

Annual report of Library Committee
Friday April 12th 2019
Prepared by Holly Dugan, chair

Voting Members:

Kimberly Acquaviva (SON)
Michael Cohen (CPS)
Valentina Harizanov (CCAS)
Maureen McGuire-Kuletz (GSEHD)
Ken Rodriguez (LAW)
Elizabeth Ruckert (SMHS)
Andrew Smith (CCAS)
Kathleen Thoma (SMHS)
Tara Wallace (CCAS)

Non-Voting Members

Geneva Henry (Libraries)
Anne Linton (Himmelfarb)
Rene Stewart O'Neal (Provost)
Scott Pagel (Law Library)

The Library Committee has been assigned with four charges this year (pasted below). Of these four, we have focused this year on the second one: monitoring funding for subscriptions and replacement of lost fee revenue.

We've held two meetings in October and in February. We plan to host one final meeting in late April. In addition, the committee chair (Holly Dugan) has met with Dean Henry (Gelman), Director Linton (Himmelfarb), and Director Pagel (Burns) to learn more about the strengths of the library and the role of student fees in past budgets. The committee chair also attended a Librarian's Council Meeting in November and has met with librarians in December and January in order to learn more about how this potential change in fee revenue impacts student experience, especially given the sharp cuts in staff made in the past five years.

We identified this charge as our highest-priority issue because of the potential for a serious shortfall in already over-committed budgets. The analysis of our library-spending (as detailed in the 2013 administrative review and in subsequent reports from this committee in the past five years) document that our budgets are well below those of our peer institutions; this is balanced with the increasing costs of journal subscriptions and for maintenance and repair (Gelman Library, for instance, is dealing with extensive HVAC issues that may threaten the stability of the collection).

Our libraries, however, remain some of the most vital and most-used spaces on campus. Library usage at GWU is incredibly high; even with all of the new places on campus to study, many students prefer the library. **They are vital spaces on campus and they are central to GWU and its academic mission.**

The loss of student fee revenue will impact student experience. Vice President Arbide's presentation at the November Faculty Senate meeting emphasized that volunteer giving remains a targeted area of

improvement; we now know that this is true for our current students, many of whom advocated for a removal of the fee from their tuition. This has resulted in a significant shortfall.

Jacob Burns Law library: **Student fees are down 99% this year (this year's budget amounted to only \$680 this year as opposed to \$68,000 last year).** Student fees have paid for purchasing books for the library; this is likely to continue for this year given the substantial cuts their budget has experienced this past year.

Gelman, Eckles & Virginia Science and Technology Campus Library: **Student volunteer gifts to Gelman's budget are down 95.3%.** Fees are down \$1,200,000 (which has been offset by \$300,000 added to the library budget); as a result, the library has lost approximately \$900,000 in student fee revenue). Fee revenue in the past paid for new chairs, shelves, and computers, as well as repairs to existing furniture and shelving units; it also funded renovations to study rooms, including adding additional electric service drops and book security systems. The loss in fee revenue will impact student experience since it funds these improvements to facilities.

Himmelfarb Health Sciences library: **only 15 students opted to pay the fee from SMHS.** Student fees pay for subscriptions to Access Medicine and Dynamed Plus, two resources that are used by students across the health sciences (though the library only receives student fees from students enrolled in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences).

The loss of these funds is dire and the effects will continue to compound in the coming years; we anticipate student contributions to be similar next year. As a result, the committee recommends the following:

1. **That the facilities budgets for the university libraries be centrally managed and funded through the facilities budget.** This is, as far as we can tell, the approach taken by most of our peers in the WRLC. This will help to address the shortfall of student fees in Gelman library's budget, which was used to improve its facilities.
2. **That GWU faculty senators become more educated on the role of the University's libraries in relationship to GWU's academic mission,** including the challenges facing each library (in terms of facilities, staff, and collections) so that faculty and librarians can work together on linked agendas;
3. **That library budgets be increased in order to cover the shortfall from the fee change.**

We recognize and support the reasoning for the change in student fee structures; however, these fees funded items that directly contributed to student experience and the loss of this revenue will impact student experience. We thus propose these three strategies to help mitigate the impact of this change in fees so that our libraries will continue to meet the needs of the university in the 21st century.

AY 2018-2019 Charges for Library Committee:

- Explore strategies for building a research university-level collection;
- Monitor funding for subscriptions and replacement of lost fee revenue;
- Explore collaboration with the University Library Faculty Advisory Committee to ensure faculty input on questions of open access and intellectual property for online course development;
- Continue follow-up on the 2013 administrative review of the library.

