

Notes from the Student Library Advisory Committee (SLAC) meeting on October 29, 2015

Student attendees: Marc Heinrich (CC), Sam Goldman (SOA), Carolyn Bratnober (UTS), Nolan Bensen (GSAS), Amritha Musipatla (SEAS, Ugrad), Stephen Johnston (Social Work), Nikul Harshad (SEAS, Grad). Library staff attendees: Damon Jaggars, Ann Thornton, Kathleen Dreyer, Jim Crocomo, Francie Mrkich, Meredith Levin, Barbara Rockenbach.

1) Facilities Issues and Updates

Damon Jaggars provided updates on facilities issues including:

- ~90 seats added to Butler Library over the summer (student comment: it is still difficult to find a seat in Butler).
- Water bottle filling stations are being installed in Avery, Butler, Lehman, and Science & Engineering Libraries in the next few weeks.
- Enhanced wireless in Butler stacks by partnership of Libraries and CUIT; see <http://tinyurl.com/pvlkye9> for Spectator story.
- Extended hours during midterms and finals in SEL and Lehman Library; see <http://hours.library.columbia.edu/> for listing of library hours.

Talk zones - are they working? Students suggest we just call "Talk Zones" on the 4th floor of Butler Library "Group Study" spaces. This would be clearer to students. Also suggested we put up signs in SEL, Lehman, and Business libraries about the availability of group study in Butler Library. Also suggested that we advertise the group study spaces on signs about extended hours.

ACTION: Library staff will clarify language describing group study spaces on the 4th floor of Butler Library and create signage advertising the availability of group study space in Butler Library as suggested.

2) Food Policy

Ann Thornton offered an overview of the food policy, citing the issues with enforcing the policy and finding a balance between those who want to eat everywhere and those who don't want food in their study spaces. The Libraries are reconsidering the existing policy about bringing food into Butler and asked for student input on this topic.

- Student suggestion - do a trial open food policy for a few weeks to see if students can take care of the food trash OR create one area for food with strict enforcement.

- Discussed the need to better explain why we have the policies we do. It is not about protecting the revenue created by Blue Java, which is minimal. It is about regulating the types of food which are consumed in the library to make sure smells and messes are contained. Spills and food messes tend to contribute to pests that cause damage to books and other library materials. There is concern on the part of Libraries staff that custodial coverage is not adequate to allow an open food policy. The Libraries receive as many complaints from students and faculty about food smells and sticky desks as we receive about the need for a more open food policy. It is a delicate balance.
- Another student suggestion - put cleaning supplies in the major reading rooms so students can take care of their spills and messes.

ACTION: Libraries staff will investigate the feasibility of locating cleaning supplies in reading rooms so students can clean up after themselves. Libraries administration will continue to lobby for increased custodial coverage while it considers what changes to make in food and drink policies in some library facilities.

3) Libraries Support for Students during Stressful Periods

Damon Jaggars, Barbara Rockenbach, and others from the Libraries explained what the Libraries does to support students during stressful times of the semester - massages from Stressbusters, study breaks, extended hours.

- Student suggestion - offer and better advertise research method workshops. These workshops relieve stress because they introduce students to more efficient research methods.
- Another suggestion - use student communication venues (email lists, newsletters, student spaces) to advertise library events and programs.
- All students were open to the idea of being ambassadors for the Libraries in getting the word out about events.
- Social media seems to be the most effective communication tool for students. Professors also a good conduit to get to students.

ACTION: Libraries staff will work with student leadership groups to use their communication venues to promote events and programs, especially via social media.

4) Libraries Engagement with Office of University Life Programming

Ann Thornton offered an overview of how the Libraries is working with the Office of University life on important student issues, such the Sexual Respect Initiative. There are librarians on many OUL working groups, and the Libraries is providing both print and

electronic versions (when available) of healing and resilience readings via the Sexual Respect Initiative website at <http://tinyurl.com/p64eh2l>.

5) Student questions and comments

- Nikul Harshad, representing grad engineering students, asked about the circulation of engineering books that are at ReCAP. Jim Crocomo explained that when the Engineering Library closed only sent low use items were sent to ReCAP. Higher use books were retained in other campus libraries, including SEL and the Mathematics Library. Nikul also mentioned that SEAS students are also interested in the Libraries purchasing more software to support their work. Jim suggested that student should sent requests for software purchases for the digital centers forward. The Libraries is always looking for this input.
- Carolyn Bratnober, representing UTS, asked for more adjustable tables and chairs for those doing a lot of writing. Chairs with arms are uncomfortable for long periods of time. This suggestion will be discussed with the Director of the Burke Library.
- Marc Heinrich, on behalf of CC students, wanted to know where after-hours scanners are located. There are two on the second floor of Butler Library and several in other libraries. Scanning facilities in the Libraries are covered here: <http://tinyurl.com/pmbvf6b>. Damon Jaggars mentioned that additional scanners will be added in several facilities for the Spring 2016 semester to replace photocopiers, which are being discontinued by Printing Services as a service at the end of the current semester.
- Amritha Musipatla, representing SEAS undergraduates, asked about lighting in Butler Library, Room 310 on the mezzanines. Is there a way for students to turn the lights on? She reports that they often are not turned on. Library staff will investigate why they aren't being turned on and rectify the situation. She also asked if it was possible for those using a reserve book to use it for more than 2 hours, if there were other copies available. This is a great idea but difficult to implement because library staff would not know if the available copies would still be available after two hours when a person checks a book out.