COUNCIL ON LIBRARIES: ANNUAL REPORT, 2003-04

The Council on Libraries (CoL) met eight times between October 2003 and June 2004, including a joint session with the Council on Computing in December 2003. CoL membership conformed with that prescribed on p. 4 of the *OFDC*, with additional meeting attendees as appropriate to the agenda. In addition, Cyndy Pawlek (Associate Librarian of the College), John James (Associate Librarian of the College) and Larry Levine (Director of Computing) regularly participated in meetings as invited guests. In this report, I provide a brief overview of our activities at those meetings. For those who are interested in learning more about our discussions, detailed minutes are available through our website: http://www.dartmouth.edu/~library/col/index.shtml.

During fall term, the CoL tackled a wide array of issues, most significantly: (1) new programs within the library for the support of teaching and learning; (2) the expansion of the electronic reserves program, including concomitant copyright problems and possible solutions; and (3) space designs within the Baker-Berry Library. Susan Fliss introduced us to RWIT, a collaborative center for Research, Writing and Information Technology that opened in a small room off the Novack Café in Baker/Berry at the beginning of fall term. RWIT provides one-stop shopping to meet undergraduate students' complex writing, research, and technology needs. Tutors are trained to help student clients acquire research skills, become adept at locating and evaluating information, develop multimedia presentation skills, and learn about library services, resources, and people who are available to help them. Richard Lucier and Jerry Rutter described the Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning (DCAL), a new program to begin in 2004-05. We also reviewed plans for redesigns of space in the Jones Media Center, the Baker/Berry home for the Education & Outreach Program, and for DCAL.

Our joint meeting in December with the Council on Computing covered three main topics. First, we continued the previous year's discussion of how to continue to maintain the publicly accessible computers purchased when Baker/Berry was constructed, but for which no maintenance budget was provided. We also discussed the success of RWIT and how to provide better information to faculty about copyright issues created by the use of PowerPoint, Blackboard, and Electronic Reserves.

During the winter, we continued to work on the issue of public computer replacement in Baker/Berry as well as remodeling plans for Baker/Berry, specifically the space to be occupied by DCAL. We also worked with library staff to increase student access to study space in Baker/Berry, and to prepare for the Libraries' participation in the LIBQUAL+ survey of user satisfaction (results expected early next academic year). Each meeting also included updates on two job searches within the Libraries, the Special Collections Librarian (new hire Jay Satterfield) and the Dean of Libraries / Librarian of the College (search still underway as I write this).

During the spring term, our discussions focused on scholarly communication. These discussions were led by Barbara DeFelice and Jim Fries, two members of the library staff. Over the course of three meetings, we learned what the threats and problems facing the current system for scholarly communication are, how it is that we find ourselves in this predicament, and how we might get out of it. Essentially, the ways academics communicate their results have grown more complicated in recent years due to (1) the explosion of new journals over the past few decades,

particularly in the sciences, technology, and medicine (STM); (2) escalation in journal prices; and (3) the development of information technologies that allow publication of material both in print and electronically. For example, in many fields, the top journals require authors to relinquish copyright to their work – and then ask the authors' institutions to buy back their work by subscribing to the journals at sometimes exorbitant prices. As a result, research libraries face three big problems: cost, access, and copyright: access is constrained by cost and restricted by copyright. To date, the Dartmouth library has coped with these pressures through cutting some subscriptions and creative consortia, but the gap between what is needed by our researchers and what we can afford grows ever wider. Something needs to be done, and soon.

After learning about the threats, we examined several models for dealing with them, and began discussing what Dartmouth might contribute to the issues. We learned about current and emerging economic models for scholarly publishing, the open access movement for journals in STM, institutional repositories, and emerging technologies for managing scholarly information. Barbara and Jim reviewed mechanisms individual faculty might use to combat big for-profit publishing companies, how publishers are reacting to those faculty activities, and how other institutions are responding to the crisis. We discussed whether Dartmouth should take a more active role both locally and nationally on the issue. For example, should faculty prepare a formal statement on the issue (as the University of California has done)? Should the CoL or another faculty group sponsor workshops or discussions on the issue? No decisions were made, but many ideas were vetted and we expect to return to this issue during Fall 2004.

Other topics covered during spring term included updates on the LIBQUAL+ survey, DCAL, RWIT, and the FY05 budget. Budget information available in June included the good news that the library was no longer in budget cutting mode, but rather FY05 was likely to be level-funded for library operations and increased ~4-5% above FY04 for information resources. Unfortunately, because of the spiraling cost of information resources, our effective purchasing power continues to decline significantly in spite of the modest increments to the budget. As a result, an important area of discussion for next year's CoL, and the campus as a whole, is likely to be dealing with ever-rising subscription costs – and the opportunities posed by alternative modes of scholarly communication to partially alleviate these pressures.

Overall, the CoL had a productive year during a time of considerable change in the Libraries. Richard Lucier completed his tenure as Librarian of the College at the end of January. John Crane became Interim Librarian of the College, and helped direct CoL activities for the second half of the year. Throughout, the CoL continued to represent the faculty in maintaining the excellence of our library system, and served as a sounding board for library staff regarding new services and changes in existing services. Most importantly, though, we began tackling the important theme of scholarly communication – a topic that is likely to occupy the Council for many years to come.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathryn L. Cottingham
Chair, 2003/04 Council on Libraries