



advancing the
Florida museum profession
through education
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A Call to Action ...

February 26, 2009 Steering Committee at DeBary Hall Historic Site

Summary Report

Steering Committee Meeting

I. Survey

It was agreed that a survey is critical. A shortened version of the HHI was discussed based on a draft distributed in advance. Consensus was that the shorter version of the HHI should be pursued. Comments on the draft:

- Ask respondents to identify priorities among their problems (i.e. security, need for more space, emergency preparedness)
- Ask respondents to identify solutions to problems (i.e. can they help others, what have they done successfully?)
- Identify ways in which the public can access collections, ways in which people connect to collections. i.e.
 - Percentage of collections on view or available for public use
 - Percentage of collections open to researchers in storage, in open storage, on-line, if there are charges for using collections for research
 - The number of people who access the collections
 - Why a collection is not available for public use (too fragile, no staff, etc.)

It should allow us to:

- Articulate the breath and wealth of collections
- Characterize types of collections
- Identify needs for collections
- Identify needs for education
- Identify budgets available for collections care

Include an open-ended question, asking what other issues respondents are facing.

Add questions to reflect issues that surface during the Forums.

II. Distribution of the survey

Information about the importance of the questionnaire should be shared widely with collecting institutions.

Individuals who can respond to the questionnaire should be identified within organizations. They should be notified that a questionnaire is coming and the type of information it will ask them to respond to. The questionnaire should be available on-line, using a tool such as Survey Monkey. Phone calls to organizations should encourage individuals to fill it out, or collect the information by phone.

III. Who should receive the survey?

It was agreed the survey should be distributed to all the members of statewide organizations represented on the Steering Committee. Two notes:

- Special collections in libraries
- Historic houses and their contents (members of the FTHP)

In addition, distribution should include:

- Historic collections at Florida State Parks
- Members of Florida Public Art Administrators
- Members of the Florida Archaeological Council
- Members of Florida Maritime Museums
- Members of Florida Lighthouse Association

We need resolution on whether or not to include the following collections

- Living collections (talk to Craig Pugh, Mote, Selby)

The following collections should NOT be included

- Federal collections housed in federal organizations located in Florida
- Corporate and privately held collections

IV. Should we work with the original HHI survey?

Myriam reported on conversations with Kristen Laise at Heritage Preservation, and Kim Streitburger at RMC Research Corp. (both involved in the HHI). While 81 Florida organizations responded to the original HHI Survey conducted in August 2004, we cannot draw conclusions about that data if we looked at only the Florida respondents. Only 71 Florida responses were complete enough to include in the data. The statistical margin of error would be too great for the data to be valid. The survey was sent to 900 collecting organizations in Florida (400 libraries, 400 museums, 28 historical societies, 8 archives and governmental bodies, and 80 scientific or archeological collections). If we used a similar universe, a 50% response rate would yield good, reliable data. The smaller the number of surveys sent out, the higher the response rate needs to be to have reliable data.

The level of detail in the survey made it very cumbersome to respond to and provided a huge amount of data. A shorter survey will probably yield more responses – and thus more reliable data.

If we get a high response rate, we could compare the Florida data to the national data, but we could not do comparisons between Florida and another state.

Working with RMC to duplicate the survey would cost approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000. Doing a shorter version of the survey would cost approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000. In both cases, RMC would administer the survey and provide us with raw data for us to write a report.

Consensus was to look at ways the survey could be managed and administered in Florida.

V. Reasons the survey is critical

It will assess the state of collections in the State of Florida. These collections are at risk. They are the irreplaceable cultural heritage of citizens of Florida. Once lost, they are not renewable.

VI. Funding source to consider

- Kresge Foundation