

SC/MLA Research Committee Manual

September, 2003

Committee History:

The Research Committee was established in 1990. Charter members were Van Afes, Cheryl Dee, Mary King Givens, Jan LeBeause, Spencer Marsh, Elaine Powers, and Jocelyn A. Rankin, Chair. During that first year the foundations were laid for the continuing work of the committee, with a survey of the members' research needs, interests, and expertise. Other activities that year included articles in each issue of *Southern Expressions* profiling current research interests of particular Chapter members. The 1990-1991 committee recommended a CE research methods course for the 1991 meeting, and developed a proposal for a chapter-wide research project of journal usage.

A pilot study for the Chapter-Wide Journal Usage Study was conducted in 1992, and the actual study involving 45 hospital libraries and 12 academic medical libraries was conducted in 1993. The project was awarded the 1998 MLA Award for Chapter Project of the Year. An article describing that research written by Cheryl Dee, Jocelyn Rankin, and Carol Burns was published in the [*Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*](#) in 1998.

At the 1991 meeting of the Executive Board the committee recommended the Chapter present the Southern Chapter Research Award to support a member's proposed research project. The first project to receive this award was made in 1999 to Shelley Paden, Rick Wallace, and Andrea Batson for their investigation of user satisfaction and the impact of Loansome Doc on libraries and end users. Reports of this project were later reported in their article in the [*Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*](#). The amount of the award was increased from \$500 to \$1000 by action of the Executive Board in 2000.

The Committee's web site was developed in 1998 by Steven MacCall, Lisa Russell, and Pat Higginbotham and included resources for researchers, the Research Award application, and links to the "Research Spotlights" columns from *Southern Expressions*. In 2000 the Research Committee recognized chapter members' research presentations at the Annual Meeting by posting abstracts of all papers and posters with a research focus on the Committee's web pages. Addajane Wallace coordinated an updating of all the Committee's web pages in 2002-2003.

In 2002-2003 the Committee developed a proposal for awarding cash awards for the best research papers and the best research posters presented at the Annual Meeting. The proposal was approved, and the first awards for research presentations were made at the fall 2003 meeting.

Committee Purpose:

The role of this committee is to stimulate individual and joint research efforts within the Southern Chapter membership; to establish and implement joint research efforts; to recommend and promote SC/MLA programs and policies that advance the development and excellence of research; and, further, to work with other SC/MLA committees to serve as an action group for the advancement of library related research.

Committee Goals:

Directed by the SC/MLA strategic plan, the Research Committee aims to stimulate and facilitate research activities within Southern Chapter membership through these specific goals:

- identification, proposal development, and implementation of collaborative, chapter-wide research projects among SC/MLA members;
- recognition, encouragement, and support for chapter members engaged in ongoing research projects;
- communication in [*Southern Expressions*](#), and on the [SOCHAP-L](#) discussion list about SC/MLA members' research projects and publications; and
- promotion of education in research methodologies at the annual chapter meeting.

Committee Structure:

Members of this committee are appointed by the Chair of the Research Committee, with the approval of the Chair of the Southern Chapter. They are selected from the members of the chapter based on their interest and experience in research in librarianship and information science. The committee has six members plus the Chair. Attempts are made to ensure geographic diversity as well as representation from both hospital and academic health science libraries. Members serve three years in staggered terms, so that two new members are appointed each year. If resignations from the Committee result in more than three vacancies in a single year, terms of the new members will be adjusted to allow for a return to a series of staggered term limits. Members may not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

The Chair of the Research Committee is appointed by the Chair of the Southern Chapter from among members of the committee to serve an additional one-year term, unless no member of the committee is able to serve. The Chair shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms. A vacancy in the office of Chair will be filled by the SC/MLA Chair, who will appoint a new Research Committee Chair to serve out the remainder of the term.

Ex Officio Members serve the Committee in an advisory capacity.

Research Mentors are appointed by the Chair to serve as mentors to members of the Chapter seeking assistance with research project development. In addition, they may be asked to assist the Committee with consultation on proposal development for chapter projects and judging papers at the annual meeting.

Committee Activities:

Under the direction of the Chair, members of the Research Committee:

- investigate and support chapter-wide research projects, such as those which led to these publications:
[Dee CR, Rankin JA, Burns. Using scientific evidence to improve hospital library services: Southern Chapter/Medical Library Association journal usage study. Bull Med Libr Assoc 1998 Jul; 86\(3\):301-6;](#) and [Paden SL, Batson AL, Wallace RL. Web-based Loansome Doc, librarians, and end users: results from a survey of the Southeast Region. Bull Med Libr Assoc 2001 Jul; 89\(3\):263-71 .](#)
- seek applicants for a chapter [Research Project Grant](#);
- [identify](#) and [award](#) the best research papers and poster presentations at the SC/MLA annual meeting;
- encourage individual researchers by spotlighting research projects of Southern Chapter members in the "Research Spotlight" column in [Southern Expressions](#);
- maintain a list of chapter members' research interests ([Southern Expressions](#) Spring 2003; 19(2): 3,6,21) and those willing to serve as [research mentors](#);
- support SC/MLA [strategic plan](#) activities.

