Library Committee Annual Report, 2018-19

May 31, 2019

Chancellor Alexander Cartwright
c/o Chris Riley-Tillman, Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness
105 Jesse Hall
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO 65211
Attention: Michelle Marsden

Report submitted by Denice Adkins

Library Committee

Charge: The charge to the Library Committee is to make recommendations to the provost concerning the continued improvement of the library collection and library services, and academic matters related to library policies and programs.

Committee Members
- Denice Adkins, Chair, Associate Professor, School of Information Science & Learning Technologies
- Carla Allen, Clinical Coordinator, School of Health Professions
- Jenny Bossaller, Associate Professor, School of Information Science & Learning Technologies
- Stephen Karian, Associate Professor, English
- Justin Legarsky, Associate Professor, Electrical & Computer Engineering
- Thomas Reilly, Assistant Teaching Professor, Biochemistry
- Eric Sandvol, Professor, Geological Sciences
- Iris Zachary, Assistant Research Professor, Health Management & Informatics
- Tamara Inge, Library Specialist Senior, Engineering Library (Staff Representative)
- Matthew Swan, Missouri Student Association Representative
- Natalie Rice, Missouri Student Association Representative
- Elita Nelson, Missouri Student Association Representative
- Michelle Zigler, Graduate Professional Council Representative

Number of Meetings
The Library Committee met 4 times during the 2018-19 academic year (November 7, February 19, March 13, April 17). In addition to this, Library Committee members also met with Provost Latha Ramchand (January 29), attended a meeting of the Campus Space Utilization Chair, Director of Space Planning and Management, Library Staff (December 7), attended a meeting with a concerned student from the College of Engineering (January 31), and attended a library meeting with university space consultants Shepley Bulfinch (April 4).

The Library Committee Chair also served as a liaison to the MU Health Sciences Library Advisory Council. One member of the Library Committee (Adkins or a substitute) participated on the MU Library’s Collections Steering Committee, which met every two weeks during the academic year. The Collections
Steering Committee makes decisions about how to spend the Library’s collection budget, including decisions about which journals and materials we can no longer afford to support due to inflation and a static library budget.

One member of the Library Committee, Mathew Swan, was chair of the University Libraries Student Advisory Council (ULSAC). ULSAC was formed to advise the University Libraries on important matters of concern to students and facilitate communication between student organizations and governments. One of ULSAC's charges is to oversee the spending of the library’s portion of the Student Services Enhancement Fee. ULSAC met every month during the academic year.

**Major accomplishments or highlights**

- **Accomplishments**
The Library Committee, in conjunction with university librarians, prepared a draft open access statement, which was submitted to the Faculty Council’s Academic Affairs Committee Chair in May 2019. We are heartened by UM System President Choi’s work in establishing a system-wide Open Access Publishing Task Force, with their role to “embark on a path to a more sustainable model of scholarly communication and library collection costs” (UM President email, 4/5/2019).

The Library Committee prepared a draft statement regarding the rumored closure of the Engineering Library. Since the initial concerns, Engineering Dean Elizabeth Loboa and Vice-Provost for Libraries Ann Campion Riley have engaged in several discussions regarding the future of the Engineering branch library.

The Library Committee met with Provost Latha Ramchand on January 29, 2019 to deliver a letter expressing our concerns about budget and space uncertainties and our support for library services and collections.

**Concerns**

- **Space**
The work of the MU Library suffered major disruptions this year due to space decisions made without full consideration or understanding of the impact of those decisions. Taking library space for a campus welcome center means that the personnel, services, and/or items in that space have to move somewhere, and the library building is currently at maximum capacity. The eventual decision to fund construction of the Depository add-on is welcome, but the uncertainty surrounding this was unnecessary.

Uncertainty and rumors surrounding the future of the Engineering Library also caused disruptions to Engineering students and faculty. Instead of making their own valuable contributions to their fields, or learning and studying, faculty and students were thrown into confusion when rumors about the Engineering library being closed were neither confirmed nor denied.

The Library Committee notes that to engage in best practices regarding library space, the University Librarian, the Library Committee, and library staff need to be involved in space decisions proactively, at the beginning of the conversation.

- **Budget**
In the past 10 years, MU Library’s budget has been reduced by 18%. However, the costs of books and journals increase every year due to inflation and journal price increases above the rate of inflation.
Nonetheless, the library provides excellent value for the money, providing $2.51 worth of services for every $1 spent. The Library has gone past eliminating “nice to have” resources, and is now having to cut resources that are essential for research and teaching.

For two years, the Provost has provided about $2 million in “bail out funds” to help MU Library pay for extensive journal packages, and for two years, the funding for this has not been provided until well after the dates by which we need to renew those contracts. When the library operates in the absence of a meaningful budget, they cannot make the most cost-effective decisions for collecting resources.

Another issue noted by the Library Committee is the difficulty of making external professional hires, due in part to non-competitive salaries.

The Library has been very careful in stewarding university resources to provide the best quality services to faculty, staff, and students. Like every other unit on campus, the MU Library needs a consistent budget and clear communications of priorities from university administration.

Recommendations for next year

- **Items to follow up on:**
  - This year, we had intended to schedule a meeting of the Library Committee with the Dean Elizabeth Loboa of the College of Engineering to discuss the uncertainty inherent in the future of the Engineering Library. This is recommended for early in Fall 2019.
  - The Library Committee also presented a petition to the Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee for Faculty Council, asking for a university-wide and hopefully system-wide open access resolution. This is recommended for follow-up during Fall 2019.

- **General advice for the next chair**
  - Scheduling meetings at a mutually accessible time was very difficult. Using Zoom or other telecommunications products for some meetings may allow more member participation. However, there is value in having some meetings take place in Ellis Library itself, and/or in departmental libraries or off-campus library facilities.
  - It may be advisable for the Library Committee to meet in different campus libraries and tour various facilities next year. This active engagement may help the committee better understand the depth and degree of services provided by the MU Library.
  - Because the Library Committee is a group that advocates for library staff, resources, and materials, I found it helpful to meet with Library Director Ann Campion Riley on a regular basis during the academic year, and especially prior to committee meetings, to get a sense of the Library’s situation. The next chair may also find this practice useful.

- **Advice for the Chancellor’s Office**
  - We recommend that a member of the University Library Student Advisory Committee serve on the Library Committee each year, to help coordinate events between the two bodies and ensure that student concerns are represented on the Library Committee.

Attachments to this document:
1) Open Access Policy Proposal
2) Letter to Provost
3) Statement on the Future of the Engineering Branch Library