

Minutes for Senate Library Committee  
Meeting of September 19, 2019  
3:00 PM to 4:30 PM  
272 Hillman Library

In Attendance: Mark Lynn Anderson, Jeff Aziz, Renae Barger,\* Fern Brody,† Barbara Epstein, Becky Faett, Gary Kohanbash, Jonah McAllister-Erickson, Donovan Harrell,‡ Clark Muenzer, Mary Rauktis, Serena Rivera,§ Shubhrika Sehgal, Marc Silverman, Nancy Tannery, Courtney Weikle-Mills, and Frank Wilson.

1. Greetings and self-introductions of attending committee members and guests.
2. Unanimous approval of Committee Minutes for meeting of May 16, 2019 as submitted by Elizabeth Mahoney.
3. Update on ongoing renovations at Falk Library (HSLs) by Epstein. Construction on the West Wing continues, and in addition to the transfer of materials to storage reported on at the May meeting, group study areas and the main floor study area were closed over the summer, but the library continues to provide a variety of available study spaces on both the main and upper floors to accommodate users. Epstein reports that the construction team has been very responsive to the needs of library patrons, performing much of the noisy construction work during the least populated hours.

Epstein discussed Falk's current exhibition titled *Graphic Medicine: Ill-Conceived and Well-Drawn!*, a six-panel display of medical graphic narratives (i.e. comics), an exhibit produced by the National Library of Medicine that explores narratives of illness, treatments, and outcomes.

Epstein also described how HSLs librarians have been invited to participate in the "Leading Emerging and Diverse Scientists to Success (LEADSS) program, which is offered through Pitt's Institute for Clinical Research Education and funded by NIH. The focus of the LEADS program is to diversify the biomedical workforce through a partnership with nine Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). Postdocs and junior faculty from these institutions receive training in areas such as scientific writing, team science, and grant writing in an effort to help launch their research careers. HSLs librarians will develop and offer online training modules on expert searching and related topics. In this first year, they will also partner with librarians at the University of Hawaii, which is sponsoring five fellows, to foster strong consultative relationships between the fellows and libraries at their home institutions. They expect to expand these consultative relationships to all fellows and their home institution libraries in the second and succeeding years.

4. Marc Silverman reported on his gallant but failed efforts to solve a long-standing problem with payments to publishers and vendors for book orders by University entities that use shared,

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\* For Barbara Epstein who had to leave before the end of the meeting.

† For Kornelia Tancheva.

‡ Writer for *The University Times*.

§ For Aurea Sotomayor.

accumulated credits (credits established for returned materials rather than reimbursements) for purchases. The problem stems from that fact that while the credits are shared across entities (University libraries, The Book Center, etc.) and held in common by Accounts Payable, the accounting departments of vendors are unable to readily accept payments from this existing credit stream because they are unable to register such credit as belonging to both the specific *and* multiple University units with which they conduct business. So when a library unit seeks to pay for book purchases with, say, credit existing from the return of unsold textbooks by The Book Center, the publisher is unable to acknowledge that credit as shared between units, and thus the library is notified by the publisher for a non-payment. Silverman called a meeting of all interested parties at the University to resolve this issue, but the meeting revealed that our PRISM software isn't currently flexible enough to provide an effective or efficient fix. Muenzer asked why units don't pay the publishers directly, and Silverman explained that Accounts Payable wants credits that the University has already paid for to be used and not accumulated. Muenzer responded that recent analyses have revealed how complicated pre-payment rules are.

**5.** The Committee spent most of the remainder of the meeting discussing a formal proposal submitted by Anderson, a proposed resolution reprising a more informal proposition that was discussed at length during the meeting in May. A copy of the submitted proposal with its rationale is attached to these minutes as an appendix. Essentially, the proposal called for a temporary change in the structure of the committee and read as follows: "For the Academic Year 2019-2020, it is proposed the Library Committee be co-chaired by an elected faculty member to the committee who, in consultation with the committee, invites a University faculty librarian to serve as the other co-chair *pro tem*."

Anderson briefly explained that the intent of having a faculty librarian as a co-chair was, in part, to create an opportunity for committee members to collaborate with a faculty librarian in a sustained manner over the course of several meetings on a single topic or issue, allowing the Committee to strengthen its ability to effectively advise the Senate or other University entities and/or to pursue action items. Anderson proposed this new model against a long-established model of inviting librarians to a single meeting to report an issue or service about which they have expertise, after which the Committee moves on to other topics. While the older model provides worthwhile communication to those non-librarian faculty members in attendance, Anderson observed that it doesn't allow for effective collaboration by the Committee with faculty librarians in the evaluation of the policies, practices, and possibilities of library work and library services. Anderson reported that he had spoken with various librarians from Barco, Falk, and Hillman over the summer about the possibility of co-chairing the Committee and all were enthusiastic.

Discussion of the proposal brought out several concerns by committee members. Muenzer worried that a single-issue approach might consume the precious time of the Committee and suggested that an *ad hoc* sub-committee assigned to a single topic might make more sense and preserve the flexibility of the Committee. Muenzer also pointed out that nothing the Committee does ultimately has the ability to determine policies. Epstein acknowledged that more voices on the committee is desirable, but she was concerned that a single faculty librarian serving on the Committee might suffer an undue burden of representation. She also expressed disappointment

that Anderson hadn't consulted those Library Directors who sit on the Committee for recommendations of appropriate faculty librarians to contact and consider.