Committee Award Guidelines:

Research Project Grant

The Research Committee solicits and reviews candidates for research project grant support in order to promote and stimulate excellence in the field of health science librarianship and the information sciences. Grants may be used to support all or part of the costs of a study, up to a maximum of \$1000. SC/MLA may award more than one grant in a year for a maximum of \$1000 in any one year.

Eligibility

1. Preference is given to applicants who are practicing health sciences librarians with at least two years of professional experience.
2. The applicant must be a current member of SC/MLA.

Terms

1. The scope and nature of the proposed project should give evidence of an established methodology and a viable research design.
2. The proposal should contain title, goals, objectives, methodology, significance, and budget of project; vital and special qualifications of the researcher; evidence of knowledge of the state of the art and existing published literature on the proposed research topic; and a description of the proposed means of disseminating the results.
3. The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications:
 - Regarding the Proposed Project: originality, importance to the profession, soundness of experimental design and detail, and feasibility of scope.
 - Regarding the Applicant: education and training, experience, research competence, research potential, and previous productivity. The name of at least one professional reference must be provided from a person capable of providing an evaluation of the applicant's knowledge of the topic and an assessment of the applicant's research skills.
4. Grants will not be given to support an activity that is operational in nature or has only local usefulness.
5. The award will be disbursed in two portions. The first half will be awarded at the chapter's annual fall meeting. The second half will be awarded February 1 of the following year, upon receipt of a first-quarter report, submitted to the chair of the Research Committee.
6. A report to the Research Committee will be required at the conclusion of the first quarter, on or before February 1 of the year following the award's presentation. This report should document completed project activities, list expenses to date, and provide a list of activities planned for the next two quarters. A final report to the Research Committee is due by October 1 documenting the year's work on the funded project. The report should include a complete financial accounting as well as interim - or final - project results.
7. At the conclusion of the project, a summary report must be submitted for publication to *Southern Expressions*, the newsletter of SC/MLA. Recognition of the Southern Chapter's support must be given in any publications originating from this project.
8. Applications will be acknowledged upon receipt.
9. Depending on the review of the received applications, the Committee may recommend that awards not be presented in a given year.

Research Project Grant Application

The SC/MLA Research Project Grants are awarded at the Annual Meeting. Before submitting a full application for a research grant, applicants must submit, by May 15th, a letter of intent http://www.scmla.org/docs/resletter_intent.pdf. By June 15, if the letter of intent is accepted, applicants will be assigned a volunteer research mentor and invited to submit a full proposal. The full proposal is due by August 1.

General Instructions

Prepare your proposal as a separate word processing document using 12-point typeface. Use outside margins of at least 1". Type the project title and page number in the top right corner of each page. Identify the numbered sections of the proposal, and double-space between sections.

Research Proposal Instructions

Please prepare your research proposal according to the following outline:

1. Cover Sheet:
 - a. Title of proposed research project; and
 - b. Name, institutional affiliation, position, mailing address, phone, fax, and email address for each person associated with the project.
2. Project Description:
 - a. Provide a brief description of the research project;
 - b. Describe the major concepts and goals and the significance of the proposed

- study; include a review of the published literature on the research topic;
- c. Describe the proposed research methodology and study population; enclose a copy of any proposed research instrument; and
 - d. Provide a timeline for the project that specifies the major stages of the project, their anticipated completion dates, and members of the research team responsible for each.
3. Describe the plan for disseminating research results, which must include a summary report for publication in *Southern Expressions*, the newsletter of SC/MLA.
 4. Indicate institutional support to be provided by the researcher's home institution or other agencies.
 5. Budget:
 - a. Submit a detailed budget providing a breakdown for all the anticipated costs;
 - b. Provide a narrative justification for each budget item.

Reporting Requirements

A report to the Research Committee will be required at the conclusion of the first quarter, on or before February 1 of the year following the award's presentation. This report should document the status of the project's activities, including a list of all expenses to date, and a list of activities planned for the next three quarters. A final report to the Research Committee is due by October 1 of the year following the award's presentation, documenting the year's work on the funded project. The report should include a complete financial accounting, as well as interim -or final - project results.

Checklist of Enclosures

- Cover sheet
- Research Project Proposal
- Budget
- Brief narrative describing the research qualifications and experience of each person associated with the research project
- Curriculum vita for each investigator
- Name and contact information of one professional reference capable of providing an evaluation of the primary researcher's knowledge of the topic and an assessment of the applicant's research skills.
- Survey or other research instrument example (if included in research design).

By October 1, submit completed application packet to Research Committee Chair.

Research Presentation Award

Beginning in 2003, at the Annual Meeting in Coral Gables, Florida, a series of awards are presented to the author(s) of the best research paper and the best research poster presentations. The Executive Board has authorized monetary awards for presented papers: 1st (\$300.00), 2nd (\$200.00), and 3rd (\$100.00); and posters: 1st (\$200.00), 2nd (\$100.00), and 3rd (\$50.00).

