

Report
Senate Committee on the Library
April 2012-December 2013

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15 January 2014

1. The overall themes that shaped the work of the Senate Committee on the Library (SCOL) for this academic year was:

- a. outside review of the Libraries
- b. library funding
- c. space/renovations

a. Outside review of the Libraries

The most significant element was the blue ribbon panel review of the Libraries October 14-17, 2012 (the review can be read in its entirety at <http://library.syr.edu/about/PDF/SUL-ExternalReviewReport-2012.pdf>). Review committee members included four directors of academic research libraries and a leader in the academic technologies and research library community:

Jeffrey Horrell, Dean of Libraries and Librarian of the College, Dartmouth College
Joan Lippincott, Associate Executive Director, Coalition for Networked Information
Sara Lowman, Vice Provost and University Librarian, Rice University
James G. Neal, Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian, Columbia University Libraries
William D. Walker, Dean and University Librarian, University of Miami

The report contains 47 recommendations that touch on nearly every aspect of the Library's programs and support. On the positive side, the recommenders were keen to congratulate the Library for its new South Campus Library Facility, for the digital repository known as SURface, and for acquiring grants to support and publicize the nationally recognized Belfer Audio Archive (among other notable achievements). This in effect acknowledges the significance of the Mellon grant funding for a director and archivist for Belfer. Jenny Doctor, hired as director, has a joint appointment with Newhouse. She is a tenured faculty member and librarian. She received her degree from Northwestern. The archivist hired, Patrick Midtlyng, comes to us from the University of Chicago.

- 1) The Libraries are currently looking at partnering with the Smithsonian and the sound recording archive at the Library of Congress. A team (Stream Team) has been formed and is comprised of Belfer staff and librarians who have been working on making the materials accessible. In late August the libraries hired Amy Vanderlyke as our new copyright librarian. She is a part of this team as well.

However, the recommenders were blunt in their largely negative evaluation, calling on the University's upper administration (current and upcoming) to prioritize improvement in two areas, the severe underfunding of the collections budget and the physical facilities.

b. Budget/Funding

The issue of insufficient funding comes up at just about every meeting of SCOL. The Library system has received some increases but not enough to move us from the bottom of our peers. We are asking for One Time Only (OTO) money to increase our collections.

SCOL continues to grapple with the issue of weaknesses of the collections, which has a large impact on instruction and scholarly work. There is the baseline collection budget deficiency, faculty concern over the ability of the collections to support the academic and research enterprises of the University, senior University administration's failure to comprehend and address the deficiencies. The baseline budget must be improved, and the woeful practice of taking from the current collections budget to support general operation's costs "must cease." As the main library on campus, Bird does not meet the University's needs and does not reach the standards of today's libraries. The Libraries need clear leadership and adequate funding. In February 2013, the USen Committee on the Library wrote a letter to the Daily Orange, detailing the main points of the report, expressing our concern and challenging the upper Administration to "take seriously the Library's integral place in the success of Syracuse University as a leading academic institution."

The Libraries received \$500,000 during the 2012-2013 academic year.

SCOL has talked about targeted fund raising through alumni who attribute their success to reading deeply in a field.

c. Space/Facilities

The Library recently received \$50,000 from the University, on top of \$100,000 already released and in addition to \$100,000 from a donor, for new furniture in the Learning Commons, but the entire floor needs renovating. One big problem SCOL has observed is the chicken and egg – we need new furniture but we need to renovate – but since we haven't renovated, we can't get new furniture

The renovation of library space: has been waylaid by various environmental concerns. For the remediation of the PCB problem in the basement of Bird Library, we are at a stage where the University and government are wrestling with language. The EPA's lawyers have consistently talked about language in the final agreement that deals with children being present on campus. We generally don't have children on campus or in the building. The EPA has looked at this issue for the remediation as a school of K-12 and not a university campus. The lawyers have been going back and forth on this for months.

According to current plans: when the law school moves into their new building, the Falk School will move to Barclay. The plan has been to move the social science collections into the Barclay Law Library. At the moment, Falk is also claiming the 5th floor of the Barclay Library; thus, the Barclay space may not suffice for the social science holdings.

The Humanities Collection would fit well into Bird Library, and there will be a Humanities Reading Room on the 2nd floor of Bird.

Science, math and technology would stay in Carnegie. The good news is that the Carnegie Reading Room renovation is complete and it will reopen in January 2014. It will be devoted to the silent individual study spaces that are in high demand.

The fact is that the Libraries do not have enough space and that the facilities are generally sub-par. The space no longer accommodates the student population. There are also competing agendas of research and 'learning commons.' The question is how to accommodate many academic needs in a finite amount of space.

2. Summary of Committee Work Spring 2012-Fall 2013

Spring 2012

With regard to the retirement of Suzanne Thorin as Dean of the Libraries, VC Spina met with the SCOL. He told us that an interim dean would be appointed, the permanent appointment to await the arrival of a new chancellor.

Spring 2013

Given interest in deeper consultation with or more effective collaboration with the Budget office, the Chairman of the Budget Committee, Craig Dudczek, met with us. Craig gave a brief explanation of RCM and we compared notes on the state of the Library.

We recently received one time only funding of \$500,000 for the collections. The review committee had recommended an increase of \$7 million in the Library's budget; it received \$1.3 million in base additions for 2013-14.

Fall 2013

Interim Dean of Libraries K Matthew Dames presented SCOL with the SWOT report he was asked to prepare for the chancellor-designate, Kent Syverud. The document is very much in keeping with the 2012 outside review, lauding the services (including library staff) and special collections as strengths, and decrying the dismal states of space/facilities and basic collections.

Interim Chancellor and Vice Chancellor Eric Spina accepted an invitation to meet with SCOL. He confirmed that a total of \$1,500,000 was to be used for back-files but not that the money would come in in three consecutive years.

He did, however, assure the Committee that in the FY15 budget and beyond there are placeholders for continued increases for the libraries that are outside the increase for collections. It will be on a year by year basis for a review to see how much administration can do. This will remain a priority. Dean Dames and Deborah Pellow gave Chancellor-designate Syverud a tour of Bird Library when he was on campus in September. He had read all the reports and wanted to see the building. As was clear to Deborah and Matthew in their tour of with Chancellor-designate Syverud, he regards the libraries as important and will work with faculty, staff and students to decide where to go.

Overall, SCOL endorses the importance of clear communication from the Administration regarding the libraries and its importance to the campus community, as well as the library administration's ability to communicate planned changes and solicit feedback from departments and colleges in a transparent manner. Overall campus dialog regarding the library and what it should do has been insufficient to many.

We see planning for library use as a unique space on campus - not a duplication of what goes on elsewhere.

Interim Dean Dames has taken a very collaborative posture toward SCOL, towards amelioration of the problems at the SU Libraries. Along with SCOL, he is strategizing to make the libraries a priority for Chancellor Syverud.

Submittee by Prof. Deborah Pellow, Chair