



## COUNCIL ON THE LIBRARIES

Tuesday, 23 May 2023  
12noon – 1:00pm

### Minutes

Present: Castelot, Davis, Donovan, Glesier, Goodman, Mehrer, Olivetti, Paker, Singh, Tell, Webster

Apologies: Cantor, Chor, Hovis, Millman, Skinner, Sunde, Vereshchuk

Library Leadership Team: Chamberlain, Johnson, Taxman

Guests: Martin, Krueger

1. Welcome

The Chair and Dean welcomed everyone.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 18 April 2023

The Minutes of the April 18, 2023 meeting were approved as written.

3. Matters arising from the previous meeting

None.

4. Dartmouth Library Staff Petition to Unionize

Dartmouth received notice that a petition to vote was filed on April 18, 2023 by the [Dartmouth College Library Workers Union](#) (DCLWU). The notice stated that the DCLWU wished to be affiliated with the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME). This process is federally regulated and managed institutionally by Human Resources and the Office of the General Counsel. Human Resources created a [FAQs](#) webpage, which is updated as information becomes available.

As required by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), governed through the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), eligible library staff received a Notice of Election. The notice is also publicly posted and can be found [here](#). The election will be conducted by U.S. mail and the ballots will be mailed to employees in the appropriate collective-bargaining unit at 4:30 pm on Friday, May 19, 2023. All ballots will be commingled and counted at the Region 01 Office on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at 2 pm by videoconference.

5. Open Education Resources and Textbook Affordability – Update from the Working Group

Shawn Martin, Head of Scholarly Communication, Copyright and Publishing, and Stephen Krueger, Scholarly Publishing Librarian, joined the meeting to share work that has been done on open educational resources and textbook affordability. The Council subgroup including David

Goodman, Joe Castelot, Caroline Donovan, David Millman and Crawford Hovis worked with Associate Dean of Libraries, Research & Digital Strategies Daniel Chamberlain as well as Martin and Krueger to generate ideas for engagement and review progress. The working group discussed affordability issues with relevant administrative offices, particularly those with frontline student-facing responsibilities, including the First Generation Office, Money Matters Working Group, living and learning communities, Dean of the College, Financial Aid, and the Registrar's office. From these conversations, it seems issues of textbook affordability are not being systematically addressed. Students who express a financial need related to textbooks are referred to the Financial Aid office and/or encouraged to have direct conversations with faculty members. Council members expressed concern about putting the onus on students to approach faculty members about financial hardship.

The subgroup also considered what actions peer institutions have taken to address textbook affordability. Harvard, SUNY and CUNY, and Kansas State University identify courses with low or no textbook costs. North Carolina State University and Temple University have programs similar to Dartmouth Library's Open Education Initiative that support faculty/instructors through staff time and funding for adopting open educational resources. Barnard College's library has partnered with the first-generation/low-income program to create textbook collections dedicated to those students.

To get Dartmouth-specific data about textbook affordability, the Library is conducting a textbook cost survey. Preliminary results indicate textbook affordability is not an issue for all students, but there are disparities that are problematic. Nearly half the respondents indicated textbook costs would be a barrier if they purchased all required textbooks, but 43% report they only purchase required textbooks half the time or less. Two-thirds of the respondents reported they find unofficial free versions of textbooks online rather than buying them. Textbook costs caused 10% of respondents not to register for a specific course, and a handful of students reported changing majors/minors due to textbook costs. Department-specific data will be available for some departments, depending on the number of respondents in their programs.

There are many ideas for how Dartmouth could address these issues, from highlighting low/no cost courses to including textbook costs in tuition. Council members raised concerns that in trying to offer low-cost materials, faculty may be assigning lower quality materials. There was also concern that highlighting low/no cost courses for students to self-select does not address disparities and might not align with institutional goals. It was noted that different approaches have different goals and underlying principles. Defining our goals and principles first would be helpful in considering what actions can be taken by faculty, departments, and/or administration.

As next steps, the question was raised whether the Council should take the lead to develop and submit a proposal to the President and/or Provost. It was recommended that the Council coordinate with other faculty committees first. The Council agreed to keep issues of textbook affordability as a priority for next year.

#### 6. Library Strategic Planning: Values, Purpose, Vision, and Strategic Direction

The Dean provided an update on the second phase of the Library's strategic planning process. Council members Geoff Parker and Claudia Olivetti served on a strategy working group with Library staff to articulate a strategic direction for the Library. Building upon the purpose and vision developed during the Fall term, the strategy working group set out during the Spring term "to collaboratively design a transformative, achievable strategic vision that positions Dartmouth

Library as intrinsic to Dartmouth's scholarly aspirations and achievements." The approach to thinking strategically was rooted in the following principles:

- Strategy is about making choices. To succeed, an organization must choose to do some things and others.
- Every organization has a strategy. It may not be explicit, intentional, or successful – but they do have one. It's expressed in what gets done every day.
- Strategy is a bet on the future. There is no such thing as a perfect strategy. You can never know for sure if a strategy will work, in advance.
- Great strategic thinking combines analysis and creativity. Strategy should be rigorous and generative – we can analyze the world as it is and imagine how it might be different.

With these principles, the strategy working group explored four possible strategic directions, envisioning the Library as a learning cultivator, as a community collaborator, as a technical innovator, and as a research partner. From these possibilities, one theme emerged that aligned with the purpose and vision and incorporated elements of the other possible directions: Dartmouth Library – Research Engine: Powering Knowledge.

With this strategic direction, "research" is defined broadly, comprising all forms of inquiry and creativity. There are several key strategic pillars that will guide the Library in this direction:

- Act as full-cycle research partners. Researchers see the library as a place to collaborate with and learn from specialized experts who are available as thought partners for the entirety of the research lifecycle.
- Equip researchers with the latest digital tools & methods. The library teaches in the service of research—ensuring anybody who walks into the library gains the skills and knowledge to do the best research possible with the most modern tools available.
- Provide equitable & individualized guidance. We deliberately think about how to best serve individual students in new and dynamic ways in order to maximize our impact with the entire Dartmouth community.
- Be the conduit for knowledge creation. We firmly position ourselves as integral to all academic research that flows through Dartmouth.

Having articulated a strategic direction and key pillars, the next steps involve thinking about how we make all that happen. The Library leadership team together with program and department heads will build out specific actions to implement this direction.

Council members shared their thoughts about the Dartmouth Library as a Research Engine: Powering Knowledge. It was noted that resources are here for faculty, but finding them can be a challenge. Council members suggested that building something in the Library that creates a "one-stop shop" for researchers would be beneficial. Some Council members asked whether "research engine" could be applied to any academic library, and what about it is specific to Dartmouth. This direction for Dartmouth Libraries is tied to the Dartmouth experience – involving students in research, promoting curiosity, asking questions – all things that we heard from the Dartmouth community. Additionally, the strategic planning process, particularly engaging faculty and students, was equally as important as the outcome. Council members also asked how this strategic direction will percolate through the institution. Increasing the visibility of what the Library offers is a priority for the new Communications Manager. It was suggested that surveying perceptions of the Library now and after the strategic direction is rolled out may

be informative. As a priority topic for next academic year, the Council will be interested in following up on implementation of the strategic direction.

7. Any Other Business

None.

8. Thank you to AY22-23 Council members

The Dean and Chair thanked the Council members for their service before adjourning the meeting.