARL also assisted with speaker sponsorship for this national conference.
- A smaller group of SCIL members reworked the full-day CARL Pre-Conference (Pasadena) into a shorter presentation/workshop for the following ACRL Conference.

❖ Program Registration

- Registration information is kept on the SCIL website.
- SCIL has a designated Program Registrar.
- The registration list for each program is available via the SCIL web site. Registrants can check the list for their status (eg., registration was received, on the waiting list, etc.) In this way individuals can check to see whether or not a program has filled [and what other colleagues will be attending – (network!)].
- Receipts are prepared in advance and distributed to attendees at the program.

❖ Publicity & Reports

- SCIL has a designated Publicist.
- Programs are announced electronically (SCIL and CARL listservs, ILI-list) and, if timely, via the *CARL Newsletter*.
- As soon as SCIL has a date, there may be a "Save the Date" announcement generated, even before exact details on venue or topic are known.
- Volunteer reporters are solicited and assigned at the beginning of each program; reports are posted on the SCIL website. [Get your attendees involved with the organization.] Any relevant links are also posted at the site after the program.
- A general report on the program is submitted to the *CARL Newsletter* (normally by the Publicist).

❖ Venue

- Having an on-site coordinator for each event has been extremely useful for SCIL programs. [E.g, the last SCIL Works program was at Cal Poly Pomona. It was key to have that individual coordinate the refreshments and tech support locally, and to know how to take care of potential glitches and obtain assistance.]

❖ Other Planning Tips

- Evaluation forms are actively used. In addition to feedback on the individual program; future topics and potential/recommended sites are solicited. This information is reported to the Steering Committee and considered in future programming.
- For any program, SCIL understands that certain tasks (and positions for them) need to

be filled so those are taken care of. With the larger projects, SCIL finds a small core group of people to take care of the planning and others work through them. [E.g., with the LOEX Conference, there were three coordinators – program, communication, site and equipment – and a conference webmistress. Volunteer SCIL members then worked on various committees through the coordinators to accomplish specific tasks.]

- SCIL includes in its program notices cancellation deadlines beyond which there can be no refunds. (This can be important with food orders and commitments.)

From the General Discussion

If a CARL member selects a CARL IG to belong to, that selection should indicate a willingness to be involved in all the activities of that IG. [Note: this comment was actually made earlier in the meeting in a discussion about membership and selecting/joining IGs. It is an important point to reiterate.]

Registration for non-CARL members should be higher than for CARL members. IGs should have information available at the program or included in the program announcements about how to join CARL. Another member suggested that the staggered prices (program registration fees) should be significant for the non-CARL members, not just, say, a nominal \$5 difference. [Good programs are an incentive for becoming a CARL member. This opportunity for continuing education, professional development, and networking are major attractions of the CARL organization.]

In the future, we might be able to take care of program registration through Reg-Online. There would need to be more work done in this area first.

Check with other CARL IGs to make sure you are not stepping on their dates.

Programs can be very simple – a discussion among attendees, for example. People can send in questions in advance; a moderator would receive them and a timekeeper would watch whose turn it is to speak (e.g., a big “sharing fest” of people who are doing research). This type of program would be easy to organize.

Include public transportation information along with the program announcements (e.g., on website w/ links or in the listserv or newsletter announcements).

Question: How much does one consider parking expenses (and information) for a program?

Create a database of potential program venues. List the people who would be willing to serve as resources. (IG Coordinator question: to talk about sites vs to serve as local contact/on-site coordinator?) Potential use of wiki for this purpose? Also, consider that some venues may involve fees.

Follow-up to program by use of wiki. (Continue the conversation after the program idea.)

If you are part of another professional association, you can send information about an IG program to those members (advertise).

Be aware of what is happening on your own campus: e.g., Conference Center, Special Events Office, Student Union. Keep track of that stuff; it might help you somehow in your own planning.

Vicki Rosen had a thought that in the north, the campus liaisons & coordinators might serve as venue people and that the IGs could come up with program content.

Although we appreciate the effort and support of interest groups, we should also acknowledge and accept the idea that IGs wax and wane.