
The University Senate

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Senate Library Committee (SLC)

April 15, 2025

Minutes of the Meeting

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[In these minutes: Library Update; Discussion of the Library Website and Search Functions]

PRESENT: Andrew Gallia (chair), Lisa German, Daryl Lawrence, Erik Loualiche, Laurie Moberg, Amanda Nelson, Angie Ohler, Louis Schwab, Wayne Soon, Scott Spicer, Holly Vanderhaar, Lynn Waterhouse, Keri Youngstrand

REGRETS: Michelle Driessen, Matthew Rosendahl, Angela Vetsch, Kyungsoo Yoo

ABSENT: Ryan Greenwood, Joan Howland, Walid Maalouli, Gourab Paul, Aaden Spencer, Maxwell Uphoff, Jane Welter

OTHERS ATTENDING: Kirsten Clark, director, Library Enterprise Systems, Jacob Sayward, associate director for collection development, Law Library, Laurie Cooper Stoll, director, University Senate Office

1. Welcome

Professor Andrew Gallia, chair, called the meeting to order.

2. Library Update

Lisa German, university librarian and dean of libraries, then provided a [U of M Library Update](#) to the committee. German began by expressing appreciation for the committee members and emphasizing her belief in shared governance. She praised her colleagues across campus libraries for their teamwork and highlighted how well the system works collectively. She discussed the libraries' involvement in recent conferences, notably the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Conference, where the University of Minnesota had a strong presence through posters, panel sessions, and presentations. Additionally, the university hosted a cohort from the Association of Research Libraries' intensive leadership program, offering programming on mentorship, library finance, donor engagement, maker spaces, interdisciplinary research, and more.

German shared a collaborative project involving a virtual swine farm for veterinary students and highlighted media coverage of the Performing Arts Archive in Minneapolis–St. Paul Magazine. The seed library at Wilson Library is returning this year in partnership with the West Bank Community Garden. German also celebrated the release of several new open educational textbooks created through the university's affordable learning initiative, covering subjects like communications, economics, music, Spanish, biology, physiology, dermatology, and language instruction in Urdu and Hindi.

German concluded with an invitation to an upcoming screening and panel for the documentary *Change the Subject*, which explores how students and librarians collaborated to push for inclusive cataloging language. The session ended with a reminder about the May 21st grand opening of the new storage facility, acknowledging the extensive work and collaboration that made it possible.

3. Discussion of the Library Website and Search Functions

Kirsten Clark, director, Library Enterprise Systems, then spoke to the committee about the [Library System and Search](#). Clark began by discussing recent and upcoming developments in the University's library systems. She explained that her department manages large-scale software systems that underpin library services, aiming to streamline user experiences. These systems include Alma, which handles behind-the-scenes management like acquisitions and circulation; Primo, the public-facing library search system; Rapido, the interlibrary loan system; and Leganto, which integrates library materials with course content in Canvas.

Clark traced the evolution from traditional card catalogs to today's digital systems, highlighting how searches now include a broader range of resources, including materials from other institutions. Primo allows users to access both physical and electronic content and was updated in 2023 to support deeper integration, such as with Rapido. This change enhances user access by showing more comprehensive search results from the start and improving filtering options. Clark emphasized efforts to enhance metadata, especially for vendor-supplied content, and introduced new features like linked open data, which connects search results to authoritative external sources like the Library of Congress.

Regarding interlibrary loan, Clark detailed how Rapido has significantly improved the process by offering users clear, immediate options to request physical or digital materials from other libraries, including expected delivery times. She explained how "pods" of cooperating libraries help streamline this process with agreed-upon fulfillment standards. She concluded by noting that more updates are planned in the near future, signaling ongoing improvements to library systems and user experience.

Erik Loualiche raised questions about user demographics and usage tracking, noting differences between logged-in and anonymous users. Clark responded that users include faculty, students, and external researchers, but it is difficult to pinpoint exact usage patterns due to the multiple access points like course pages and integrations with other platforms. German added that while they do not have specific catalog access

statistics, usage is high with 6.4 million article downloads and 1.5 million ebook accesses, indicating widespread usage among logged-in users.

Scott Spicer discussed the impact of integrating external resources into search results, noting a significant increase in interlibrary loan (ILL) requests since the implementation of Rapido, with requests rising up to 180% in some cases. The visibility and ease of requesting materials through Rapido likely contributed to the spike, even if some users now choose ILL options over in-house materials, sometimes unintentionally. This reflects both an opportunity and a need for refinement in how results and request options are presented.

The committee also discussed the ongoing challenge of balancing broad search results with relevance to locally held materials, and how evolving tools and interfaces are aimed at addressing that. Clark emphasized the continual need for usability testing to serve a diverse user base with varying research needs. Angie Ohler highlighted a broader philosophical shift—from libraries emphasizing only owned collections to now focusing on accessible materials regardless of ownership.

German expressed gratitude for the improvements to the interlibrary loan system, highlighting how much easier it has become for users. She also shared concerns about the impact of grant losses on the library system, especially regarding Minitex, which helps transport collections around Minnesota. Wayne Soon echoed appreciation for the new interlibrary loan system, calling it impressive, but noted initial issues with requests not going through. Clark confirmed there were early technical challenges, especially in integrating multiple systems and campuses, but said many issues have since been addressed. She explained how feedback helped them identify and resolve gaps in the request process. Soon also suggested incorporating more special collections into the catalog, potentially with images. Ohler responded that efforts to digitize and enhance access to these collections were underway but were affected by funding cuts. Despite these setbacks, she emphasized the library's ongoing commitment to resource accessibility.

Loualiche raised concerns about whether students still receive training in using library systems. Clark and others confirmed that various forms of library instruction are still offered, particularly through courses like writing seminars and freshman orientation. They also mentioned subject liaisons, digital tutorials, and coordinated campus efforts to support information literacy. Finally, Clark highlighted the importance of usability testing and language customization within library systems to make them more intuitive and accessible for diverse users.

4. Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Gallia adjourned the meeting.

Laurie Cooper Stoll
University Senate Office