

# First steps in global advocacy: some perspectives on the formation of UMAC, an international committee of ICOM

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## **Abstract**

*This paper provides some personal insights into the origin of UMAC, the International Committee of ICOM, established for university museums and collections. The origins of the group are shown to be controversial as they cut across the discipline-specific criteria usually associated with the formation of an international committee. Aspects of the early history of the group are outlined plus a summary of conferences is presented.*

### University Museums and Collections

The word «university» is derived from the Latin *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* - a community of teachers and scholars. The University as an institution is more than a thousand years old, with the founding of the University of Karueen, Morocco, in 859 and the University of Bologna, Italy, in 1088. Its roots extend even further to the establishment of educational systems for accumulating, recording, and preserving cultural heritage in ancient Babylonia and Egypt. Universities have survived great wars, revolutions, cultural shifts, and religious upheavals. They have transformed human societies.

The University is an institution of education and research. To accomplish these tasks, universities have built huge collections of different origins. As the activities of universities cover a myriad of human interests, there seems to be no limit to the range of these collections. Some collections are specific to academic disciplines, while others are more encyclopaedic. Some are of a scientific nature, e.g., huge collections of medical sciences, while others are collections of art, e.g., casts of Classical sculpture or original painting. All collections serve several objectives. First, they preserve priceless knowledge and material culture. Second, the collections offer possibilities for research, for creating new knowledge of nature, creativity, and life. Many have developed into museums with interpretive exhibitions and public programming.

The idea of having a collection and a museum within the university organisation is global. Throughout the world, university collections hundreds of years old are maintained for the sake of science and education, such as the Nacional University of San Marcos, Peru (1515); University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines (1611); the National University of Córdoba in Argentina (1613); Harvard University in America (1636), and the Université Laval, Quebec (1663).

The origin of the modern museum can be traced back to the cabinets of curiosities, collected by universities and wealthy travellers, especially during the Renaissance. Oxford University's Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology is considered to be the first modern university collection. It has its origins in the university's art collection, founded in 1683, and the collection of the Tradescants, of "all rarities of flowers, plants and shells" and other curiosities amassed through travel under the patronage of England's aristocracy.

A new era of physical and natural sciences emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as scientists measured natural phenomena, developed scientific instruments, and created the basis for the era of rationalism. The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, established in 1728, is the oldest of the University of Cambridge's museums. The collection of fossils illustrates the evolution of life on the earth. The Royal Mineralogy Museum at the University of Naples, established in 1801 by Ferdinando IV di Borbone, is considered the most important Italian mineralogical museum and is well-known for the historic and scientific value of its Vesuvian collection, scientific instruments, and hyaline quartz from Madagascar, given as a present to King Charles VII. One of the most beautiful examples of a scientific instrument collection that remains intact is found at the Science Museum of the University of Coimbra in Portugal. Dating from 1772, the Physics Cabinet is the most important science collection in Portugal and one of the most important ones in Europe.

Scientists throughout this time measured natural phenomena and created the basis for the era of rationalism. Scientific instruments and collections were developing hand-in-hand with new theories and methods.

For example, botanical gardens, which date back more than 3,000 years to ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, are one of the earliest types of university museums. The botanical garden at the University of Siena dates to 1588, when the university began to grow medicinal herbs. Oxford University has the oldest botanical garden in England, dating from 1621. The French National Museum of Natural History, part of the Sorbonne Universities, was founded in 1793, but its origins lie in the royal garden of medicinal plants created by Louis XIII in 1635. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, botanical gardens were organized to represent the newly developed binomial nomenclature, first published by the Swedish botanist and zoologist Carl von Linné's (Linnaeus), *Systema Naturae* in 1735. His garden remains at the University of Uppsala. The herbarium at the University of Bologna is one of the earliest in Europe, with specimens from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century many major universities collected art, symbols of the university's role in the society, exhibited to show the wealth, prosperity and status of academe. The origins of Princeton University's art collections date nearly to the University's founding. Chartered in 1746, it is one