The Research Committee coordinates the judging. Papers and posters are scored using criteria based on those used by the MLA Research Committee at MLA Annual Meetings. Points are awarded for study design, validity, reliability, presentation, and implications of the research.

Research Award Judging Criteria

Research papers and posters are evaluated using the following criteria to arrive at an overall score based on 100 possible points.

STUDY DESIGN: 25 points

Score the following items on a scale of 0-5

- 1) Is the research design unique, creative, original, clearly defined, and relevant to health sciences librarianship?

- 2) Is the abstract in a “structured abstract” format, including results section?
- 3) Is there a clear hypothesis?
- 4) Is the design appropriate for testing the hypothesis
- 5) Are the methodology, environment and population clearly defined?

VALIDITY: 27 points

Score the following items on a scale of 0-3

- 1) How well does the methodology answer the question(s) posed by the researcher?
- 2) Was the research subject adequately defined?
- 3) Was the research thorough and systematic?
- 4) Are the indicators of variable appropriate for measuring those variables?
- 5) Could another variable or factor have caused the observed results? (e.g., in studying a marketing plan intended to boost library use, could other factors such as relaxing overdue policies explain an increase in library usage?)
- 6) Were research techniques such as randomization or use of control groups applied?
- 7) Did the researcher avoid common pitfalls such as selection bias (e.g., if the project participants were library customers, did the study enroll an atypical cross section, such as customers particularly sympathetic to the library?)
- 8) Did the study interfere with the participants’ perceptions? (e.g., did survey participants answer questions they thought would please the researcher, or did they feel overly conscious of serving as objects of the study and therefore behaved differently than normal? [Hawthorne Effect])
- 9) Did the study’s results exhibit sufficient statistical strength or other evidence (historical, case study, field observations, etc.) to support the conclusions?

RELIABILITY: 20 points

Score the following items on a scale of 0-10

- 1) Could this study be replicated at another library and produce comparable results?
- 2) Can the results be generalized beyond the site studied?

PRESENTATION: 20 points

Score the following items on a scale of 0-10

- 1) Does the researcher present the study and findings in an organized, easily understood manner? If there are graphs, charts, or tables, are they useful?
- 2) Are the elements of the presentation (purpose, literature review, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion) present and clearly outlined?

IMPLICATIONS: 8 points

Score the following items on a scale of 0-2

- 1) Are the implications of the results presented?
- 2) Are recommendations for further research presented?
- 3) Are results compared to similar research presented in the literature?
- 4) Does the study contribute to the field of Medical Librarianship?

Timeline of Annual Committee Activities

First Quarter:

- Submit abstracts for Annual Meeting research papers and posters to web site coordinator
- Submit names of new committee members to web site coordinator
- Review other Committee web pages for needed updates
- Solicit candidates for Research Mentors
- Solicit and review ideas for Chapter-wide research project
- Suggest research CE course ideas to Annual Meeting planners
- December 1 - Submit *Southern Expressions* Column for Winter Issue
 - Report from researcher awarded previous year’s Research Project Grant
 - Annual Meeting awards for best research papers and posters

- Proposal(s) awarded Research Project Grant for current year
- Solicit and review Research Project Grant applications for next year

Second Quarter:

January - Work with Annual Meeting planners to promote research papers and posters; recommend use of [SC/MLA Research Guidelines for Abstracts](#) for all presentations
 Survey chapter members, asking for reports on their ongoing research projects
 Solicit candidates for Research Mentors
 Solicit and review ideas for Chapter-wide research project
 February 1 – receive mid-year report from current year’s Research Project Award winner
 March 1 – Submit MLA Annual Report for period beginning June of the previous year
 March 15 - Submit *Southern Expressions* column for Spring issue

- Report on survey of chapter members’ ongoing research projects
- Solicit and review Research Project Grant applications

Third Quarter:

Solicit candidates for Research Mentors
 Solicit and review ideas for Chapter-wide research project
 Work with Annual Meeting planners to obtain abstracts of papers and posters to be presented at annual meeting; ask presenters to self-identify if reporting research
 June 15 - Submit *Southern Expressions* column for Summer issue

- Solicit and review Research Project Grant applications
- Spotlight research of chapter member(s)

Fourth Quarter:

August 15 - Submit *Southern Expressions* column for Fall issue

- Solicit applications for Research Project Grant due October 1
- Spotlight research of chapter member(s)

Solicit candidates for Research Mentors
 Recruit judges for Annual Meeting research papers and posters
 Solicit and review ideas for Chapter-wide research project
 September 1 - Recruit new committee members
 October 1

- § Receive final report from recipient of Research Project Grant awarded at previous year’s Annual Meeting
- § Determine recipient of Research Project Grant for coming year
- § Submit annual committee report
- § Distribute letters or certificates acknowledging service of committee members

Annual Meeting

Submit Annual Report on Committee’s activities
 Submit report from previous year’s Research Project Grant recipient(s)
 Announce new Research Project Grant recipient(s)
 Judge and present awards for best research papers and posters
 Recognize outgoing Committee members and announce names of new members