

LIBRARY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 4, 2009

[In these minutes: Letter to Provost Sullivan, Budget Update, Libraries Engagement in Scholarship – HarvestChoice, EthicShare, Project Bamboo]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Jay Hatch, chair, LeAnn Dean, Bill Sozansky, Juliette Cherbuliez, Isaac Fox, Jennifer Gunn, J. Woods Halley, Anatoly Liberman, James Orf, Nora Paul, Danielle Tisinger, David Zopfi-Jordan, Monica Howell, Jonathan Lundberg, Farzad Sadjadi

REGRETS: Jonathan Binks, Suzanne Thorp, Wendy Lougee, Owen Williams, Stephen Gross

OTHERS ATTENDING: Mary Beth Sancomb-Moran

GUESTS: John Butler, associate university librarian for information technology, Professor Susan Noakes, French and Italian

I). Professor Hatch called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

II). Members unanimously approved the December 3, 2008 minutes.

III). Professor Hatch turned members' attention to the revised Senate Library Committee letter to the provost, which members had been asked to review prior to today's meeting. He asked members if they were comfortable with sending this letter to Provost Sullivan.

A member stated that the letter was a good representation of the diverse viewpoints from members of this committee. Having said this, this member was hopeful that the committee would be comfortable sending this letter forward. Other members also made comments supportive of the letter. A member stated that the Libraries recently received the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) 2009 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award, and suggested this achievement should be included in the letter. John Butler distributed a copy of the press release highlighting this significant accomplishment:

<http://www.ur.umn.edu:16080/uns-archive/view.php?id=5280>.

Members unanimously passed a motion to send to the provost a version of this letter amended to include reference to the ACRL award.

IV). Professor Hatch reported that John Butler is attending today's meeting in Wendy Lougee's stead as she is attending a conference. Mr. Butler began by distributing copies of the University Libraries' budget reduction planning strategy for FY10. In addition to the mandated 1% recurring reductions, the Library, noted Mr. Butler, like other units, has been asked to plan for 3%, 5%, and 7% reductions.

With respect to the unallotment for FY09, the provost, when compared to other units, proportionately spared the Library's unallocation. This amounted to \$200,000, which the Library is returning to the University through funds from open positions this past year.

During December and January, the Library encouraged all Library staff to attend staff sessions, which were aimed at gathering input and ideas for budget reductions and efficiencies. Additionally, cross-institutional surveys are being conducted to see what shifts are taking place in higher education and to identify potential new models for operating under leaner financial bases. According to Mr. Butler, this has been a very collaborative and creative process.

The Library anticipates receiving more detailed instructions from central administration concerning its budget in mid February. In the meantime, the Library will continue to work on its budget reduction plans. It will strive to balance its core services and strategic priorities while focusing on areas where impacts will be felt the least, and where further efficiencies can be gained. All aspects of the Library and its operations are being looked at; nothing is sacred. The Library is also aggressively looking at how it can increase its external revenue support (e.g. grants, as well as revenue from its fee-based document delivery and research service operations).

A member asked whether the other CIC institutions dealing with the same financial constraints that the University is, and, if so, is the CIC flexible enough to look for collective solutions. Mr. Butler stated that many of the CIC institutions are dealing with similar issues. The fact that the Library has been asked to model 1%, 3%, 5% and 7% cuts suggests that it may not have to reduce its budget as much as some other large research institutions. The Library is anecdotally hearing about startling percentage reduction targets at some private institutions because of significant endowment losses. Institutions that have rarely had to retrench such as Yale, Harvard, and Stanford, for example, are being forced to curtail their spending. To a degree, the CIC is flexible, but there remain some localized policy barriers and budgetary model issues. The CIC Center for Library Initiatives has, in the past 3 years, demonstrated great capacity for collective action (e.g., Google Book Search project, consortial licensing, and Shared Digital Repository).

A member reported reading an article that dealt with the contractual arrangements between universities and Google, and asked Mr. Butler to comment on this with respect to the implications of "giving away" University assets to a commercial entity. Mr. Butler stated that this issue is not without debate. For example, one action initiated by the CIC in response to the Google Book Project was the establishment of the HathiTrust, a large-scale, shared digital repository aimed at bringing the vast collections of print books and

journals currently housed in individual libraries into the digital world for access, discovery, and preservation purposes. The CIC launched this effort, which has now been joined by the 10 libraries of the University of California system, and the California Digital Library. The University and other member institutions wanted the assurance of owning the digital copy without relying on Google. More information on this shared digital repository can be found on the CIC website at:

<http://www.cic.net/Home/Projects/Library/SDR/Introduction.aspx>

V). Moving on, Mr. Butler provided information on three initiatives, which highlight the Libraries engagement in virtual scholarship community development: EthicShare, HarvestChoice, and Project Bamboo. Before providing detailed information on each of these projects, Mr. Butler, using a series diagrams, provided the committee with the building blocks for understanding the details of each of these three initiatives.