of the oldest collecting institutions in America. The Academic Museum of Antiquities at the University of Bonn was founded in 1818 with one of the largest collections of plaster casts of ancient Greek and Roman sculptures in the world. These were used to instruct students in art academies. In addition to 500 casts, the museum today owns more than 2,000 originals from Greece and Rome and 3,000 works from ancient Egypt. The Fitzwilliam Museum at the University of Cambridge, founded in 1816 with the bequest of a collection consisting of 144 paintings by Dutch masters, works by Titian, Veronese and Palma Vecchio, 500 folio albums with engravings, 130 medieval manuscripts and a collection of autographed music by Handel, Purcell and other composers, is a world-class resource for researchers, students, and the public. The Yale University Art Gallery is the oldest university art museum in the western hemisphere, founded in 1832. The gallery was founded when patriot-artist, John Trumbull, donated more than 100 paintings of the American Revolution. Today, its encyclopedic collections number more than 185,000 objects from ancient times to the present. The Tokyo Fine Arts School, predecessor of Tokyo University of the Arts, started to collect art materials for education and research prior to its foundation in 1887.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, empirical research became the foundation of scientific education in the academic world, with the University of Berlin the vanguard of research-based science and university education. As research became the foundation of scientific knowledge, associated collections became the evidence. Possession of a magnificent collection of devices designed and manufactured to measure time, angle or distance, became essential for the replication of experimentation and publication. The taxonomic approach to flora and fauna was made possible with significant collections of plants and animals. At the same time, research in mineralogy was advancing due to growing collections of crystals and minerals, providing the basis for the theories of chemistry and the earth sciences.

Science academies, founded in many European countries during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, introduced series of scientific lectures for the general public, and established permanent exhibitions for scientific and technical education. Technical institutes, such as the Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg, Germany, had used technical model collections as a means of education from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. New exhibitions and technical collections, however, were targeted for both university and general public audiences. The Musée National des Arts and Métiers in Paris is one of the oldest permanent scientific and technological exhibitions.

Museums of anthropology and ethnography, the corpus of the Enlightenment concept of humanity, as something unfolding progressively through time, became prevalent at universities around the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as did archaeological collections when increasing interest in antiquities led to increasing excavation work. These museums were influential leaders in documenting cultures and professionalizing academic disciplines. Harvard University's Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, founded in 1866, is one of the oldest anthropology museums in the world. The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, founded in 1884, has collections spanning nearly 2 million years of human history from all inhabited continents. The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology was founded in 1887 to house artifacts from a planned expedition to the ancient site of Nippur in modern-day Iraq (then part of the Ottoman Empire). Many objects of world cultures in the collection come from the University's archaeological digs and anthropological expeditions and include artifacts from Queen Puabi's tomb at the Royal Cemetery at Ur, ancient Mayan monuments, and architectural elements from the 3,200 year old palace of the Egyptian pharaoh Merenptah.

The model of organization of university museums and collections has gone through substantial transformations on a global scale. There is no longer a single model for university museums or collections. They all have distinctive missions and purposes, developed over time as appropriate for the parent institution. The only permanent and common feature of university museums and collections is their status as a tangible knowledge bank and a vital component of the academic tradition.

### **The Idea of UMAC**

University collections share a specific feature derived from the nature of teaching and research. Science is a cumulative mass of knowledge, its development is unpredictable. No one can tell what the research problems of the future will be, and no one can tell if accepted scientific paradigms will still be accepted in the decades or centuries ahead. Every specimen that

contributes to knowledge has value and is of importance, independent of its economic value or its relevance to current research. A single artefact or specimen may be unbelievably valuable, or have no economic or scientific value at all. It is easy to see the value of the works of famous painters in the collections of fine art, or the gemstones in the mineralogical collections. But also, the economically worthless mud samples or a collection of a million little flies form an irreplaceable entity. The collection and individual items are both components of the research process that builds scientific understanding. An individual fruit fly specimen might not be that interesting, but as a set of millions they proved to be the key for outlining the genetic basis of the theory of evolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The duality of economic value and value in terms of knowledge production presents a real risk to collections. For example, when the direction of scientific research changes it may be considered economically prudent to discard a collection associated with previous scientific endeavour that is no longer considered relevant. When organisations are busy working on new research issues, and are not provided with adequate resources to take care of the old collections, these easily become unvalued objects stored in a backroom of the lecture hall. These kinds of collections are called orphan collections. The term is quite revealing. If these collections don't have someone to advocate for their importance and use in research, or use them for education or engagement, the outcome may be disposal.

