

STATUS AND FACTS

Library Strategic Planning: December 2009 Updates

The Library Strategic Planning Task Force was charged in April 2009, "to make recommendations to the University Librarian about current and future library priorities and opportunities for cost savings and revenue enhancements." The purpose was to initiate a formal process in gathering ideas for a library budget reduction to help the University address its financial deficit. The Task Force consisted of 14 members, seven faculty and administrators representing a wide range of disciplinary fields, and seven library staff. (See Charge and membership at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/StrategicPlanningTaskForceCharge.pdf>)

The Task Force spent the first two months developing general principles. These principles guided the work of the library members over the summer in generating specific recommendations and options. Some options were mutually exclusive; others were dependent upon the results of sequential actions. There was no single solution identified that could generate the 10% savings being targeted. This version of the draft report was shared with the faculty and administrator members of the Task Force in early September. Their reactions ranged from full support to complete dissent. The group did unanimously agree on some common recommendations, which formed the preface to this report. The report and preface were submitted to the University Librarian, Anne Kenney, in mid-September.

The Library Executive Group had a little over two weeks to complete the review process of the Task Force report. It submitted the final Library report, entitled, "Towards 2015: Reenvisioning Cornell University Library with Reduced Resources," to the Provost on October 1. The Task Force report (with its preface) was included as an appendix, since many of the recommendations included in the final library strategic planning report originated there. The Provost asked all the deans, including the University Librarian, to make two versions of the reports available for the Cornell community to read:

- a) A short summary report, available at <http://www.cornell.edu/reimagining/taskforces.cfm#summary>;
- b) A public copy, which was originally made available in print at Day Hall. With the Provost's approval, every library now has a copy.

On November 24th, the Provost and Anne held a public forum to discuss the Library's strategic planning report. During the public discussion, the Library and the Library Strategic Planning Task Force were first made aware of a report, "Minority Report," authored by two faculty members who served on the Library Task Force. The minority report contains some erroneous or misleading information as well some recommendations that were included in the Task Force report—and ultimately in the "Towards 2015" report—including reducing administrative and management overhead. These areas will be addressed in the context of the Bain Consulting report and review process.

In the weeks following the public forum, Anne and Library Executive Group have had many meetings with faculty, administrators, students, and library staff, to listen to feedback, answer questions, and provide clarification. We anticipate these efforts will continue as the Library moves from the confidential phase to public engagement and the vetting phase of the strategic planning process.

On Friday, December 18, 2009, the [Provost issued his response](#) to the twenty task force reports, including the Library report.

In terms of the Library, the Provost has requested the following:

- Develop a concrete plan to enhance resources devoted to collections and other scholarly resources.
- Initiate a planning process to explore the consolidation of some unit libraries. This process should provide for appropriate levels of participation from deans, faculty, and other relevant constituencies. Such a plan must also provide for maintaining an appropriate level of student study space. The Provost's Office will work with the Library and the affected units to determine how vacated space will be allocated.
- Proceed with the design of a plan for an appropriately-integrated budget process managed by the University Librarian which maintains effective participation by the colleges and schools.
- Continue to pursue shared collections and enhanced document delivery with other university libraries, including the library at Weill Cornell Medical College.
- Review programs, initiatives, and service functions to determine whether they have a demonstrable value that exceeds the value of reallocating these resources to collections and other scholarly resources.
- Participate with CIT, under the leadership of the new Information Technology Governance Council (ITGC), to develop a plan for academic computing.

The Library welcomes your suggestions and comments. Please direct them to libadmin@cornell.edu.

Sale of Uris Duplicative Collection to Tsinghua

Cornell University Library (CUL) and Tsinghua University Library signed an agreement on November 1, 2009 in which CUL agreed to sell 95,000 duplicative, single-volume monographs to Tsinghua, for a total price of \$895,000. One or more copies of the same title remains available either in the Olin/Uris complex or another Cornell library unit after the sale.

The decision to sell the duplicate volumes was made after consulting broadly with the community. Over the past year, the University Librarian discussed the potential sale of duplicates with the University Faculty Library Board, the Library Advisory Council, the Student Library Advisory Council, the administration, and in various forums for CUL staff. The Library's collection budget has not kept pace with inflationary pricing or with increases realized at many of our peer institutions. As a consequence, the Library's ranking among North American research libraries in terms of acquisitions support has declined from 9th to 20th in the course of six years. When faced with tough choices, we are choosing to acquire more distinct/unique titles over retaining fewer, duplicated titles. The Provost concurred with this approach when he approved the sale. In addition, faculty and students have asked that we retain more books on central campus. This sale will free up stacks space now occupied by duplicate titles for new acquisitions. Last but not least, CUL and Tsinghua have signed an agreement to promote research and other forms of academic cooperation. These duplicative books will serve as a core collection for Tsinghua's new humanities and social science library scheduled to open in 2011. There will be further collaborations with Tsinghua both at the university and library levels in the future.

The revenue will be used to compensate partially for the deep cut in the materials budget, and to expand access to materials that our users need. The Library will ask the Collection Development Executive Group to consult with faculty in developing recommendations on how to spend the sales revenue. The Library recognizes that there continues to be a role for some collection duplication to support curriculum needs. Many of the titles sold have one or more duplicative copies remaining in the Library system. If curriculum and research needs call for duplicative copies, the Library has a policy in place to meet such needs.

The Uris stacks are a structural part of the building, suitable only as stacks space. During the proposed fire safety project in Olin, the stacks in Uris will be used to house the collections that have to be displaced from Olin. Once the fire safety project in Olin is complete, the Olin/Uris collection will be re-mapped into one humanities-social sciences collection.

The Library plans to move the sold collection out of the Uris Library stacks during the winter break, when it will be least disruptive for our users. We expect to ship the books by the end of January 2010. Once the moving logistics are finalized, Anne will share the information with the deans and ask them to update the department chairs and faculty. We will also create signage to alert users as the moving activities take place.

The Library is committed to timely communication and will update staff of the developments. When parts of the Olin collection are moved into the emptied Uris space, there will be another round of communication to orient library users. Library public services staff and student employees will have up-to-date information and background facts to handle inquiries from the users.

Please direct questions and comments concerning collection moves in and out of the Uris Library to Kornelia Tancheva (kt18@cornell.edu). All other questions and comments should be directed to Xin Li (xin.li@cornell.edu).