EthicShare stems from a one-year grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in 2005 to develop a model for assessing scholarship and research support on a large research campus. The Libraries worked in collaboration with CLA to develop this model. In doing so, particular attention was paid to the perceived notion that library content, campus research services, space, etc. are fragmented. The goal of the project was to identify how the Library could bring greater coherence to the many different physical and virtual resources that support research. This assessment model was later leveraged and extended to the science technology and health science communities to gain a more comprehensive understanding of research support requirements across disciplines and the campus.

EthicShare is a website and database that enables scholars and students to discover and share high-quality research in the bioethics field (<http://www.ethicshare.org/>). The University of Minnesota Libraries, Center for Bioethics, and the Department of Computer Science and Engineering have now been awarded a planning grant (2006 – 07) and a pilot implementation grant (2008 – 09) by the Mellon Foundation grant to develop and deploy EthicShare. Currently, EthicShare is in its pilot implementation phase. More information about EthicShare can be found at University's Center for Bioethics website at <http://www.ahc.umn.edu/bioethics/research/ethicshare.html> and the Libraries' site at <http://www.lib.umn.edu/about/ethicshare/>.

In discussion about some of the specific services that EthicShare offers, such as linking to full-text publications, a member asked whether scholars or students at institutions that do not have a lot of journal subscriptions experience restricted access to information by virtue of their institution's limited subscriptions. At this point, access to a majority of full-text is highly dependent on the capacity of the institution to provide those resources, noted Mr. Butler.

Next, HarvestChoice, noted Mr. Butler, has a different focus in its support of scholarship but uses an underlying model and technology that is very similar to that of EthicShare. HarvestChoice is an international project that currently focuses on improving food production in sub-Saharan Africa, and is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates

Foundation. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and the University are leading this initiative collaboratively. Mr. Butler highlighted features found on the HarvestChoice website. More information about HarvestChoice can be found at <http://harvestchoice.org/about/harvestchoice/ataglance.html>

A member asked how would one know if the information on their website is reliable. Mr. Butler stated that this is where the virtual community model mentioned earlier comes into play. These virtual communities rely on an editorial board to monitor the content; similar to peer review.

In closing, stated Mr. Butler, the Library plays an important functional role in the development of virtual scholarship communities in terms of content selection, aggregation, and integration, preservation, curation, tool development, and collaboration. However, collaborative challenges and questions remain around hosting, sustaining, and contributing to these communities.

A member asked whether the Library is creating a template of sorts for these different virtual communities, which other disciplines could take advantage of. Mr. Butler stated that behind the scenes an extensive technology model for building these virtual communities is being developed. The plan is to create a common infrastructure that can be leveraged for multiple disciplines.

Next, Professor Hatch welcomed Professor Susan Noakes, French and Italian, who was invited to share information on Project Bamboo (<http://projectbamboo.org/>). Professor Noakes distributed a handout that described the project and its current status. Project Bamboo is also a Mellon Foundation funded project intended to encourage collaboration between institutions, and to make advanced computing services more available to researchers in the arts and humanities. Many faculty, noted Professor Noakes, work at institutions where there is no technology unit specifically trained to work with arts and humanists faculty to enhance their research efforts. Professor Noakes stated that her work with Project Bamboo has given her the opportunity to look at new ways of designing and implementing her research. Prior to her participation in Project Bamboo, Professor Noakes did not find it easy to find the range of computation consulting resources to facilitate her research.

Professor Hatch asked for clarification regarding what Professor Noakes means by computation resources. Does this terminology incorporate quantitative analysis? No, it does not mean quantitative analysis, stated Professor Noakes, but rather digital analysis that can be done on large-scale platforms.

A member requested that Professor Noakes provide the committee with a specific example of how Project Bamboo can benefit arts and humanists faculty. Professor Noakes provided the committee with detailed information about her project, the Scholarly Community for the Globalization of the 'Middle Ages' (SCGMA). Currently, according to Professor Noakes, no single university can provide an adequate scholarly community to accomplish SCGMA's research goals. Therefore, a mechanism for collaboration

among humanists, and library and technology professionals must be expanded to include researchers and research institutions around the world. Current tools such as email, blogs, and conferences/workshops are inadequate.

Given the scope of Project Bamboo, noted a member, at what point does it become the Internet all over again. Professor Noakes stated that the vision for the SCGMA project is to be a tool for carefully thought-through transformation of disciplines. Project Bamboo is meant to help this by incorporating and integrating systems for the assessment of academic quality. For example, the blogs for each project in the SCGMA project will be restricted to scholars that already have a minimum of 3 publications in a relevant field.

A member commented that the models highlighted today appear to be somewhat top-down and abstract. Has thought been given to building in variation into the models in order to see what works and what doesn't? Mr. Butler stated that buy-in for projects is always important, but another dimension to this issue is determining how sustainable can these communities be.

In light of time, Professor Hatch thanked Mr. Butler and Professor Noakes for their presentations.

VI). Professor Hatch stated that future agendas would have an "issues and concerns" placeholder. He encouraged members to use this time to bring forward issues that the committee should address.

Professor Hatch announced that he will go before the University Senate tomorrow, Thursday, February 5, to introduce the motion to have the Rochester librarian (currently Mary Beth Sancomb-Moran) included in the ex-officio membership of the committee. He noted that he would report on the outcome of this action at the March 5 meeting.

Hearing no further business, Professor Hatch adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate