

University Library Committee Minutes
November 9, 2016, 3:15 pm

Present: Thomas Burr, Magdalena Casper-Shipp, S. J. Chang, Oguzhan Dincer, Chelsea Fary, Chad Kahl, Marie Labonville, Alan Lessoff, Dallas Long, Jay Percell, Dane Ward, Kathy Webster

Absent: Melissa Johnson, Ed Reitz

Guests: Becky Franz, Susan Kalter

Meeting was called to order at 3:15pm.

Burr asked the committee if there is interest in holding a meeting in December or should the committee wait until its regularly scheduled meeting on January 11th. December 7th or December 14th were proposed as possible meeting dates. The question was tabled until the end of the meeting, pending the need to continue any unfinished discussions or business.

Burr asked Lessoff to start the discussion. Lessoff said he heard from librarians that the "Annex" book collection is being moved up from the first floor to the fourth floor. Ward replied the Annex book collection is moving to a temporary location there. Lessoff said some amount of suspicion from faculty members surrounded the withdrawal of books from IRMA, but he acknowledged the librarians and staff were working under difficult circumstances. Lessoff said, moving forward, we should develop a deaccession policy so the librarians and faculty do not find themselves in a similar position in any future emergency situations. Lessoff asked what the number of books are that will be deaccessioned. Franz said 124,000 is the number that is predicted. Burr asked if that number is going down. Kahl replied that some books are being retained after the feedback in the 4th round of reviews.

Ward said a deaccession policy should be dialogical and developed between the librarians and the faculty. Burr asked who would oversee such a policy? Would Academic Senate be responsible for it, or would Library Administration? Lessoff said he would like to see collection strengths and priorities be articulated for each discipline. Kahl said the librarians have conspectuses for most subject areas. Burr said the conspectuses are largely lists of criteria without explanative text, and he would like to see more substance included. Where is the rationale in the decisions behind the criteria?

Dincer said deaccessioning should be linked tightly with collection development. He asked whether it is possible to see the library's collections budgets. Ward said the collections budgets are complicated but roughly \$4.5 million is budgeted for collections annually, with \$2.5 million of that going to the library's subscriptions for EBSCO databases, \$500K for new books, and the remainder for journal subscriptions.

Burr said in order for the librarians and the faculty to have constructive conversations about collections and deaccessioning, the librarians need to get into the departments. Ward noted the librarians don't consistently have great access to the departments, but more importantly they may not be having the right conversations when those meetings do take place.

Burr reminded the committee of Lessoff's assertion last month that the library should adopt a philosophy of collections similar to those adopted by archives or museums. Burr pointed out that we are a research-2 university with access to a consortium of academic libraries and to the University of Illinois, which acts as a depository for last copies of books in the state. Lessoff explained how historians

apply archival thinking - we may not have control over the last copies in the consortium, and we need to be concerned about that. Lessoff said Milner is not an archive, but we have a responsibility to the future while working here in the present. Circulation statistics were favored too strongly over substance in this deaccessioning project.

Burr asked how do we balance these various needs? Percell said the library should have the authority to develop its own policies, and the University Library Committee be advisory. Dincer asked whether it is feasible to maintain the temporary storage location on a permanent basis. Franz answered that keeping the storage location is not feasible because it would be leased and is a significant financial commitment for the university. Kahl noted that Milner has a storage facility off-campus on Warehouse Road, but it is at capacity. Franz explained there is a potential for greater capacity, but only if the stacks were modified to be higher and the floor reinforced to support the additional weight. These modifications are probably not likely. Webster asked whether space could be planned for library storage as campus buildings undergo renovations. Franz said that was probably not a likely solution in most instances but is not impossible.

Percell said the library should control collection growth through a strong deaccessioning policy. Burr asked how would such a policy balance the undergraduates' use of the library. Jay said the library needs to make decisions that are in the best interest of the university community at the end of the day.

Chang raised questions – what should the committee actually do? Where is the committee heading? What are the actions and outcomes of the committee's decisions? Burr replied that Chang's questions moved the meeting to the second agenda item, which concerned governance; the University Library Committee should help with building 2-way communication between the library and the departments.

Chang offered that the committee write a statement to departments asking them to allow a librarian to come to regular faculty meetings. He also suggested joint appointments could be helpful. Is it within the committee's authority and ability to facilitate these? Dincer asked what do we expect to gain from encouraging departments to have regular meetings with librarians; these are already happening for some departments. Long explained that librarians are able to share information about new resources at the meetings they attend, but probably the depth of conversation is lacking. More strategic discussions about long-term collection needs, research support, or student learning needs are probably not taking place.

Burr asked Kahl to share information that he obtained by surveying the subject librarians about their access to departments. Kahl surveyed the library's 17 subject librarians (which included himself as the subject librarian for Legal Studies.) Most subject librarians responded that they had met with their departments at least once in the past 15 months, but some communicated only with the department chairs or with the department's library liaison. One subject librarian reported little to no success with his or her department. Some librarians reported that their best experiences had been working with departments' curriculum committees.

Burr suggested the University Library Committee could come up with a framework for library relationships, go to departments' faculty meetings, and talk about how this framework will help guide relationships. Ward asked – what are the problems your students have writing research papers? Probing questions should be asked to start substantive discussions.

Percell had been sketching out a possible framework, which was shared with Long to include in the meeting minutes. Percell's sketch included:

Create a Framework

Library Questions/Philosophy → Department Conversations, Desires, Wishes →

Recommendations to Library → Library Decisions

Frameworks needed for Library/Department Curriculum, Deaccessioning/Accessioning Policies, Collections Philosophy, and Library Purpose.

Webster asked if students receive an orientation to the library. Kahl said students get a virtual orientation as part of ENG101 and COM110. Webster noted that the writing-across-the-curriculum initiative should be an opportunity for librarian and faculty collaboration.

Burr returned the discussion to selecting the committee's next meeting date. December 7th was selected.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45pm.