



Library

COUNCIL ON THE LIBRARIES

Wednesday, 17 February 2021

12noon – 1:00pm

Minutes

Present: Castelot, Chor, Davis, Glueck, Goodman, Green, McCabe (chair), Mehrer, Parker, Rose, Singh, Webb

Apologies: Clarke (Sabbatical), McDonald, Skinner, Snyder, Tell

Library Leadership Team: Chamberlain, Peterson, Taxman

1. Welcome
2. Minutes of meeting held on November 18, 2020
The minutes were approved as written.
3. Matters arising from previous meeting
None.
4. Library Budget – Update and Forward Planning
Sue Mehrer, Dean of Libraries

The Dean reported that the FY22 budget was approved by the College. For FY22, the Library was expected to cut a further \$200K from its subvention budget. With this latest budget cut, the Library will have had to accommodate an overall permanent budget decrease of \$2M over five years. The majority of the budget cuts had been met by not filling existing vacancies, which was a deliberate strategy to protect employment of existing staff. In the same 5-year period, the Library has seen a reduction in overall staffing by 30 FTE, which has put increased pressure on existing staff. For the FY22 budget cut, the Library had put forward plans to meet its target from the collections and student employment budget in order to avoid a further reduction of its overall staffing capacity.

The Dean explained that the proposed changes to Kresge and Paddock libraries were part of planning for the future of Dartmouth library services in the context of significantly reduced financial resources, a decrease in usage of physical

collections and adjusting staffing capacity to library operations. The planned changes would bring together circulation services and core collections at Baker-Berry Library, with lesser used collections to be housed at the Library's offsite shelving facility in Lebanon.

The council members expressed their grave disappointment and criticism in relation to the planned closure of the Kresge and Paddock libraries. Several members expressed frustration that the Council was not consulted on the plans in advance. Members felt they could have offered valuable insight into the impact of such closures. Members further highlighted the important role these libraries have played for their respective departments and the benefit of adjacencies for those communities. The Dean stressed that critical subject support by expert librarians would continue, as would investment in collections and information resources. The Library would be working closely with faculty and students to discuss ongoing support for their teaching, learning and research needs and explore opportunities in relation to space for community and engagement, which was clearly a critical aspect.

The broader discussions raised important questions about the role of the council and how to make the engagement more meaningful. Suggestions included early notification of potential changes so council members could provide critical feedback to inform decisions; advanced meeting materials to support more in-depth discussions; and ways to advocate for the Library and its central role to the Dartmouth mission.

It was agreed that both the discussions in relation to the planned changes for Kresge and Paddock libraries as well as the role of the council would be continued at the next meeting.

5. Any other business (AOB)

None

6. Upcoming meetings:

- March 17, 2021
- April 21, 2021
- May 19, 2021