



To: Margaret Nichols (Cornell, lead), Diane Ducharme (Yale, SAA liaison), Kate Moriarty (St. Louis University), Jennifer Nelson (Robbins Collection, UC Berkeley), Maria Oldal (Morgan Library), Heather Wolfe (Folger Shakespeare Library)

From: Randal Brandt, Chair, RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee

Subject: RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee Manuscripts Working Group

Date: August 1, 2007

On June 23, 2007, the Bibliographic Standards Committee, under Chair Deborah J. Leslie, authorized the formation of a Working Group to develop guidelines for item-level description and cataloging of modern manuscripts. This authorization arose from a request made by Bill Landis, chair of the Society of American Archivists' DACS Working Group, for the BSC to take the lead in developing such guidelines.

As recognized experts in the description of rare materials, you have been selected to act as the BSC Manuscripts Working Group. Margaret Nichols will be the lead. The Working Group may call upon others for help and advice as needed.

Charge: To develop rules or guidelines for item-level description and cataloging of modern (post-1600) manuscript material. These rules may be adapted from AMREMM, APPM, AACR2, and/or DACS and are to provide specific, technical instruction for preparing full MARC 21 descriptions. They are to be self-sufficient as far as possible, with reference to other codes (such as AACR2 for the formulation of headings) only as necessary. The rules/guidelines should follow the principles of *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials* (DCRM), as established and codified in DCRM(B).

The Working Group should also make recommendations for a future set of rules for describing and cataloging manuscripts. Possibilities include: 1) a full revision of AMREMM that incorporates rules for modern manuscripts; 2) a two-component DCRM module for manuscripts (one component that has the same scope as the current AMREMM and a second component that picks up where AMREMM leaves off and covers modern manuscripts).

The Working Group should endeavor to make the rules acceptable to as wide a constituency as possible without unduly sacrificing internal coherence or consistency.

The Working Group should make a preliminary report on the status of new guidelines at the BSC meeting scheduled to take place at ALA Midwinter 2008 in Philadelphia, including, if possible, a timeline for the completion of the guidelines.