The 9th Annual South Asia Cooperative Collection Development Workshop was held on October 12, 2018 in Madison, WI. This was the third workshop centering on stewardship of our interdependent South Asian collections through shared print or print retention agreements. The specifically SACOOP agreement crafted in last year’s workshop met with less than total success at our individual institutions. The goal of the 9th workshop was to get our cooperative South Asian materials into print retention schemes—be it through the SACOOP Print Retention Agreement, a national level project, or a regional collaborative—and to document that commitment.

Following on our experiences in our first MOU efforts, we sought input from various perspectives—success stories, administrators’ perspectives, and reports from the membership on various ongoing local and national print retention schemes.

Librarian Perspectives on South Asia Retention Agreements

Three participants whose institutions did (or will) commit to the SACOOP Print Retention Agreement reported on the conditions of their success. Mara Thacker of Illinois, Ellen Ambrosone from Emory, and David Faust of Minnesota spoke of support from their ULs, AULs, and CDOs, who all endorse our goals. Concerns revolved around tracking and management of these projects over time, technical services specifics, documentation and communication.

Effective Models for South Asia Retention Agreements

In general library administrators all voice support for SACOOP’s goal of ensuring the continuity of our interdependent collections, but they disagree about methods and scale for appropriate action. Joining our meeting by Skype were:

Tom Teper, AUL for Collections and Technical Services at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
David Magier, AUL for Scholarly Collections and Research Services at Princeton University
Jeff Kosokoff, AUL for Collection Strategy at Duke University

All three AULs stressed the point that providing current and future access to scholarly materials is the central mission of research libraries, so SACOOP’s goals and the institutions’ own goals are congruent. UIUC is particularly active in retention work, via several programs, and Teper felt that Mara’s unique comic book collection is precisely the sort of material that UIUC prioritizes for retention. Kosokoff, on the other hand, believes that large and inclusive (subject-agnostic) retention plans are more effective than a proliferation of small subject-specific agreements. Magier emphasized that SACOOP’s prospective collection development is strategic, and we do need assurances that our less-duplicative collections will be retained. The AULs all agreed that retention commitments must be not only documented, but broadly exposed.
Existing Print Retention Projects

Participants reported on the workshop homework, investigating retention projects in which our institutions are already engaged. WEST and CIC/BTAA are both limited to serials, so unlikely to accommodate the set of materials that SACOOP has prioritized. HathiTrust is robust, but requires digitization for inclusion. Ivy Plus shared print is still emerging; so far it consists of small subject-specific MoUs for collection with a retention clause, and it seems promising for SACOOP purposes.

Niche Collections

Show and tell presentations on our special-focus local collections are a regular highlight of our workshops. This year we had two that made specific connections between niche materials and the institutions’ academic practice.

Phil McEldowney spoke of the Bihar collection of the University of Virginia. Bihar has been a focal area for Virginia since the 1970s, with historian Walter Hauser impelling studies of the region and inspiring students for decades. Virginia boasts some 20 dissertations on Bihar, politics, and peasantry, with a number of archival collections on research there. Phil declared Bihar as a niche priority through SACOOP in 2014.

Mary Rader presented on Popular and Pulp Fiction in Vernacular Languages at the University of Texas, Austin. This niche collection in various languages is substantial, actively developed through acquisitions trips to South Asia and through cultivated dealer relationships. Mary is vigorous in promoting this niche collection, through a Fall 2018 seminar series called Public/Popular/Pulp, frequent blog postings, and online exhibits. Fun content, splashy graphics, thorough documentation, and plenty of publicity do our workshop’s collective effort proud.

Next Steps

We will circulate a draft statement from SACOOP that can be shared with local, national and other administrators and decision-makers, stating our concerns regarding the preservation of and access to South Asian materials identified as part of the collaborative effort. Participants will seek and obtain administrative commitment for SA print retention in some form at their own institutions.

Next Year

This is the last workshop to be devoted specifically to print retention issues. In 2019 we may return to active collection development, revisiting and updating LC profiles. Suggestions on other activities or topics are welcome! Participants are encouraged to use the SACOOP listserv to share their ideas.