The situation became critical in Europe from the 1960s onwards, where the rapid development of university organisation and administration posed a serious threat to many of these old collections. The universities' administrations were influenced by strategic ideas arising from corporate life, and the basic tenor of the university started to change<sup>1</sup>. Merging of age-old institutions, renovation of the old buildings, even abandoning old university campuses in favour of new modern premises brought the collections from behind their closed doors, exposing them to new rationales that provided university administrators with justification to dispose of collections on financial grounds. Another reason for the undervaluation of collections arose with the introduction of computers and the rapid development of information technology that for a new generation promised a different approach to the generation of knowledge.

In many cases, the real scientific database, i.e. the scientific collections which were created at many universities, became an economic burden for the growing ranks of university administrators. One of the first examples of drastic action occurred when the Faculty of Geology of the Leiden University was closed down and merged with the Utrecht University at the beginning of the 1970s. In that process, the old collections of geology were dismantled<sup>2</sup>. A similar elimination of collections happened at the Hancock Museum in England in the 1970s.

Probably the first organized response to the emerging threat of the destruction of elements of scientific heritage took place in the United Kingdom. The British Museums and Galleries Commission published reports on the university museums in 1968 and 1977. The problems of the university museums were raised during the 1986 Museums Association's conference, where Alan Warhurst of the Manchester Museum and Frank Willett of the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow presented papers under the topic *The Crisis in University Museums*<sup>3</sup>.

In the 1980s in Scotland, and later in England, university museums formed a special task force to discuss the problems. In Scotland, university museums founded a special organization, UMIS, to take care of its members' needs. In England, a similar organization, University Museums Group, UMG, was founded. Peter Stanbury from the University of Sydney, visiting the UK to discuss common problems with university colleagues, was surprised and interested by the amount of organizational work already done in Britain, especially in Scotland.

Following the Scottish model, Stanbury decided to try to undertake a survey and a project for establishing operational guidelines in Australia. There had been no serious survey of university collections since the 1930s although Barrie Reynolds from the James Cook University, Townsville, had conducted a simple overview of the Australian university museums in 1979<sup>4</sup>.

1 See e.g., Museums & Galleries Commission. Report 1986–87. Specially featuring University Collections. Also

2 Steven De Clerck, correspondence 20/07/2011.

3 Museums & Galleries Commission. Report 1986–87. Specially featuring University Collections.

4 Peter Stanbury. A survey of Australian University Museums and Collections 1992. Read 29/11/1993 at Council of Australian University Museums and Collections AGM, Hobart Tasmania. Barrie Reynolds. Survey of University Museums. Museums Association of Australia, 16/11/1979 (unpublished report).

In a preliminary survey in 1992, Stanbury compiled a list of about 125 different university museums and collections. After discussions with Reynolds, the two founded the Council of Australian Museums and Collections, CAUMAC. One of the initial aims of CAUMAC was to try to find the right forum to discuss the problems of university museums with the government, but there was an unexpected difficulty. Australian universities were under the authority of one Federal ministry, and museums under another. Neither of the ministries were willing to take responsibility for the university museums and collections. The State Governments (equivalent to Counties or Provinces) considered the university museums and collections to be responsibility of university administration, so the responsibility for financing and developing these museums rested with the individual universities themselves.

In the administrative sense, the situation was a deadlock. Finally, with the help of Di Yerbury, vice-chancellor of Macquarie University, the problem was brought to a meeting of the Australian vice-chancellors. This group was sufficiently influential to discuss the problem with both Federal government ministers. Sufficient funding was established to carry out a proper review of Australian university museums<sup>5</sup>.

A University Museums and Collections Review Committee was announced, chaired by Don McMichael, to consider the current condition of university museums and galleries and to make appropriate recommendations.

The Australian survey proved to be a turning point in the history of university museums, it stimulated interest and similar work in other countries. After eighteen months (with Peter Stanbury acting as the secretary of the project), the Review Panel published a 225-page report called *Cinderella Collections* (1996). A following report, *Transforming Cinderella Collections*, was published two years later. By the end of the decade, the number of known Australian university museums and collections had increased to 250.

Concomitantly, or perhaps as a result of the government review mentioned above, a project led by Vanessa Mack from the Macleay Museum of the University of Sydney, resulted in the creation the Australian University Museums Information System, AUMIS. This project attempted to catalogue items in university museums Australia-wide. Almost at the same time Macquarie University began putting its collections online using the Ad Libris system<sup>6</sup>.

