



Standing Committee on Libraries (FSLC) Interim Report 2022-2023

Presented by Rhonda Schwindt and Holly Dugan

Members of the committee:

<i>Schwindt, Rhonda*</i> , Chair	SON	Voting
<i>Dugan, Holly</i> , Co-Chair	CCAS	Voting
<i>Agnew, Hugh*</i> , FSEC Liaison	ESIA	Voting
Abate, Laura	Himmelfarb	Nonvoting
Eakle, Jonathan*	GSEHD	Voting
Echevarria, Mercedes	SON	Voting
Faraz, Asefeh	SON	Voting
Henry, Geneva	LAI	Nonvoting
Joubin, Alexa Alice*	CCAS	Voting
McGuire-Kuletz, Maureen	GSEHD	Voting
Pagel, Scott	Law Library	Nonvoting
Patel, Ashesh	SMHS	Voting
Peng, Yisheng	CCAS	Voting
Rodriguez, Ken	Law Library	Nonvoting
Scalzitti, David	SMHS	Voting
Telikicherla, Puja	CPS	Voting
Temprosa, Marinella	GWSPH	Voting
Thoma, Kathleen	SMHS	Voting
Warren, John	CPS	Voting
Whitt, Karen	SON	Voting

The committee met twice during the fall semester (October 29th and December 2, 2021). In October, the committee received its charges for AY 2022-2023:

- “(1) Monitor the libraries’ online presence.
- (2) Address any deficiencies of the physical library spaces (including HVAC).
- (3) Assess staff and librarian positions and the impact of a limited budget on these, weighing this against adjustments in library collections.

(4) Consider avenues for improving library funding.”

The chairs also worked closely with Dean Henry and Directors Scott Pagel and Laura Abate to discuss challenges and issues connected with LAI (including Gelman, Burns, Himmelfarb, Eckles and the VA campus) and with the Scholarly Communications team to address an issue about online educational materials (discussed in detail below).

After discussion and clarifying questions, the committee has prioritized its work for the spring semester in order to focus on charges 2, 3, and 4, expanding charge 4 to include improving funding for open-educational resources and open-access research.

Facilities (charge 2)

Our libraries are among the most utilized buildings on campus and the uptick in usage this semester is exciting. Facilities issues continue to be a concern. Repairs to the roof and resealing of windows have improved conditions but Gelman’s HVAC system requires immediate repair. Though there have been a number of improvements, Gelman Library’s HVAC system needs immediate repair. Repairs to the roof and to windows has improved issues with flooding somewhat but the HVAC system is still a top priority. Himmelfarb Library has had roof leakage and window leakage; a new roof was installed in August.

Budget (charge 3)

Hiring of librarians and staff has helped to meet the increased in-person usage of library facilities and collections. Yet there are still a significant number of backfilled positions (many from the 2016 budget crisis and the dramatic reduction of staff to mitigate financial shortfalls). LAI reports from this committee in [2018](#), [2019](#), [2020](#) and [2021](#) call attention to the systemic underfunding of the LAI system and its impact on our collections

The budget for LAI needs to be increased if GWU is to continue to pursue research excellence as one of its pillars.

Funding (charge 4)

Retention is of utmost priority. Though a number of positions are being filled, hiring takes time and there is tremendous competition from other Universities who are offering competitive salaries and flexible work. A number of our librarians have competitive offers from other universities. These conditions exacerbate longstanding, systemic issues in GWU’s approach to Libraries and Academic Innovation. In 2016, the University budget prioritized collections, which resulted in a 30% reduction in librarians and staff. Most of these positions remain backfilled and have not been replaced. New hires last year have allowed the university to deliver quality online learning and to facilitate faculty research. Hiring continues this year, however staffing remains a top priority. The LAI budget cannot be reduced further without a dramatic impact on either the quality of teaching or the quality of research, both of which are pillars of our university’s mission. We thus emphasize that the choice between staff or collections is a false one; we advocate strongly for hiring and retaining our excellent librarians and staff.

In addition to the issues outlined above, the committee strongly recommends an increase in resources to support open access academic publishing and open educational resources. These resources are needed in the short term to address issues, such as the Wiley/Proquest database. There is also a pressing need to address new requirements for open-access publishing of research. The current system of academic publishing is unsustainable and the time to develop new approaches to meet future requirements for open access publishing is now. **We encourage all senators to familiarize themselves with [GWU's 2015 Open Access Resolution](#).**

The [Wiley/Proquest database issue](#), in which Wiley pulled 1379 high-use titles a week before the start of the fall semester, emphasizes the connection between LAI budget and collections. For the spring semester, the committee will work with Librarians to advocate for increased funding for OER and OA resources at GWU. In 2022, the [American Association of Universities adopted the League of European Research Universities' Leiden Principles](#) (trust, diversity, openness, stewardship, and freedom). By 2026, [federally-funded research will require open-access publishing](#). If GWU is to remain competitive in securing research funding, a more robust research infrastructure (as well as faculty education on these issues) is needed.

Open Access

LAI has adopted a [theme of "Open"](#) for AY 2022-2023 and the committee has adopted a similar charge in partnership with them. The Wiley Proquest Ebooks Contract issue is a pressing one as the removal of the titles was only delayed until May 2023. At least six courses were impacted by their decision before the titles were restored to the subscription and will likely be again next fall. It is also likely that publishers will continue to adopt such practices that maximize their profit.

In the fall, chairs Rhonda Schwindt and Holly Dugan met with Irene Foster, chair of Educational Policy to discuss whether this was an issue under discussion. The committee strongly suggests that Ed Policy take notice of Wiley's decision. Holly Dugan gave a brief presentation on this topic at the October 21st meeting. The committee hopes to coordinate with other committees, including the research committee, in the spring.