



Digital Scriptorium
2024 Annual Meeting
University of Kansas & Zoom
Lawrence, KS
1 October 2024

Director's Report

In this, my final report as President and Executive Director of Digital Scriptorium, I want to highlight the strength and vitality of DS as an organization and the successful completion of the development phase of the DS Catalog. When I joined the DS Board of Directors in 2015, under the leadership of Debra Cashion, DS faced a tenuous future, an out-of-date and unsustainable technical platform, and declining membership. Thanks to the dedicated investment of time and resources of the board members who have served since 2015, DS stands on firm ground. After today's meeting, DS will welcome two new board members and will have added ten new member institutions for a total of fifty-two members, almost doubling the number of member institutions in 2015. The DS Catalog, which was beta-launched last year at the 2023 Annual Meeting with 1200 records now boasts over 12,000 records representing global manuscript traditions.

These successes have been made possible by the Board's diligence in building DS's financial health in the past year. The ad hoc Finance Committee, composed of board members Lisa Fagin Davis (Medieval Academy of America; ex officio), David Faulds (UC-Berkeley), and Sue Steuer (Western Michigan University), reviewed the current member fee schedule, which was set in 2010, and proposed the fee increases to be voted upon today. The proposed schedule reflects the level of care and attention they committed to this difficult task required for the future sustainability of DS and demonstrates a high level of sensitivity to DS's commitment to equity among member institutions.

In July, DS made the Project and Data Manager position, held by L. P. Coladangelo, a full-time position for at least one year. With anticipated revenues from the member fee increases this year, we will be able to extend the full time position at least through FY 26 and longer if we can continue to maintain and ideally increase current levels of membership. On behalf of DS, Penn Libraries, our partner institution, also applied for and received a grant of \$17,000 from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, which enabled us to appoint Rose McCandless as the Manuscript Data Curation Graduate Student Fellow. Many of you will recognize her name thanks to the extensive outreach she has done to bring in new members, offer manuscript description support for several of our existing member institutions, and support data management workflows. The DS Board also initiated a fundraising effort to continue the Graduate Student Fellowship for another year, and has already raised \$14,500 of its \$20,000 goal, allowing us to extend Rose's position at least through December 31.

Instituting the full-time Project and Data Manager position and the extension of the Graduate

Student Fellowship has been critical to the successful implementation of the DS Catalog. L. P. has established innovative and sound data management workflows and protocols that have streamlined data collection from member institutions and the transformation of their structured data into Linked Open Data. In addition to supporting data management, Rose has worked with four institutions to create new manuscript descriptions in a structured data format for ingestion into the DS Catalog. Not only has their work brought the DS Catalog to its current number of records, they are also translating this work into research that is being shared with library and information science networks at conferences and soon-to-come publications. They have accomplished much more than anyone would have expected, and are to be congratulated for their exceptional contributions to and teamwork in the service of DS.

Organizationally, DS has continued to strengthen its governance practices. At this meeting, members will be asked to approve necessary changes in the organization's bylaws recommended by the ad hoc Bylaws Committee, including Emily Runde (Columbia University) and Aaron Pratt (Harry Ransom Center, UT-Austin). The updates reflect and serve the changes to the DS technical and organizational platform implemented over the last several years. The DS Board has also determined that the combined President/Executive Director role should be split into two roles to make the role of president less onerous. For this reason, I am stepping aside as President to assume the role of the board-appointed Executive Director until we can reach a level of secured revenues to convert the Project and Data Manager position into the more permanent Executive Director position. I am delighted that Sue Steuer, who has served as Vice-President since 2021, has agreed to run for the office of President this year. The DS Board of Directors will thrive under her leadership. She in fact has been serving as the interim President while personal challenges have prevented me from doing so, and has kept DS moving through a difficult time.

The DS Board of Directors is also poised to elect two new members today: Anna Siebach-Larsen (University of Rochester) and Eve Wolynes (University of Kansas-Lawrence). Each will, I am sure, bring valuable new insights and ideas into the governance and strategic development of DS. I thank the members of the Nominating Committee Regine Heberlein (Princeton University) and David Faulds for finding such excellent candidates.

The addition of two new board members unfortunately signals the departure of two valued colleagues and friends from the board. David Faulds and Vanessa Wilkie (Huntington Museum and Library) will be rotating off the board as of today. Their commitment to DS has been extraordinary in the face of much change in the organization in the past six years, and I thank them both from my office and as a friend for their service.

In closing, I wish to gratefully acknowledge the continued support of Penn Libraries, our partner institution, for providing the administrative and technical support to keep DS going. I would also like to thank the University of Kansas for hosting this year's Annual Meeting. Eve Wolynes and Elspeth Healey have graciously opened their physical and virtual spaces to the DS community and have arranged a rich post-lunch program for all of us to enjoy. I thank them especially for giving us the opportunity to hold the meeting at the University of Kansas and for welcoming us so warmly.

Respectfully and gratefully submitted,
Lynn Ransom, President & Executive Director