Celebrating The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's
Scholarly Communication Program

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Deanna Marcum

It is my great pleasure to serve as moderator for this panel. The Andrew W.Mellon Foundation is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and each of the programs will find an appropriate venue for a panel similar to this one to reflect on accomplishments and future directions. When Don Waters, Senior Program Officer for the Scholarly Communication program asked me to organize a panel for his area, I immediately thought of the ACLS conference as the perfect venue—in part because ACLS is celebrating its centennial this year and in part because throughout Mellon's history there has been such a close connection between the two organizations.

To prepare for this discussion, I read the annual reports from 1969 through 2018, and I took a few excerpts from presidents of different periods to illustrate how the foundation viewed its role in scholarly communication over time. That brief and admittedly incomplete history is in your meeting materials.

Between 1969 and 1999, the Foundation did not have a formal scholarly communication program, but President Bill Bowen recognized the need for such a program and identified Don Waters, who was in the organization that I headed, the Council on Library and Information Resources, serving as its founding director of the Digital Library Federation. I have often told the story of Bill calling me using his most winning charm to apologize for raiding my staff, but assuring me he was doing it only because the country needed Don. And indeed it did. Don Waters, who announced his retirement from the Foundation just last week, though his program has been responsible for the development of digital libraries and services in support of scholarship and teaching. Prior to Don's tenure, the Foundation had funded numerous library projects, but with Don's arrival, the focus was on the needs of the disciplines in a digital era, and grants to libraries were always in support of the scholarly enterprise.

I feel certain that every person in this room has benefitted directly or indirectly from a scholarly communication grant from Mellon. As of March 26, 2019, Mellon had made 1,710 grants to institutions and organizations totaling $800,015,240, which is approximately 12% of the Foundation's total grant making.

I invited three people to write papers on different aspects of the scholarly communication program and to share reflections with you on the accomplishments they consider most transformative, reflect on experiments that were not entirely successful and why, and offer some hopes for future directions. I refer you to the biographical information about these three wonderful speakers, so that they have more time to speak. Tara Mc Pherson describes discipline-based Scholarly Communications Institutes in which leaders in specific fields spent time

together thinking about the needs in their disciplines—the resources and tools that would enhance scholarship.

    --Identifying problems in the disciplines and how those changed over time

    --Adapting technology to meet specific disciplinary needs

    --Bringing together scholars, librarians, and technologists

    --Separating externalities from those issues disciplines could control

Michael Keller describes the experiments and innovative projects in the initial decades of the digital age.

    --The importance of a third party in supporting new ideas

    --Examples of projects that led to collaboration that would have been difficult without external funding; experiments that resulted in breakthroughs

    --Lessons learned

Sylvester Johnson, who has not been a recipient of Mellon grants, will discuss the influence of Mellon funding on the academy, specifically in his case, Virginia Tech. From his perspective as a university administrator, hedescribes how Mellon funding has facilitated greater access to scholarly resources and created more opportunities for humanities scholars

    --Digitization of important collections, allowing separated collections to be re-united

    --Discovery of hidden collections, giving new importance to special collections

    --Building vast digital libraries, increasing access for all

    --Increasing collaboration across disciplines