



Center for Research Libraries  
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GLOBAL RESOURCES NETWORK

## **CRL Collections and Services Policy Committee**

### **Report to the CRL Board of Directors**

April 16, 2021

*CSPC Membership 2020/21:* David Magier (Chair), Princeton University; Debra Bucher, Vassar College; Louis Houle, McGill University; Janet Hulm, Ohio University; Elizabeth Kirk, Harvard University; Denise Pan, University of Washington; Mark R. Watson, University of Oregon; Doug Way, University of Kentucky; Gregory Eow (ex officio), Center for Research Libraries

### **Introduction**

The Collections and Services Policy Committee (CSPC) is charged with advising the Board on issues pertaining to the Center's collections, management of content and services to the members, and policies and budget relating to the same.

The convening of new CSPC members at the start of the year provided an opportunity to revisit the objectives of the committee and aspirations of its members, and to “reboot” the committee’s engagement with CRL leadership and overall membership. To situate the committee more actively in the development of strategic opportunities for the organization, the CSPC decided to meet monthly rather than its past practice of quarterly gatherings. In total, CSPC has met eight times this fiscal year.

The reengagement has proven productive, with the committee providing substantive guidance on CRL opportunities, significant partnerships, and relationships with the broader community. The CSPC also stood up a new working group under its auspices to focus attention on CRL’s unique role within the International and Area Studies community. In its most recent meetings, the committee has begun considering how the CSPC itself can become an idea generator and thought leader for the CRL community to advance the creation and stewardship of knowledge for the benefit of all. The following briefs highlight some of these significant outcomes.

### **NERL / CRL Relationship**

Coming out of the May 2020 decision by the NERL Executive Board to formally merge NERL into its host CRL, CSPC engaged with the [NERL/CRL Integration Task Force](#) in Fall 2020 to explore possible integration strategies. CSPC sees tremendous opportunity for a merged organization to support community-based and academy-owned infrastructure to advocate for Open Access at scale. CRL and NERL merging could promote OA initiatives and make them available to a wider set of institutions.

The [results of the Task Force conversations](#), however, raised several factors that would need to be addressed by both the NERL and CRL communities on the path towards a merger, most notably the need for more engagement across the NERL and CRL communities to generate a better collective understanding of the value proposition of a merger. NERL itself expressed the need to better recognize how its own mission and operations fit within the changing needs of its community, and recommended NERL engage in a strategic assessment to clarify its changing mission, vision, and values, with

implications for NERL’s strategy, governance model, and activities. CSPC will continue to advise on the relationship between NERL and CRL to recommend the best path forward together.

### **International Collections & Content Group (ICCG)**

In part driven by community concerns over the availability of print materials during the current health crisis, CSPC discussed measures to improve CRL’s ability to support collective action in international studies material acquisition and discovery. Noting a governance gap between CSPC’s strategic oversight and the work of CRL’s communities of interest in the Global Resources Network, CSPC recommended the implementation of a [standing working group](#) to help shape, implement, and maintain CRL’s approaches to the development and responsible stewardship of international collections.

The International Collections and Content Group, formed in October 2020, is charged to advise CSPC on matters of policy and strategic opportunity in areas related to international collection development and management in cooperation with and on behalf of the library and research community. It also serves as an advisory group and planning team for efforts implemented by CRL to support collective action among research libraries.

The [diverse and broadly representative group](#) has met several times since formation to discuss its own role within the CRL governance structure and its aspirations as a community representative and leader. In addition to providing specific recommendations to CSPC on strategic international programs, the ICCG has begun to outline a specific action agenda for its work with the community in the coming year. The ICCG has expressed strong interests in championing discussions on Scholarly Communication and Open Access from an international perspective, advocating for collective solutions to technical services infrastructure challenges, and in supporting CRL’s Annual Forum programming around the theme “Diversity as Knowledge.”

### **Shared Print Partnerships**

CSPC has guided CRL’s considerations of partnering in the Shared Print environment. In January 2020 CRL, California Digital Library, and HathiTrust [announced their intent](#) to collaborate on embedding shared print in the lifecycle of library collections. Bringing together complementary strengths, the [CDL, CRL & HathiTrust Shared Print Collaboration](#) will play a facilitative leadership role with the community to define a new phase of shared print built on open and interconnected infrastructure.

CRL has adopted an open, collaborative posture with the shared print community, and with CSPC’s endorsement CRL engaged the Rosemont Shared Print Alliance and the Partnership for Shared Book Collections to enter into [formal membership in both initiatives](#). CRL’s partnership brings strategic and operational expertise to the groups’ collective effort to work at scale to preserve and make accessible valuable resources for the scholarly community.

### **CSPC Member Survey**

The CSPC’s capstone engagement with the CRL community was the dissemination of its first CRL Member Survey. CSPC sought to collect feedback from the broad member community to better understand the community’s priorities regarding CRL’s programs, services, and activities. The responses were intended to build collective intelligence and to directly inform CRL strategy, programs, projects, and partnerships.

The member response was overall highly favorable, validating CRL's role as a collector of unique material to complement and extend local collections, and as a means to access timely and important materials for research and teaching, particularly through digital initiatives.

CSPC will continue to analyze the responses, particularly those that reflect lower perceived value, to determine a process of engagement and improvement. Among the respondent comments provided, CSPC agrees there needs to be increased visibility and membership engagement for CRL across its entire suite of programs and services.

### **CRL Collections Budget FY 2022**

CSPC considered and endorsed the FY 2022 Collections & Services budget, which was presented to the Committee in the context of overall fiscal restraint in line with anticipated revenue reduction due to the current fiscal crisis. CSPC recognizes the high value members place on CRL's continued investment in international collections and related services, and recommended strategic allocations to maximize CRL's value proposition for its member constituents as described above. To this end, CSPC endorses CRL's proposed reallocation of funds to provide additional support for CRL's Purchase Proposal Program to accommodate nominations for digital acquisitions (digitization or born-digital) in addition to recommendations for physical purchase. CSPC also endorsed CRL's formal incorporation into the Collections Budget of various lines for digital support that were previously spread across CRL's operations budget. The addition of these funds to CRL's Library Materials expenditures more accurately reflects CRL's growing investment in new digital resources as part of its explicit collection building strategy.

### **Looking Forward**

In the coming months, CSPC will continue to engage in forward-thinking models and transformative approaches to CRL's work. Among areas of interest the committee has expressed interest in taking up include:

- Positioning CRL's role in the increasingly busy area of Open Access—in particular playing a leadership role in championing models and investment for OA monographs;
- Supporting solutions to collect and make discoverable and accessible marginalized materials in a way that balances the opportunities, risks, costs, and responsible stewardship for CRL, its constituents, and the producers of such content;
- Advancing collaboration and championing sustainable infrastructure solutions around technical service processes of description, discovery and access of unique and specialized research content; and
- Assessing and recommending Controlled Digital Lending scenarios appropriate for CRL's collections profile and service model.

CSPC will play an active role in the upcoming CRL Annual Council of Voting Members Meeting. We look forward to this opportunity to provide more visibility for the committee's role as a conduit for the CRL membership to provide feedback to CRL's leadership and Board on priorities and new directions.

David Magier  
Chair, CSPC