In Europe, at the same time, similar discussions and projects were emerging. Steven De Clercq was making an effort to highlight the situation of university museums and collections at the Scientific Instruments Commission of the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science and the European Association of Museums of the History of Medical Sciences. Also active on these issues during the late 1990s were Liba Taub, Jim Bennett, Robert Anderson, and Paolo Galuzzi. By that time, De Clercq had set up a task force which later became the Dutch Stichting Academisch Erfgoed.

The Dutch network was created as an unofficial network during the late 1970s, at this time responsibility for financing and preserving university collections was essentially being shouldered by those working in the university museums themselves rather than their parent institutions. This network consisted of the few people that still cared for the old collections. They saw that the collections were under immediate threat of disposal. The network managed to get the attention of the government, and measures were taken in order to save the collections. In this way, the issue managed to stay on the political agenda.

In 1982, Steven de Clercq was appointed director of the Utrecht University Museum, and together with the existing network he started the Landelijk Overleg Contactfunctionarissen Universitaire Collecties (LOCUC), consisting of representatives from the universities of Amsterdam, Groningen, Leiden, Delft, and Utrecht. Meanwhile, at the government-level, a workgroup called Werkgroep Universitaire Collecties (WUC) had been established, chaired by the head of the Department of Museums, Monuments and Archives at the Ministry of Culture. This group had previously undertaken a national survey that had excluded university museums. In October 1984, WUC and LOCUC sat together and decided to run a national survey, to be carried out under the responsibility of the Utrecht University Museum. The survey made by the University of Amsterdam the previous year served as an example.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. An Issues paper: Why are Universities in the Museum Business? October 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Mack & Llewellyn 2000.

The results of the survey, published in December 1985, revealed that there were at least 128 collections. In addition, a lot of important material was discovered: at least 18 collections were under imminent threat of disposal, and another 10 would be orphaned in the near future. The Ministry of Culture considered the situation serious and asked the Rijkscommissie voor de Musea and the Commissie van Advies voor de Natuurhistorische Musea to establish a commission for further investigation and to make recommendations for safeguarding the irreplaceable collections of national and international significance. The report of the commission was published on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1986<sup>7</sup>.

While this work was being undertaken in the Netherlands, international contacts were being established. The Dutch activists were visible in the Scientific Instruments Commission of the International Union on the History and Philosophy of Science IUHPS, and in the European Association of Museums of the History of Medical Sciences, and their work was crucial when the foundations of UMAC were being formed during the late 1990s.

In Britain, the report of Museums and Galleries Commission of 1986–87 focused on university collections. The demand for survey and inventory work was apparent also in Britain, and an extensive research project of the different collections was established. A series of publications was issued during the following decade, a number of them written by Kate Arnold-Foster<sup>8</sup>.

The discussion that had been going on in Britain and in the Netherlands, was being noticed at the European level. The European Council accepted the report of the Committee on Culture and Education. In 1998, the Council of Europe gave the *Recommendation 1375 (1998) over the Protection of "incidental collections" against dispersal*. The recommendation was for the most part ignored in the general discussion, but at least it gave moral support for those who were trying to do something positive to preserve the endangered cultural heritage in university collections.

In 1998 the issue finally had a chance to get some global visibility. That year, ICOM held its general conference in Melbourne. The conference theme was *Museums and Cultural Diversity*. The new Secretary General of ICOM, Manus Brinkman, came to be the key person in advancing the issue. Brinkman started this role in early 1998, and quite soon Peter Stanbury, now working for Macquarie University in Sydney, presented the idea of a new international committee to him. It was too late to put forward the case at the Melbourne meeting, but Brinkman brought Peter Stanbury and Steven De Clercq into contact with each other. Discussions between Stanbury and De Clercq lead to the idea of gathering a larger group of interested associates, and Stanbury sent dozens of letters around the world to get the project initiated.

