



Library

COUNCIL ON THE LIBRARIES

Tuesday, 25 January 2022
12noon – 1:00pm

Minutes

Present: Castelot, Chor, Clarke, Davis, Donovan, Gleiser, Goodman, Marinho Ramos, McCabe, Mehrer, Parker, Quint, Singh, Skinner, Snyder, Sunde, Tell (Chair)

Apologies: Cantor

Library Leadership Team: Chamberlain, Reynolds, Taxman

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed the Council and reminded everyone the next meeting would be on March 8th. The Dean introduced Kristen Rhodes, the new executive assistant to the Dean of Libraries, who will be supporting the Council going forward, and said farewell to former executive assistant Skip Cook.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on November 16, 2021

The Minutes of the November 16, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

3. Matters arising from previous Meeting

None.

4. Update on FY23 Budget Round

The Dean provided an update on the Library's FY23 budget round. Of the \$500k increase requested for the Library's collection budget, \$300k was approved. Mandatory increases for IT infrastructure were also approved. The Library's request for recurrent funding for the successful Historical Accountability Student Research Program (initially funded for 5 years through June 2023) was deferred as Dartmouth will be implementing a new budget process for IDE initiatives through the Office of Institutional Diversity & Equity (IDE).

The Dean further reported that the Board of Trustees at its meeting in November approved the capital project for a new Library Collections and Service Facility to house its growing physical collections under industry standard conditions, making it possible to steward and preserve Dartmouth's valuable collections for future generations.

5. Communication with Faculty Governance Structure: Preparing for Attendance at A&S Committee on Priorities in April

The Chair reiterated the Council's goal to improve communication with the faculty governance structure, and suggested the Council prepare a status report for the Committee on Priorities (CPr).

The Council discussed what they would like to address with CPr. Questions were raised about what the CPr typically discusses, what issues they address, and what influence they have. The Council indicated it would like to address concerns about the cumulative impact of budget cuts over the past 5 years. Comparisons/benchmarking with peer institutions may be useful for the Council to advocate for the Library, though as discussed at the previous meeting, such data is not readily available.

The Chair suggested the Council focus on the impact of the budget cuts, both in terms of what the Library can no longer do, and in terms of limitations it would put on strategic vision going forward. Questions were raised regarding the closure of Kresge and Paddock, the reduction of space, and the culling of collections. The Dean clarified that the Kresge and Paddock collections and services had been relocated to Baker-Berry Library, not culled. She further explained that space allocation across the campus is under the purview of the Provost and does not affect the Library's bottom line.

The Dean outlined the Library's strategic goals and highlighted the need for investment in growing and emerging areas, including: new areas of research with new collection requirements and appropriate staffing levels and expertise; supporting the Library to recruit and retain the best staff; meeting the demand/need for new information resources, particularly electronic resources; continuing ongoing development of infrastructure to improve discovery and access, which will require more developer capacity to participate in open source projects; and reimagining and upgrading spaces to align with changing needs and new ways of working.

It was noted that there was a broader context of budgets and funding at institutional level that the Council had no detailed knowledge of and that it was difficult to understand how to gauge the Library's situation without a fuller understanding of the larger institutional context.

6. Discussion with Provost Kotz

Provost Kotz joined the Council at 12:30pm.

The Chair asked the Provost for his thoughts on how the Council can more effectively and efficiently communicate with the faculty governance structure and the Provost's Office.

The Provost encouraged the Council to talk to the school Deans, agreed that the CPr was an appropriate body for the Council to connect with the A&S faculty governance, and suggested the Deans may be able to suggest other committees to engage. The Provost also reminded the Council its annual reports serve as a communication tool not only to the Provost but also to the Steering Committee of the General Faculty and to all faculty.

The Provost provided a brief explanation of how budget allocations are decided. When asked what the future trajectory looked like, and whether it would continue in the same direction, the Provost was cautiously optimistic that the next 5 year would be more positive than the past 5 years, in part due to the new Infrastructure Renewal Fund and the larger-than-anticipated endowment returns. The Provost also indicated that with the search for a new President, a new capital campaign may be coming in the next few years. The Council emphasized the damage of disinvestment couldn't necessarily be repaired by future budget increases. The Provost noted there are always tradeoffs in the budget, and cited approval of the off-site storage facility as a success that enables the vital growth of the Libraries.

When asked how he views the role of the Council and what would be the best use of the Council's time and energy, the Provost advised the Council to consider the future of information and the Library's role in helping people interact with information. What does the Library of the future look like? What is the future of the book? What are the services and spaces we need as an institution? The Chair explained that the Council was engaged in those conversations, but wasn't sure how to convey its findings/conclusions in a useful way. The Provost encouraged the Council to work with the Dean of Libraries, but also offered to meet with the Council annually and explore other ways to connect with the Provost's Office.

Before concluding the meeting, the Chair indicated the Council would continue these engaged discussions and start working on a document to present to the CPr.