

University Library Committee Minutes
October 12, 2016, 3:15 pm

Present: Thomas Burr, S. J. Chang, Oguzhan Dincer, Chelsea Fary, Melissa Johnson, Marie Labonville, Alan Lessoff, Dallas Long, Jay Percell, Ed Reitz, Dane Ward, Kathy Webster

Absent: Magdalena Casper-Shipp, Chelsea Fary, Chad Kahl

Guests: Chad Buckley, Susan Kalter

Meeting was called to order at 3:20pm.

Burr asked for feedback on the minutes of the previous meeting. Labonville, Reitz, and Chang offered several corrections. Pending the corrections, the minutes were approved.

Burr referred to the presentation Ward's Honors class made at the end of their course. The presentation was focused on their recommends to enhance or improve Milner Library for the betterment of student learning. Burr said the students offered great advice, and he'd like the University Library Committee to discuss space in the library perhaps at the November or January meeting. Ward said the students were very engaged in the topic. Ward said he would share the students' presentation, if possible. Burr asked whether we have to adopt every suggestion the students made. Ward replied no.

Percell reported out on a task he and Burr worked on together during the summer. They investigated literature to explore the question "How are academic libraries governed?" They wanted to learn what alternative models might also exist. They did not find much in the literature – sources were old and dated, which was an interesting finding in of itself. Many articles debated whether librarians should have faculty status or argued in favor of faculty status of librarians. Those arguments were based largely on the need or desire for librarians to participate in university governance. Aby (?)'s 2011 study was the most recent and discussed mostly the budgetary constraints libraries increasingly faced. Burr reported on what he found related to senate committees whose work is focused on their library: Not a lot. He found more studies about library administration; Wayne State and UW-Eau Claire have no library committee at all, whereas the University of California campuses have library committees for each campus. The committees advise the library concerning policies and the student body. These committees advise the President rather than the libraries' deans.

Burr reported that some institutions make the dean into a full VP, such as at Harvard; Rutgers; Baylor; and Columbia, whereas others make the dean a vice provost or combine the library with IT. Lessoff recommended that Burr examine Illinois State's approved list of comparator institutions. Burr asked, what about power? Do we need more power or less? Does the dean need more power or less?

Dincer asked what we mean by power. Burr replied that he meant the ability to say no and to make the answer stick. Dincer said he assumed the dean already has that power. Ward said the library needs to balance various needs, and the importance of the library needs to be raised on campus. The library needs more involvement with the faculty.

Lessoff said one concern he heard from the librarians when he served on the Senate is that not enough faculty lines are being replaced when librarians leave or retire. An erosion of library tenure-track faculty

is occurring. There is a professionalization as faculty members that is lost when faculty lines are not replaced. Ward said that NTT faculty are excellent at providing our critical services, but TT faculty are very important for research that informs the library's future. Kalter said that Milner has lost by half the number of tenure-track faculty lines that it had a decade or so ago. Ward said there are many competing needs when it comes to allocating tenure faculty lines, such as classroom instruction needs, accreditation, etc. Kalter said the library has gone from 28 lines to 14.

Burr asked why the library is losing so many tenure lines. Ward replied that most are due to retirements and resignations. The library has usually received 1 line per fiscal year, sometimes no lines. Dincer asked whether the library has considered joint appointments for the library faculty. Ward said yes but the discussion about joint appointments has not moved beyond the initial discussions. Kahl explained joint appointments may be difficult, as subject librarians work with multiple departments.

The joint appointment model works best if the subject librarian is a liaison to one department. Johnson said she knew of several special collections librarians and archivists with PhDs. Burr said most academic librarians have two master's degrees and do not have PhDs. Lessoff cited April Anderson, the university archivist. She is not tenure-track faculty but she still teaches in the history department and even has an office there. Kahl said the best example of a librarian embedded at a department at the university may be the nursing librarian. She attends all of their faculty meetings and co-teaches with the faculty. She may be the closest to a joint appointment that Milner has currently.

Webster asked whether it would be better to have the subject librarians embedded in their departments. Percell said that might be difficult. He reflected on the number of students he teaches, most of whom are not actually College of Education students. He said it comes down to ownership. Dincer thought there might be library science PhDs, but probably it is easier to hire faculty members with PhDs in other disciplines. He said he has never met an economics faculty member with a library degree. Johnson said having an MLS matters. The importance of professionalization and professional identity of librarians must be maintained. Burr asked to move a continuation of this discussion to the November meeting agenda.

Burr reminded the committee of Dincer's impassioned thoughts on the state's declining support for public higher education. It is a question of priority of resources for the library. The competing priorities led to deaccessioning, which is not easy for many faculty to contemplate. The deaccessioning under former Dean Wastawy was five years ago but was the cause of many hurt feelings across campus.

Percell referenced a study he found at Hofstra, in which the librarians thought they had done a good job with managing the deaccessioning of infrequently used titles but the biology department thought differently. They had a list of titles that biology had agreed to withdraw, then an additional list, and then the biology faculty went back on titles they had already agreed upon. It heightened the importance of communication. Clear need for all stakeholders to understand the situation and to be working together. Johnson asked if the librarians had data that backed up the use of the materials. Percell said they did.

Lessoff said this moment [deaccessioning for IRMA] will pass, but we effect the future by the decisions we make today. We know digitization of primary source materials will have a great impact. You would want to keep local materials for cultural heritage reasons. You retain materials that are low usage for heritage reasons. How do we decide on historical materials that in the present are not getting much use but might in the future. Collecting policies should define emphases and priorities in subject areas.

Dincer asked whether the committee could see the library's budgets for collections.

Kahl said there are collection development policies for each of the subject areas. He pointed to law, for example, whose policy indicates that Illinois law is especially retained. Lessoff said the library can grow only so much, but are there quotas or targets? Kahl said no, but we do not have an endless capacity to store items. We have the benefit of being in a statewide consortium, and the University of Illinois is the deposit of last copies. They do not throw anything away. We acquire approximately 20,000-30,000 new titles each year so our goal is a steady state of collections. The collections philosophy document references that.

Lessoff thought the collections philosophy seemed defensive in tone. Someone asked if the collections philosophy document is a draft. Buckley explained that it was drafted as an internal library document. Kalter pointed out that the document was not drafted in consultation with the library liaisons in the departments. Faculty were not involved in developing the criteria. Face to face discussion is needed. Consortia can only go so far, because undergraduate students in particular will not wait the couple of days for delivery. Lessoff said the loudest voices are the most successful in influencing which collections are retained. Kahl said we need a consistent review so we don't tackle huge numbers of items at once like we have for the IRMA project. He hopes to test this by reviewing collections at the time academic programs go up for program review.

Burr adjourned the meeting as discussion ran over the meeting's allotted time. Meeting adjourned at 5:05pm.