

LDLT Retreat 10/4/17 – Update for Public Services Staff

The Library Directors Leadership Team, which includes Xin Li, Curtis Lyons, Jill Powell, Eric Acree, Bonna Boettcher, and Mary Ochs, spent the morning sharing ideas for our common vision for our libraries that will allow for consistency and predictability across units, but also allow for unit-level innovation and customized services that meet the needs of the varied disciplines and programs across Cornell. The retreat was facilitated by Gaby Castro-Gessner.

Xin provided an introduction to set the stage for the day focusing on an overarching goal of providing highly relevant services that meet user needs. We agreed that we need to carry out those services within a staff culture of accountability and innovation, supported with the right resources and training. Public services must also operate within a sustainable business model, so that we can support and sustain our services, spaces and technologies.

Eric noted that he talks to students about the library as their laboratory for self-directed learning. Our goal is to make that learning environment the best it can be through our spaces, technologies, services, and collections. We know that students value the library as a place where they can come to join others in the common purpose of learning.

The group acknowledged that we are planning in a time with several uncertainties, including the yet to be determined AUL to replace Kornelia Tancheva. Xin, in her interim role, felt it was important for our group to move forward with setting the current direction for public services. Even though the AUL position is vacant, public services staff need directions and she felt the task rests with LDLT

Some other uncertainties and issues that impact the planning process are:

- CUL budget and different scale of available funding among units due to historical reasons
- Structure of and roles between LDLT and PSEC going forward (this will be revisited)
- What actually is a library in the public services context?
- How can we address diversity and inclusion issues in a long term sustainable way?
- How can we best support and acknowledge the great work of staff? How do we retain talented staff?
- How can we learn from libraries outside Cornell to try new approaches?

The group spent a segment of the retreat noting key public services that we need to *continue* to offer, services we would like to *grow*, and services we would like to *explore*. We acknowledged the conflict between maintaining ongoing services while trying to grow popular services or explore new ones.

Services identified for continuation represent the bread and butter of public services, including developing and maintaining collections, reference and research support, instruction and learning support, support for scholarly communication, offering high quality technology-rich

learning spaces for quiet study and group collaboration, and access to materials. While public services staff are on the front lines offering these services, we noted that all library staff impact our ability to provide high quality public services.

Some services identified for growth included:

- Collaborative collecting and licensing of e-resources
- Collaboration with kindred groups on campus, e.g. Center for Teaching Innovation, and potentially offer more shared spaces for consulting
- Systematic reviews support – support for evidence-based policy work on campus
- Grow our software expertise with library relevant software, e.g. Mendeley, Bibtex, LaTeX, Covidence, etc.
- Collaboration with CUL-IT for public services related IT initiatives
- Enhanced spaces designed with user input and with an overarching vision for what library space is for
- Diversity and inclusion programs
- Professional development opportunities
- Unlocking more HathiTrust material

Some services identified for exploration included:

- Peer mentoring program for staff
- Peer mentoring program for students
- Visualization lab
- Expand cooperative collection building
- Expand community outreach

We acknowledged that some of these require more assessment and the choices may be hard, e.g., what would users want from us, more databases or more staff to teach how to use the existing ones? Or, should collection budget be used for acquiring technology? Consultation within and across units is needed as follow up to determine how to prioritize these areas for growth and/or exploration and determine how to balance the new with the important ongoing services. We also need to determine which ones might be done at the CUL level and which ones might work better as pilots or unit-level initiatives with the potential for scaling up. LDLT will revisit these points in its regular meetings to develop actions.