During the meeting in Melbourne, the Comité International des Musées de Sciences et des Techniques CIMUSET, an international committee of ICOM, delved into the problems of university museums and collections. Peter Stanbury was the main lobbyist in getting the issue raised inside the ICOM organization. During the meeting, he collected a sufficient number of signatures for a formal submission to establish an international committee of ICOM for the university museums and collections. De Clercq suggested the name UMICOM for the organization.<sup>9</sup>

The request provoked a heated discussion among the ICOM Advisory Committee and also among the Executive Board. The major argument against the new committee was based on the belief that there were already too many international committees within the organization. It was argued that the number of committees should be reduced rather than expanded. There was also a question of money. ICOM was not a rich organization, founding new international committee would also put pressure on finances. The second argument against the new committee was based on the nature of university museums. Some people argued that university museums are not a special group of museums, but rather a series of art, natural history, history museums, etc., and thus they would be better accommodated in the existing international committee structure. The controversy was exacerbated by different national backgrounds and perspectives. The tradition and the whole idea of university museums were very varied; in some countries these museums were treated as special museums, but in others the whole concept was unknown<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Steven De Clercq, correspondence 20/07/2011.

<sup>8</sup> See Foreword by James Joll in Kate Arnold-Foster: *Beyond the Ark. Museums and Collections of higher-education institutions in southern England. Scholarship, learning, and access*. South Eastern Museums Service (Western Region) 1999.

<sup>9</sup> <http://publicus.culture.hu-berlin.de/umac/pdf/Notes%20from%20Steven%20de%20Clercq.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Manus Brinkman, correspondence, 25/07/2011.

One of the biggest obstacles on the path of the new organization was that the concept of the intended new international committee was not clear even among the university museums themselves. With the support of Manus Brinkman and the President of ICOM Jacques Perot, ICOM decided to support the idea of a new committee. The success or failure of the operation would be judged by the number of supporting and motivated museum professionals around the world<sup>11</sup>.

In 2000, the creation of the new committee was bolstered when *Museum International* (a UNESCO publication) produced a series of articles discussing the question. Stanbury had managed to get a group of writers to fill two issues, # 206 and # 207. The articles were an important mechanism for changing opinions about university museums and collections. However, the case for establishing a new organization for university museums was not yet clear. The president of UMAC Jacques Perot explained the situation to Peter Stanbury in a letter on 24 July 2000. There was still much to be done before the establishment of the committee<sup>12</sup>.

The discussion continued in different forums. UMiS in Scotland arranged a meeting in Glasgow in September 2000 under the theme *The Death of the Museums*, primarily to discuss the problem on a national scale. Several foreign delegates took part in the meeting, especially from the United States, where a group of University Museums had been struggling with their own problems of financing and administration. One of the leading museums in the US movement was the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History which was going through an impressive development project under the directorship of Michael Mares with Peter Tirrell as deputy. The need for a new international organization came out during the discussions in Glasgow. The initiative for the founding of UMAC was presented a few days later in Paris, to which several delegates of the Glasgow meeting travelled.

More background crucial for the founding of UMAC came from the Nordic countries. There the discussion started when the University of Helsinki was reorganizing its museum and scientific collections in the late 1990s. The old laboratory building Arppeanum (1869) was destined to host a permanent museum exhibition. During these preparations, the museum director Kati Heinämies and the chief of administration Sinikka Mertano initiated co-operation with the Museum of Medical Sciences of Paris V – Université René Descartes. Contacts were also created with the Museum Gustavianum of Uppsala University, and to the University Museum of Tartu. During these discussions, a need for a wider forum for the university museum leaders was recognised.

Sinikka Mertano was an acting member in the program IMHE, the Institutional Management of Higher Education, which was a part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD. Heinämies and Mertano made an initiative for IMHE to arrange a seminar under the topic *What Works*, where university museums could discuss practical problems.

The initiative met obstacles. First, there was doubt whether this kind of meeting was needed, because a common view was that ICOM could handle all discussion regarding different kinds of museum issues. After some persuasion, the deputy director of IMHE, Jacqueline Smith, agreed to arrange the seminar. As Mertano was also a member of the Board of the Finnish Cultural Centre in Paris, she managed to persuade them to host the meeting, and the seminar on the *Management of University Museums* was arranged at the Finnish Cultural Centre in Paris from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2000<sup>13</sup>.

The seminar was a huge success, over 60 participants from 17 countries participated. The largest delegations were from Australia and the United Kingdom. Among the participants were e.g. Peter Stanbury, Dominick Verschelde, Penelope Theologi-Ghouti, Steven de Clercq, Ing-Marie Munktell, Kate Arnold-Forster, Aldona Jonaitis, Lyndel King, and Peter Tirrell. The participants gave two full days of presentations, and 18 presentations were later published in the OECD series<sup>14</sup>.

