UMAC 2011, XI Annual Conference of the International Committee of ICOM for University Museums and Collections, 21-25 September.

The conference took place at the Museum of Science and was integrated with the Commemoration of the 100 years of the University of Lisbon. The main theme of the conference was "University history and Identity". 110 participants came from 24 countries and 64 papers were presented. Three Board meetings and the formal AGM (Annual General Meeting) were held. The Board discussed the budget for 2012 and updated the Strategic plan of UMAC. Vice chair Peter Stanbury made a suggestion about creating an annual Award for the best paper of the year. The proposal was welcomed for further development by the board. Next conference will be in Singapore 2012 and Director Christine Khor presented the ongoing planning.

New for this year was an "open session", as a starter, the day before the opening of the conference. The "open session" gave an opportunity for the hosting country to present their museums and collections. The authors came all from the Universities of Lisbon, Coimbra and Porto and the topics/collections presented were mainly about the History of Science, Medicine, Technology, Natural history, Ethnology and Anthropology. All papers of this session had in common that they told the story about how the collections were brought together and how they were used for teaching and research in the past.

The opening was held in the old, 19 th century, Amfiteatro Chimico. The Director General of ICOM, Julien Anfrans and Carlos Brandao from ICOM Executive Committee, as well as the chair of ICOM Portugal were present. Vice Chair of UMAC Peter Stanbury spoke over the title "Making contact - Adding value". He stressed the importance of University museums as places for discussions and ideéas, a place with facilities like a shop and café. He also said that it is important for University museums to find their role within the university and that many collections are unknown, although university museums have a unique position. His suggestion was: "Make History – do not only write! And relate exhibitions to personal stories".

The first session had the title "University collections shaping the History of universities". Most papers focused on the History of Art collections as "branding marks" for their universities. The second session was about "University collections shaping Identity of universities". Sebastien Soubiran from University of Strasbourg, showed how the museums still contribute to building an identity of excellence of the University. In the third session, with the title "Bringing new audiences to university museums", Kate A Foster, University of Reading, presented a successful cooperation with BBC radio using rural collections from Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) in a drama serie called "The Archers". Both academics and non-specialist audiences work together in a range of events like a research symposium, public lectures and outreach activities. The project has prompted the Museum to reconsider the focus of approach to developing audience engagement and its future strategies for collections management. Director Sten Björkman, the Helsinki university museum, showed how the Helsinki Observatory will become a new center in the public sphere aimed at the general public and schoolchildren. In a parallel third session Andrew Simpson, Maguarie university, Sydney, presented a new survey of university collections ordered by the Council of Australian university museums and collections (CAUMAC). The survey revealed 400 university collections in Australia compared with the former survey from 1996 which gave 264 identified collections (the Cinderella Report, 1996). The

higher number reflects improved awareness of university museums and collections and easier access to museums and collection data. Policies and practice will be discussed further on.

Session four was about "University collections as sources for the History of research and teaching". Presentations from Brussells and Leiden showed the importance of new and dynamic views on old anatomical collections. One way was to use the collection transformed into a virtuel world and the other was used for experiments in other media. Film as a modern media to present academic research and fulfill the museums public mission was discussed. Concerning Natural History Collections I. Nieuwland stated that scientific research has changed in the twentieth century-many collections shift from their primarily scientific profile to a historic one – new role as a representative of the academic world to an increasingly estranged public.

Session five and six, about "The history of university collections", showed clearly that the past and the current identity of universities is deeply connected with university collections. A good example was D Verscheldes presentation of "Past and Present identity of the University of Ghent" and the Zoology museum nowadays working with children of all ages. The last session was about "Advocacy of the museum field". UNICUM, a Portal for the Dutch Academic Collections was presented by M. Portal for the Natural Europe Project as a new way for museum education and finally an "European Anatomic collection network for the history of Medicine" was presented by M. Bukowski, Poland and E. Corradini, Italy.

Post conference tours to Coimbra and Porto complimented the very intense and inspiring conference at University of Lisbon.

Uppsala October 11, 2011

Ing-Marie Munktell, PhD, Museum Director, Museum Gustavianum, Uppsala University Vice chair of LIMAC