

Mid-year report of Library Committee
Friday December 13th 2019
Prepared by Holly Dugan, chair (hdugan@gwu.edu)

Voting Members:

Jack Davey (EISA)
Asefeh Faraz (SON)
Heather Hoffman (GWSPH)
Roger Lang (SEAS)
Maureen McGuire-Kuletz (GSEHD)
Ken Rodriguez (Law)
David Scalzitti (SMHS)
Rhona Schwindt (SON)
Andrew Smith (CCAS)
Puja Telikicherla (CPS)
Tanay Wetenhall (CCAS)

Non-Voting Members

Geneva Henry, Dean of Libraries
Anne Linton, Director of Himmelfarb Library
Rene Stewart O'Neal, Vice Provost for Budget and Finance
Scott Pagel, Director of Jacob Burns Law Library
Yannik Omictin, Undergraduate representative

The Library Committee has been assigned with three charges this year:

1. Building a research university-level collection
2. Monitor funding for subscription and replacement of lost fee revenue
3. Explore collaboration with the University Library Faculty Advisory Committee to ensure faculty input on questions of open access and intellectual property for online course development.

In October, the chair met individually with Dean Henry and Directors Linton and Pagel to discuss each of the charges and to learn more about how they apply to the individual libraries and to the library system as a whole. Based on these conversations, Dugan asked the committee to meet three times this year (November, January, April). We held the first meeting on November 13th.

1. Building a research university-level collection

The analysis of our library-spending (as detailed in the 2013 administrative review and in subsequent reports from this committee in the past six years) document that our library budgets are well below those of our peer institutions; at the same time, the costs of journal and database subscriptions have increased. In 2016, library staff members were laid off in order to protect and maintain the collection while still meeting the call to reduce expenses. These positions have not been replaced. As the university participates in strategic planning, our committee advocates for a fully-funded budget and fully-staffed library system in order to ensure that we maintain a research university-level library system.

2. Monitor funding for subscription and lost-fee revenue

The Board of Trustees's decision in 2018 to change the \$100 student library fee from opt out to opt in) resulted in a dramatic reduction in revenue last year:

- a. Fee revenue dropped from \$68,000 in 2018 to \$680 in 2019 (Jacob Burns Law Library);
- b. Fee revenue dropped from \$1.2 million in 2018 to approximately \$63,600.00 (Gelman Library);
- c. And in 2018-2019 only 15 medical students opted to pay the fee (Himmelfarb Library).

We support the change in the fee system. We ask that this shortfall be addressed in other ways. The Provost's office supplemented Gelman's budget by \$300,000 last year with a commitment to increase this to \$675,000 by 2022. While generous, these additional funds did not cover the loss in revenue, which continues to compound this year. Since these fees paid for furniture and care of the facilities, we expect there to be an impact to student experience of the library. All of our libraries are among the most heavily used buildings on campus.

The law school and the medical school have supplemented the budget to cover this shortfall and to ensure that the journal subscriptions and databases it paid for are still available to students, however this has resulted in cuts to their collections in less extensively-used areas (often linked to specialized, high-impact research).

3. Ensure faculty input on questions of open access and intellectual property for online course development.

To the best of our knowledge, the University Library Faculty Advisory Committee no longer exists. From what we can discern, however, there are a number of constituents who could help contribute useful information to this topic. Staff and faculty at the law school have extensive expertise in intellectual property; staff and faculty in the medical school are also well versed in online education, including embedding librarians into online courses. Holly Dugan will attend a Library Council meeting in January in order to explore collaboration opportunities with librarians on all three charges to the committee. The committee will continue to explore this topic, while also engaging with the broader role of the library system in conversations about the strategic plan.

Holly Dugan also asked Provost Blake and President LeBlanc to assign an ex-officio member to the committee from the Provost's office since Rene Stewart O'Neal is no longer at GWU.