Library Council Meeting

October 6, 2016

1. Introductions and Announcements

Attendees: Deborah Jakubs, Lisa Huettel, Phil Stern, Sumedha Gupta Ariely, Guo-Juin Hong, Ann Elsner, Tom Hadzor, Bob Byrd, Naomi Nelson, Tim McGeary, Doug Boyer, Jasmine Cobb, Nivedhitha Subramanian (Graduate student representative), Sean Bissell (Undergraduate student representative), James Roberts, Dominika Baran, Anthony Kelly, William Johnson, Tom Witelski, Manoj Mohanan (briefly on the phone)

The Library council charge was reviewed. We have a very broad cross-section of people on this council, lots of different perspectives. Our role is both advisory and as ambassadors for the Libraries.

1. Review of the charge and responsibilities of Library Council (Jakubs, Huettel)

We try to use the agendas to both solicit advice and show cool new things going on in the Libraries and to alert you to our challenges. Feel free to speak up and give us feedback. One quick thing we need advice on: after 7-8 years, the Libraries have been invited back into the new faculty orientation next week with Shawn Miller from CIT. I wanted to ask you as Faculty are there particular things about the libraries you wish you had been told when you just arrived.

1. Engage, Discover, Transform: Duke University Libraries’ Strategic Plan, 2016-2021

A few years ago, we held something called a Seminar on the Research Library that was a year-long investigation on the Library. We tried to include as many staff in that discussion, we had speakers, administrators, we were prepping for the strategic plan throughout that year. We asked every department to write an annual report. People were asked about achievements and challenges and resource needs. Generally, we do our strategic planning in concert with the University so that our plan reflects the directions that the University has indicated are important for the next 5 years. The University’s strategic plan will be approved by the Trustees in their February meeting. The plan that you have in front of you is the product of the work of a team using input from every single department of the Libraries and through consultations with others. Ann Elsner was the representative from the Executive Group on the Strategic Planning Team. This is not a traditional strategic plan. This is a more integrated kind of plan, which also makes it a little difficult to implement. Each department needs to identify things that play into these goals.

I doubt we will make changes to this plan once we see the plan for the University, but we have been asked to see the plan, and so we may see some part of the plan in the University’s.

We did a swab analysis of what’s happening externally and internally, we looked at what’s happening regionally, nationally, through various research topics. The group was very energetic and motivated. One of our key concerns were our guiding principles (see attachments). They are the lens through which we look at the rest of the plan. We have really focused on that both as a library culture and as an operational plan at the library. These plans are being integrated, and are an opportunity to influence how we develop our actions steps as part of the strategic plan. Within our plan, our goal was not to have a 100-page document, but rather have something broad enough that people could see themselves reflected, but narrow enough that we could take action through this.

We met and went through different elements of the plan to make sure the staff could really see themselves. In some cases, it requires interpretation, in some places it is pretty cut and dry. The Executive Group will take this and operationalize it. This is a multi-year plan. Trying to temper expectations – budgets are not exactly flush within the next couple of years, and the Library is no different. EG will be talking in the next few weeks. Our budgets are due in mid-January. We go in early in the budget process. Our goal will be within EG to take a look at our plan, looking at this, how we wanted to come up with specific action steps that we will then attach to these goals. We will then filter out to the departmental level.

The reaction from the staff is positive. Staff is anxious to know how the University planning folks will take it. Our goal always is – our plan should be a reflection and should try to achieve what the University’s plan is doing. If the University comes out with a plan that is completely different from what we are providing, then we will need to go back and change the plan to reflect that.

Robert Byrd’s 9 department heads are having a retreat next week to discuss the strategic plan, about how our activities and actions interrelate and seem to accomplish these goals. We in collection development are thinking more of a non-local collection. We are talking about how we provide access to collections, regardless of where the materials are. Collection building is very much user-focused, but that doesn’t mean that it isn’t shaped by the teaching interest at Duke.

We hope you see through this plan a focus on users, Faculty, students. We try to always pay attention to what user needs are. The current strategic plan will act as a guide as to what we will try to raise money for. There are signs of things that are important to us, like Lilly. As we operationalize these goals, that’s going to suggest some things on the fundraising side as well. We are trying to create the resources to do that. On the development side, this is an important tool.

1. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (Ann Elsner)

As you hopefully noted in the strategic plan, one of the guiding principles is what we used to create this is the issue of diversity. We have a very passionate staff. The students that study here, the faculty we engage in. This is a topic of great concern that has raised a variety of great emotions. Over the year, the Libraries had a diversity focus group. They would offer programming, highlight awareness of different cultures, different nationalities. Some of the folks were tired or were moving into other things. Now we have the opportunity to revisit this. We got a group of interested staff together to see what would a new group look like? What would their role be?

We are very cognizant of the fact that time is precious. We wanted a group that could make suggestions to EG for us to assign projects and really make a true commitment. Deborah has been a true champion for this. She has supported this. We want felt very strongly that this council should have a very strong reporting relationship with Deborah. There is that direct line. This council has a lot of importance within that organization. We are soliciting names and nominations from staff of individuals interested in serving on the council. It is a statement of interest. EG will choose 6-8 staff in organizing outreach conversations. This is a staff initiative. We want to see what this looks like. Open it up to be a little bit more inclusive of the groups that are representative and that we serve. Emily Daly is our president of the librarian’s assembly, another hat of hers is the head of our assessment of user experience. She works very closely with undergrad and grad students so we feel very confident about how we would be able to draw on these experiences.