11 Manus Brinkman, correspondence, 25/07/2011.

12 Letter, Peter Stanbury to Jacques Perot, 25/07/2000.

13 Mertano, correspondence, 12/03/2011. Report on UMAC activities from September 2000 to June 2001. In the Umac Archive.

14 Managing University Museums. Education and Skills [microform] / Melanie Kelly, Ed. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, France. Washington, D.C. Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse, 2001.

During the closing session of the seminar, a discussion about founding an international committee for university museums inside ICOM was held. The meeting made a practical decision to form a committee for the university museums and collections, and the voting members for the new organization were asked to sign the charter. Bernard van der Driessche and Dominick Verschelde, both from Belgium suggested a name for the organization: University Museums and Collections, UMAC.

To proceed with the practical arrangements, an interim board was appointed. Peter Stanbury became the chair, Penny Theology-Gouti the treasurer, and Steven de Clercq the secretary. The aim of the work of the interim board was to arrange the first UMAC meeting in Barcelona in 2001.

The International Committee for University Museums and Collections, UMAC, was officially founded during the 2001 ICOM Triennial Conference in Barcelona, Spain<sup>15</sup>. One of the main objectives of the new organization was to get recognition from both the academic world and political organizations.

### **The First Conferences and Stabilizing the Organisation**

As stated, UMAC organized its first and very successful meeting in connection with the ICOM Triennial Conference in Barcelona in July 2001, with some 20 contributions under the theme *Intensifying Support for, and Increasing Audiences in University Museums and Collections*. There was concern that there would be an inadequate number of participants, it was unfounded. Around 50 participants from 20 different countries were willing to sign up as voting members of the new international committee<sup>16</sup>.

According to the statutes of UMAC, the Board is elected during each triennial plenary meeting. The members of the first elected UMAC Board were:

Chair: Peter Stanbury, Australia  
 Vice-Chair: Steven de Clercq, Netherlands  
 Secretary: Penny Theologi-Gouti, Greece  
 Treasurer: Sue-Anne Wallace, Australia  
 Dominique Ferriot, France  
 Kati Heinämies, Finland  
 Lyndel King, USA  
 Ing-Marie Munktell, Sweden  
 Tonnette Peñares, Philippines  
 Fausto Pugnaroni, Italy  
 Ewen Smith, UK  
 Peter Tirrell, USA  
 Pasquale Tucci, Italy

Four working groups were established at the Barcelona meeting to tackle the most important problems and to discuss and introduce procedures for the newly born organisation, UMAC<sup>17</sup>. The idea of the working groups was to share the workload of the Board. In fact, at the beginning, the aim was to distribute most of the time-consuming work of the International Committee to the working groups. The first four working groups were: Directories, Organisation of the next Annual General Meeting and Conference, Personnel and Staffing, and Ethics.

The Directories Working Group was formed by Simon Chaplin, and the group's basic role was to create and maintain UMAC's relations with the other actors in the museums field. Peter Stanbury suggested a working group for the arrangements of the next annual meeting. The main question of the working group was to figure out if the next meeting should be arranged as soon as the following year. Australia, Poland, Portugal, and the USA were candidates for hosting the event.

<sup>15</sup> In some sources the date of the Barcelona meeting is mentioned to be in 2000, but the triennial was 2001. See e.g. <http://www.icom-ce.org/recursos/File/Resolutions%20adopted%20by%20ICOM.pdf>. 21/03/2010.

<sup>16</sup> UMAC Annual report 2001–2002.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of 1st UMAC Board Meeting. Barcelona Tuesday 02/06/2001.



The next working group for discussing the status of personnel and staff in the university museums was proposed by Ing-Marie Munktel. The Museum Gustavianum of Uppsala University was to be a case study. The fourth working group was on Ethics, the formation was proposed by Steven de Clercq. The main objective of the group was to point out where and how the ethical procedures of the university museums and collections differ from the formally established Code of Ethics of ICOM. For instance, research collections were created in order to find answers to scientific questions, and it does not always follow that the material should be preserved once the research questions are resolved; in other words, selection and subsequent deaccessioning may, in some circumstances, be appropriate.

From the beginning, UMAC's working processes were based on e-mail exchange, and it became the standard way of communication; even reporting to the Board was done this way.