A portion of the discussion also concerned the difficulty of agreeing to the new model without first knowing what it is the Committee might wish to pursue with a librarian co-chair. Anderson concurred that this is a difficulty but that it is important to come to define our concerns and objectives in collaboration with a faculty librarian, though the committee will soon have to define some broad area(s) of interest before inviting a faculty librarian to serve with us.

McAllister-Erickson discussed how such structural change itself might work to push the Committee forward, while Rauptis described how this proposed process of change is consistent to developments in social work with respect to family group decision-making. Silverman expressed support for the change as a potential means of perhaps finally accomplishing something tangible through committee work.

As the proposal came up for a Committee vote, Muenzer offered a friendly amendment that sought to specify a review process for this new model, a procedure to be undertaken by the Committee at the end of the academic year, with members voting at the April 2020 meeting on whether or not to continue with this new model going forward. While the exact language of the amendment wasn't finalized during the meeting, the amendment was accepted by the unanimous consent of all voting members present, and the amended proposal was then voted on with unanimous support [nine for, none opposed, and no abstentions.]\*\*

After the meeting, Muenzer and Anderson worked together on the final language of the passed resolution and circulated this language among the voting members of the committee for comments or concerns. The resolution now stands as a committee procedure for the coming year. The final version reads,

*For the Academic Year 2019-2020, it is proposed that the Library Committee be co-chaired by an elected faculty member to the committee who, in consultation with the full committee, invites a faculty librarian to serve as the other co-chair pro tem. The elected members of the Library Committee will evaluate the usefulness and viability of this new model for chairing the committee at their April 2020 meeting when they will vote for or against its continuance.*

**6.** The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of possible subject areas for the committee to investigate this year. Kohanbash was very interested in student experiences and their understanding of library services, and Sehgal mentioned that while library services were part of her graduate orientation, it wasn't until she approached and began working with librarians that she became aware of the types and quality of support the libraries and librarians provide for graduate research and teaching. Muenzer pointed out that "students wear many hats," and that a consideration of them might also involve issues in, say, scholarly communication as well as library services. Brody mentioned that ULS has some user survey results posted on its Assessment Resources page, the [link](#) to which Tancheva subsequently sent to the committee via

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\*\* Jonah McAllister-Erickson had to leave the meeting early before the final vote.

email. Kohanbash also expressed a desire to take up a specific and well-defined issue for study and action, while others stressed a need to arrive at that specificity through a gradual process. The general areas of inquiry suggested by Anderson under which more specific sub-areas are grouped were: 1) scholarly communication; 2 ) liaison librarians; 3) collection access and availability; 4) ADA access; and 5) archives and special collections. It was agreed that the discussion of these areas would be continued at the October meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 PM.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Mark Lynn Anderson  
(with assistance from Barbara Epstein)

Corrected and Approved in Committee, October 17, 2019

## APPENDIX

### Proposal for an Alternative Governance Structure of the Senate Library Committee 17 September 2019

Submitted by Mark Lynn Anderson (English/Film and Media Studies), Co-Chair

#### Proposal:

For the Academic Year 2019-2020, it is proposed the Library Committee be co-chaired by an elected faculty member to the committee who, in consultation with the committee, invites a University faculty librarian to serve as the other co-chair *pro tem*.

#### Rationale:

For the past three years the Senate Library Committee has been co-chaired by two elected, non-library faculty members, and during that time committee meetings have been principally devoted to regular reports on developments at the campus libraries by their respective directors (renovations, new technologies, policy changes, etc.), as well as to a series of revolving guest speakers from the libraries who have presented on various library services, departments, and issues about which the committee had sought to learn more. In this way, the committee serves as a means of communication between the libraries and the faculty, staff, and students, at least for those faculty, staff, and student members who attend committee meetings and those with whom said committee members might later share information. Faculty communication has also been conducted via the annual reports on the work of the committee given to the Faculty Assembly by the committee chair(s).

The proposed change in the governance structure of the committee is designed to allow for the continuation of this important communication while working against a model of communication that tends to separate librarians, archivists, and information specialists from non-librarian faculty, with the former explaining their work to the latter while the latter provide feedback by describing their needs. By having a faculty librarian serving as co-chair, the committee's work will be directed by a collaboration between librarian and non-librarian faculty with the aim of raising, investigating, and solving problems together. Such a model of committee governance would be much closer to the regular and valuable collaborations between librarians and non-librarians in teaching and research at the University.

#### Expectations:

Having a *faculty* librarian co-chair a *faculty* committee that is dedicated to library issues provides our committee with a sustained and guiding perspective of a librarian who can work with us over the course of a year to study an issue in depth, with the aim of more effective outcomes for our work. What that issue might be is for the committee to decide, but having a continuity of perspective, concern, and collaboration from meeting to meeting would provide our committee with greater direction and hopefully greater purpose.

At the very least, the committee will have a chance to evaluate this new governance structure over the course of the year and decide whether we wish to continue with it, amend it, or return to our earlier model.