The idea is that the council does not bite off more than it can chew. These three terms - diversity, equity and inclusion will have definitions. We want the council to identify one or two key topics that we could focus on action planning and activities. We would work with them to develop on what does this mean – programming, planning. It could be bringing in speakers, events with staff, relying on existing resources within the university as well as within the library. That is where we are right now. These are our efforts to engage on a different level. We have a number of staff that are very vocal in their support of this program. This is a staff appointment, so it will be more of an organizational perspective. This is one of the guiding principles for the strategic plan. It’s not going to be pigeonholed and left up to a different group. This is more staff enrichment, enlightenment, conversation. A conversation about collection would not come out of this group.

One of the issues with research libraries is recruiting, and the pipeline of having more underrepresented groups. We want our staff to represent our groups. How do we bring more people into the libraries with different backgrounds from different groups? What strategies could we adopt? Internships? Visiting librarians?

1. Agenda brainstorming

We typically have a variety of agenda items. Learning about initiatives, learning about ongoing projects, learning about other things coming up in other areas. One future agenda item was already brought up. Here are a few more:

* A question was posed about indices for our outside of Duke community engagement, related to one of the goals laid out in the strategic plan/charge. In what ways we connect to the non-Duke community, what we allow and not, and what are the challenges involved. How Duke Libraries define responsibilities vis-a-vis the rest of the university to relate/interact with the non-Duke community (town vs. gown and internationally – in terms of access, open sources and resources, etc. ) is a challenging but important/interesting question – and she thinks cuts across multiple domains of inquiry. For example, what will the role of universities and libraries in the future be as information access and technology changes in terms of: who accesses information and in what ways- virtual, physical, etc; what information will have to be free vs. not; how institutes of higher learning and libraries as repositories of knowledge evolve as globalization moves forward and inequities change and morph, etc.
* Talking about user experience, emerging technology, digitizing. One thing seems to be getting lost as we move towards digitization: the old-fashioned experience of going to a library to browse. Technology could also connect to that. We could have a screen where you could scroll through to choose a book. It seems like we’re creating a place for people to meet or places to study. Are we thinking about that within this?
* How do we then make the Library a library and make it not for studying or sleeping. How do we give it that irreplaceable human library thing? It is a core experience.
* The library catalog is far from ideal. It would be useful for the council to be educated on what some heavy users think about it. When you do shelf browsing, it’s not just looking at the titles. I’m pretty irritated at LSC. It’s really impacted my way of doing research, picking up the book, browsing the book. I’m interested in the nuts and bolts. I’d like to be able to look under the hood.
* Digitally picking up the book and actually looking at it would be good on some way. What would that technology look like? I always look at the table of contents.
* Mark record is the way the catalog is organized. Old card catalogs were a specific format that machines could read. Our databases were created way after that. We tried to cram an older technology format into a digital one and it’s never been perfect. I would love to have a group come in and talk about what this project is doing. A speaker can come talk about Link Data. In terms of virtual reality. Potentially, a fairly practical in-between could be augmented reality. You could do things where you geographically tie places around the Library to searches on the phone. Like Pokémon Go. There are some interesting possibilities in that regard.
* Does the Library have any connection with Sakai? It’s not really that obvious when you’re using Sakai. Instead of me uploading my connect to Sakai, it would be great if I could link to possible materials. (This is already done with library guides.) That could be something added to the faculty orientation. Ways to make things more intimate and obvious. Ways to have faculty connect easier to the site.
* It would be great if we could spend some agenda time on the diversity topics. So far, recruitment, collection and operations were mentioned. I just learned about online streaming video - it’s proved especially helpful with partnerships with disability services for students. We might want to talk about it. If there would be opportunities for us to make very specific recommendations about specific collections or recruitment. There are times when I have to bring students to see objects that are not exactly what I need available. It would be great if someone could work with on bridging the gap.
* Any updates about Lilly Library could be on our agenda. We have received an updated feasibility study, an addendum to the original study that has a difference on the size and scope of the project. We need to have a meeting with Tallman Trask about the funding for the project, and how much we would be expected to raise. In the case of the rest of the expansions, we are expected to pay about half of the total cost. We wanted to make sure that was still the case. Given the expansions the University’s been doing, and the bigger than usual projects going on, it might not be the case. Bob and Deborah have been discussing this will Tallman. The fact that we’ve gotten this far shows his interest in this project, but we don’t know. Tom has raised $60M for the libraries, our goal was $45M so who knows? We will add that to the agenda.
* From the undergraduate perspective, we would like to learn more about facilities - more students use the library webpage and use the library for studying. A lot of things are going on online. I have lot of classes where instead of getting a book, they will scan and put it on Sakai.
* Jimmy – Organizationally, how does data + visuals fall? It’s a predominant way that the econ dept. interacts with the library. We’ve had good interaction so far. It might be helpful to make faculty aware of it.
* Regarding browsing, one app I’ve seen was an iPad app called Browsing. It doesn’t do it for books but it does it for journals. And the print book reserves for classes. It works, but it’s kind of “icky”. I’d like to hear about some kind of assessment of how Edge is working and being used. In connection with one of the guiding principles, I’m wondering if the library has any connection with Scholars@Duke. I’m hoping you can improve Scholars@Duke.
* Revisiting a topic came up before regarding Rubenstein. The question of diversity within the collections. We would like an overview of the strategy of collecting at Rubenstein. What strategies go into collecting unique items? How do we decide what the Rubenstein focuses on?
* Traditionally, we have been going on some field trips. Behind the scenes, under the hood. If there are any particular things you’d like to see, I find those visits on site and hands on very informative. We’ve done trips to the Library Service Center before but we could do that.

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 pm.