

UMAC News October 2003

Dear UMAC Member / Potential UMAC Member

This email has 5 parts

1. Report - the UMAC Oklahoma Conference*
2. New issue of Museologia contains the Sydney Conference papers
3. New website for UMAC - draft proposal*
4. ICOM code of Ethics and the definition of the word museum
5. Workshop for Natural History Collections*

* see also attachment

1. Report - the Oklahoma Conference

The UMAC conference in Oklahoma attracted over 55 delegates from 14 countries. It was a lively conference with around 30 short papers of high standard.

Meetings of all the working groups were held and each revised their priorities for the forthcoming year. A new working group was formed - Publications. Full details of the new functions and aims can be found on the attachment UMAC AGM. (Attachment is written in MS Word)

In brief though, let me say that the Publications group will be responsible for new publications such as the papers from the Oklahoma conference and UMAC guidelines. It will also work with the Directories group to upgrade UMAC's website.

The Directories group, under the Chair, Cornelia Weber, has written a data-base program which will enable information about university museums and collections to be entered from many parts of the globe. UMAC's old data-base (entered by clicking on the map of the world at the top of the website) will be incorporated into the new data-base and the result will form part of the new website. (See 3 for more details)

Please contact the chair of any working group if you would like to contribute to its activities.

There is important information about next year's conference in Korea and UMAC elections in the attachment.

2. New issue of Museologia contains the Sydney papers

Volume 3 (Summer 2003) of Museologia carries the well edited papers from the Sydney conference. These are a worthwhile addition to any museum library and can be ordered at www.museu-de-ciencia.ul.pt/museologia Please do have a look at this website - it has a fine picture of the Sydney Opera House!

3. New website for UMAC - draft proposal

A draft layout for the new website is attached. Your comments are welcomed. It will take us most of the year to complete the planned upgrade, but you will notice improvements as the year progresses.

4. ICOM code of Ethics and the definition of the word museum

ICOM is asking for comments about its revised code of ethics. You can read the draft at: http://icom.museum/code-restruct_eng.html Your suggestions will be welcomed. The Ethics working group will be making a submission concerning conditions relating to university museums. There has also been considerable debate in ICOM-L about a new definition for the word museum. UMAC's working group has considered one originally proposed by Bernice Murphy. It reads:

Museums are permanent institutions that conserve and communicate knowledge of the natural world and the cultural inheritance of humanity through collections, records, memories, images, and sites. Museums interpret and research for present and future generations.

The debate continues and once again your input is sought.

5. Workshop for Natural History Collections

Over the last few years geology collections in university museums have come under threat. This year it has been natural history collections. Information about a workshop to discuss the problem is attached.

With best wishes

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