Reliance on this relatively new technology was perhaps a little too enthusiastic. During UMAC's first years, there was the ambitious plans that the working groups would report on their progress every two to three months, and that the minutes of the general meeting would be published online almost without delay. The years to follow would show that discussion and reporting would not be quite that rapid. At the same time, the 'old fashioned' paper-based publication of proceedings of meetings came up as a means of giving substance to the work of the organization. The Board received a proposal from *Museologica*, the museological journal of the University of Lisbon in Portugal, for publishing the proceedings of UMAC. The chair also reminded the Board of ICOM's own series *ICOM Study* and of the possibility for UMAC to propose a special issue on university museums.

In Barcelona, UMAC had made a good start, but the future still seemed quite uncertain. It was decided the next meeting would be held in Sydney the following year. This seemed promising, but the time for preparations was short. Everyone understood that the future of the organization depended on UMAC's relationship with ICOM and the national museum committees that made up ICOM. It was already decided that the next ICOM triennial conference would be held in Seoul in 2004. The vice-chair suggested that the Board should start communicating with the organizers of the Seoul conference as soon as possible, as well as with the local institutions, in order to ensure a strong UMAC program for the next meeting.

One of the presentations in Barcelona was given by Marta Lourenço, who had written to Steven De Clercq and posed some questions regarding her doctoral thesis. De Clercq asked Lourenço to submit a paper, and her thesis started to intertwine with the development of the new organization. Lourenço became a member of the scientific committee of the annual meeting, and she started as a consultant for the Board, delivering information on European and American university museums.

Marta Lourenço's doctoral thesis *Between two worlds. The distinct nature and contemporary significance of university museums and collections in Europe* was published in 2005 in the series of Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers in Paris<sup>18</sup>. Steven De Clercq and Dominique Ferriot were the supervisors. This study became a solid basis of university museum knowledge in Europe.

The next UMAC conference was arranged for Sydney and Canberra in 2002. There, Peter Stanbury actively encouraged Australian researchers to engage with university museums. The theme of the conference was *Exposing and Exploiting the Distinct Character of University Museums and Collections*. In Sydney, 25 contributions and 8 posters were presented. In addition, two round table discussions were arranged.

The next year, 2003, 55 people from 14 different countries attended the UMAC conference which was held at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History in Norman, Oklahoma. In the Annual General Meeting during the Oklahoma conference, UMAC proclaimed its maturity; the first tentative steps were over.

Cornelia Weber and Marta Lourenço came forward with a proposal for a new world-wide database for the university museums and collections. The database was set up at the ICOM/UMAC website, and it was published in May 2004. It was an immediate success; the number of hits was levelled between 900 and 1200 hits per week.

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<sup>18</sup> Correspondence Marta Lourenço. 17/08/2011.

### **A Summary of Subsequent Activities and Conferences**

The next ICOM General Conference was arranged for 2004 in Seoul, Korea. Hosts of the UMAC meeting were Professors Kidong Bae, Chung-Kyu Lee, and Youngna Kim. For quite a few European participants this was their first exposure to Korean culture.

A new Board was elected during this meeting with Cornelia Weber, Berlin, Germany, as chair. The number of vice-chairs was raised to two. Steven de Clercq continued as the first vice-chair, and Peter Stanbury was to be the second. Lyndel King, Minneapolis, USA, was nominated newsletter editor, and Peter Tirrell, Oklahoma, USA, web editor. Other Board members were Dominique Ferriot, France, Kati Heinämies, Finland, and Ing-Marie Munktel, Sweden. The chairs of the working groups were also taken as Board members; these were Aldona Jonaitis, USA, Marta Lourenço, Portugal, and Raffaella Simili, Italy.

After Seoul, UMAC arranged conferences as follows, a summary is presented below<sup>19</sup>.

#### **2005 - Uppsala**

25 September – 1 October

Location: Museum Gustavianum

Theme: Communicating University Museums. Awareness and Action – University Museums.

Local organiser: Ing-Marie Munktel

#### **2006 Mexico City**

25–29 September

Theme: New Roads for University Museums

Location: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Local organiser: Miquel Angel Fernández Felix

#### **2007 Vienna**

19–24 August

Theme: Museums and Universal Heritage

Location: Vienna University

ICOM general conference

UMAC Theme: Universities in Transition – Responsibilities for Heritage

Local organiser: Monica Knofler

The Board election was held during the AGM, and Cornelia Weber was chosen to continue as the chair. The post of the second Vice-Chair was passed on to Nicholas Merriman, Manchester, UK, Aldona Jonaitis became the Secretary, Panu Nykänen, Espoo, Finland, was elected the new Treasurer., and Lyndel King the newsletter editor. Other members of the board were Hugues Dreyssé, Strasbourg, France, Kate Arnold-Forster, University of Reading, UK, Peter Stanbury, and Penny Theology-Ghouti. The proceedings from this conference became the first edition of University Museums and Collections Journal as an electronic publication<sup>20</sup>.

