

## Student Library Advisory Council

October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015

### Meeting Notes

1. Anne Kenney, the University Librarian, welcomed the new and returning members of SLAC.
2. PULSE Survey: Kornelia Tancheva, AUL for Research and Learning Services, presented the results from a spring 2015 survey of all enrolled undergraduates across the 34 institutions members of the Consortium of Financing Higher Education. For the first time, the survey included library-related questions in 4 areas (study spaces, collections, research help and library instruction) that 27 of the institutions included. Each of the areas had two associated questions: have you used the service; and if yes, how helpful was it on a 3-point scale. Our results were broken up by college and patron status (freshmen, sophomores, etc.) and also compared to those of the other Ivy+ institutions, and the non-Ivies in the sample.  
Our results are comparable or better to those of our peers in the “use” category. In the helpfulness category, they are also comparable or slightly better than those of our peers.

The questions that SLAC members were asked to discuss included: what could explain the very large difference in the percentages of Cornell students who rated these 4 services as not very helpful:

- library spaces: only 5.7% of those who had used them rate them not very helpful
- collections: 9.9% rated them not very helpful
- research help: 26.2% reported it not very helpful
- library instruction: 38.5% rated it not very helpful

The last number is particularly difficult to explain, considering that on the recent faculty survey, faculty rated library instruction for their students very highly; and that data we collect at the end of our instruction sessions consistently shows very high student satisfaction.

Some of the possible explanations the SLAC members offered included:

- Library instruction is forced
- It is repetitive and many have gone through it in high school
- Redundancy: During their Cornell years, students experience “effectively the same presentation”
- Quality of instruction varies (it is often not engaging enough; instructors just “throw tools at you”)
- Conceptually, it is often too search-engine-based (which is fairly intuitive); or it is too general

Some of the recommendations included:

- Replace instruction with one-on-one sessions
- Turn instruction into a Q&A session
- Divide classes in smaller groups so that individual questions can be addressed

- More targeted and personalized instruction (software workshops on specific skills; CULearn-like modules which record modules you've already taken and passed quizzes for so you can start at appropriate level)
3. Makerspaces: Camille Andrews and Devin Sanera led a discussion of what making activities SLAC members have participated in and what they would want a makerspace to include. Students have made parts prototypes for projects and work in research labs, and done projects involving laser cutters, sewing machines, Arduinos, posters, quarter cards, and T-shirts. In terms of things students were interested in seeing in a makerspace, some of the suggestions included:
- Equipment (and training) for activities/projects such as:
    - 3D printing for prototyping and printing things like iPhone cases (also some interest in bioprinting)
    - Printing on cloth or vinyl for making outdoor signs, tablecloths, and especially t-shirts (which are often hard to do in small batches for clubs). This would also be useful for fine arts students who need faster printing (and binding) options with a variety of other materials
    - Javascript for interactive data visualization
  - Higher quality or more accessible to all (rather than just more) options, for personal as well as academic department or class-focused projects
  - Fewer restrictions on kinds of material or less of a wait time for equipment (some labs have equipment but hard to gain access, takes time to switch materials, or can't support project needs at reasonable price point)
  - Centralized information about available options (unaware of available spaces and equipment and uncertainty as to access, audience, and kinds of projects possible); menu or a map of services that are available across campus with examples of output so if they were unfamiliar with a tool, they could get a sense of what it produces or accomplishes
  - Makerfaire to promote available tools, spaces, and projects
4. SLAC members' suggestions:
- More collaborative spaces, esp. those that could accommodate 3-6 people
  - Better utilization of the Fiske Room in Uris
  - Sound proofing of group study rooms (e.g. at Mann and ILR)
  - Math Library—light switches for downstairs not visible; featured books section has been empty for a long time; perhaps use it to feature student articles from ArXiv; or connect the display to featured lectures
  - Get grad. students to do workshops (esp. in Computer Science)
  - Carrels (I believe in Olin)—people are hoarding them
  - Feature students' personal collections (perhaps an online exhibit)
  - Not clear where all the study rooms that can be reserved are located
  - Install more double-screen monitors
  - Notification system of available rooms/seats (like CIT's LabStats)
  - Provide more desktop computers; more Macs, but also more PCs
  - Getting access to Columbia was hard
  - Provide adjustable desks in public areas

- Provide more umbrellas and raincoats for check-out (there were voices against this suggestion—is that really the mission of the research library)
- Law library: shortage of quiet study space; reserving carrels is no longer possible, which is a problem
- Install a vending machine in front of Mallot
- Longer hours in Olin and Uris
- Vending machines in the Tower room in Uris
- More information about the FAL project
- The Knight Writing Institute space in Olin and Uris is very cramped
- Offer library instruction online