

Notes from the Student Library Advisory Council Meeting  
September 21, 20098

Members attending: Andrea Armstrong, Juan Guerra, Daniel Hest, Sophie Hochhaeusl, Omair Khan, Heather Levy, Lauren Mangano, Ashley McEnery, Brian McGlade, Lauren McLemore, Andre Minicozzi, Ali O'Neill, Amy Richter, William Spencer, Darla Thompson, Kelly Vaughan,, Corey Wronski-Mayersak

Attending from the Library: Anne Kenney, Carl A. Kroch University Librarian; Leah Solla, Coordinator, Physical Sciences Library; Kornelia Tancheva; Ed Weissman, Assistant to the University Librarian

### 1) Physical Sciences Library Transformation

Leah Solla, Coordinator, Physical Sciences Library, briefed the Council on the latest developments in the transformation of the Physical Sciences Library from a physical to a virtual presence and about future library support for physical sciences research, teaching and learning. The facility will close in December at the end of the Fall semester final exam period. The print materials will be dispersed to other campus libraries--Math, Engineering, Mann and the Library Annex. A high percentage of current journal subscriptions and a growing proportion of the back issues, will be available online and there will be a growing emphasis on electronic books, thanks in part to a generous bequest from librarian and Cornell alumna Erna L. Gramse and the Edna McConnell Clark endowment fund. A new and expanded Clark Library Web site will help guide people to resources and services. In addition, a transition team of librarians, faculty and students recommended, among other things, that quiet study space with a 125 seat capacity, the same as in the current Physical Sciences Library facility, be maintained in the space being freed up. See Leah's PowerPoint slides

<https://confluence.cornell.edu/download/attachments/90736818/SLAC092109.pptx> and the FAQ <http://physicalsciences.library.cornell.edu/node/3587> she distributed. Three Council members indicated that they used the Physical Sciences Library. Comments, including one received via e-mail after the meeting, include:

- e-Journals are great. eBooks are "not so great." Print is still preferred. It will be good to still have access to printed books, even if they are shelved in the Math, Mann or Engineering libraries.
- As the library moves to e-Books, the cost of printing needs to be taken into account. Can printing be subsidized in some way? It's hard to study from an e-Book and they are often hard to use
- e-Books have advantages. They are always available and can be accessed from home.
- Student updates about the transformation of the Physical Sciences Library via departmental emails has been greatly appreciated. There was a lot of controversy early in the process but the open exchange of information has been appreciated.

### 2) Olin Renovation update

University Librarian Anne Kenney reported on the status of the Olin Library renovation project. Last spring, an extensive project to renovate Olin Library was put on hold because of the budgetary crisis facing the University. The Library has been working to revamp the plans to ensure that serious life safety issues in the building are addressed. Plans for a more limited "life

safety" project will be come before the Buildings & Properties Committee of the Board of Trustees in October. If approved there will be floor-by-floor renovations with each floor "under construction" for between 2-3 months. Arrangements will be made to provide temporary homes for those with carrels and offices on the affected floors as well as for the books.

### 3) Strategic Planning in the Library

The Library, like other academic units across the campus, was instructed by the Provost to prepare a plan for responding to a 15% budget cut. Like the other units, the Library formed a Strategic Planning Task Force to make recommendations as to how the Library can best maintain its excellence in the face of these cuts. The Task Force, which began work in mid-May and worked throughout the summer, was comprised of faculty and library staff. Because of the timing, no students were on the group. Anne presented the overall budget figures: The Library budget for 2009-10 amounts to \$47.8. \$31.7 go to operating expenses, including personnel costs. The remaining \$16.1 million goes to acquiring and licensing scholarly resources and collections. Having already absorbed a 5% cut in the 2009-10 budget, the Library is looking to accommodate an additional 10% cut. If applied equally to operations and collections this amounts to a \$2.1 million cut in the budget for operations and a \$1.3 million cut for collections. Anne asked members of the Council what they and other students value most in the library. Comments included:

- The physical facilities--study space is very important and there is not enough good study space on campus, especially "quiet" study space with outlets for laptops
- There is study space on campus that is under publicized,. e.g., Rhodes Hall.
- If it were possible to "mimic" the quiet study space the library provides in other locations that might be OK. Need someone to help maintain the proper atmosphere and for security. Safety would be a concern.
- Need more group/collaborative study space.
- OK to cut facilities if alternative study spaces are provided and to send low-use books to the Library Annex.
- In the humanities disciplines, physical access to scholarly resources is important for research and study.
- Important to protect access to high demand books.
- Public access computing is very important. Need better publicity about the availability of computer labs and group study area.
- Library instruction, especially for first-year students is important.

### 4) Issues/concerns/suggestions from members of the Council

- The Library printers always print out an unnecessary cover page. Can this practice be stopped?
- The Library should look to outsource printing. At Texas, doing this cut costs per page from \$.13 to \$.04.
- At some universities, students pay a technology fee and this covers their printing costs up to a certain threshold.
- Like both the new and the classic catalog . Took awhile to warm up to the new catalog but like that it covers materials at other libraries and also articles.

- Appreciate the microfilm scanners in Olin that convert content to PDF.
- While don't often interact in person with staff at the information desks, services like chat reference and Ask a Librarian are helpful.
- As a graduate student, find personal service is important.
- Consider offering credits/benefits for student workers instead of wages as way to save money.

## 5) Announcements

Anne announced:

- BorrowDirect <http://campusgw.library.cornell.edu/services/borrowdirect.html>, a rapid book request and delivery system that enables Cornell faculty, staff and students to search the combined library catalogs of Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton and Yale, a collection of over 40 million volumes, and directly request expedited delivery of circulating items, is hoping to add Harvard to the group in January.
- The Graduate School and the Library are offering full library privileges for up to two years to graduate students in good academic standing who have passed their A exams, exhausted their original guarantee of funding without having completed their Ph.D. degrees, are on a leave of absence from Cornell, and live in the Ithaca area. The cost is \$200 per semester. Prior to this new program, these students would have had to purchase library card access for \$25 per month and would not have had any remote access to licensed electronic resources. Students apply through the Graduate School.
- The Cornell and Columbia University libraries are working together to better integrate collections and services in the 2CUL project. We hope to receive a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to help move this project forward. [We learned following the meeting that the Library did receive the grant.]

The next meeting is scheduled on Monday, October 19, 5-6:30 PM in 703 Olin Library.

Edward Weissman

Assistant to the University Librarian