#### **2008 Manchester**

16–20 September

Theme: University Museums and the Community

Location: University of Manchester

Local organiser: Nicholas Merriman

#### **2009 Berkeley**

10–13 September

Theme: Putting University Collections to Work in Research and Teaching

Location: University of California, Berkeley

Local organiser: Rosemary A. Joyce

<sup>19</sup> A full listing of conference details is given on the UMAC website <http://umac.icom.museum/resources/archive/past-annual-conferences/>.

<sup>20</sup> A brief history of UMAC's publication ventures is given in Lourenço et al. 2017.

**2010 Shanghai**

7–12 November 2010

Theme: Museums for Social Harmony / University Museums and Collections as Recorders of Cultural and Natural Communities Worldwide

Location: Shanghai World Expo 2010

Local organiser: Professor Wu Hongzhou, Chinese University Museums Committee CUMC

The meeting was held simultaneously with the ICOM general conference. The UMAC conference was arranged in co-operation with the International Committee for Egyptology (CIPEG). A new UMAC Board was elected. Huques Dreyse, Strasbourg, France, became the new chair. Ing-Marie Munktel, Uppsala, Sweden, and Peter Tirrell, Norman, OK, USA became the vice-chairs. Other new board members were Elena Corradini, Italy, Christine Khor Seok Kee, Singapore, Lyndel King, Graciela Weisinger (secretary), and Panu Nykänen (treasurer).

**2011 Lisbon**

21–25 September

Theme: University Museums and Collections - University History and Identity

Location: University of Lisbon

Local organiser: Marta Lourenço

**2012 Singapore**

9–13 October

Location: National University of Singapore (NUS).

Theme: Encountering Limits: The University Museum

Local organiser: Christine Khor, National University of Singapore

**2013 Rio De Janeiro**

12–17 August

Theme: Museums (Memory + Creativity = Social Change)

UMAC Theme: Evaluating change

Local organiser: José Lira (São Paulo)

This meeting was held simultaneously with the ICOM general conference. The composition of the Board after the election was: Hugues Dreyssé Chair; Panu Nykänen and Elena Corradini Vice-Chairs; Graciela Weisinger, Secretary; Catherine Giltrap Treasurer. Members: Isidro Abano, Christine Khor, Lyndel King, Luisa Fernanda Rico Mansard and Barbara Rothermel.

**2014 Alexandria**

9–14 October

Theme: Squaring the Circle? Research, Museums, Public: A Common Engagement towards Effective Communication.

Location: Library of Alexandria

Local organiser: Mona Haggag

The UMAC conference was arranged with the Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECA) of ICOM.

**2015 Manila**

11–15 May

Theme: Rethinking university museums: Bridging theory and practice

Location: University of Santo Tomas

Local organiser: Isidro Abano

**2016 Milan**

3–9 July

UMAC Theme: University Museums, Collections and Cultural Landscapes

Local organiser: Sofia Talas

This meeting was held simultaneously with the ICOM general conference. The current Board at time of writing were elected; Marta Lourenco Chair; Barbara Rothermel and Graciela Weisinger Vice-Chairs; Marcus Granato Secretary; Natalie Nyst Treasurer. Members: Fatemeh Ahmadi, Elena Corradini, Akiko Fukuno, Lyndel King, Luisa Fernanda Rico Mansard and Andrew Simpson.

**2017 Helsinki and Jyväskylä**

5 – 8 September

Theme: Global issues in university museums and collections: Global objects, Global ideas and ideologies, and Global people.

Location: University of Helsinki, University of Jyväskylä

Local organiser: Panu Nykänen

**2018 Miami**

21-24 June

Theme: Audacious Ideas: University Museums and Collections as Change-Agents for a Better World

This was held as a joint conference with the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries, AAMG-USA.

Local organiser: Jill Hartz and Barbara Rothermel

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