

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting
March 24th, 2003
2:45 p.m.

Present: Karen Albertus; George Bergus; Ken Cmiel; Carolyn Dyer, Miriam Gilbert, Chair; Sarah Hess; Lauren McCarthy; Mike Noth; Yangbo Ye

Staff: Nancy L. Baker, University Librarian; Kelly Avant, Secretary

Guests: Geoff Freeman and Carole Wedge of Shepley, Bullfinch, Richardson and Abbott of Boston; Diane Machatka, FSG Space Planning and Utilization

Absent: none

I. Call to Order and Introductions

II. Space Consultant's Report

Baker reviewed the reasons for hiring the space consultants: storage issues and better utilization of space in Main and Hardin.

Wedge identified the following as recommendations for Main:

- Main Library has been acting as a storage facility for the branches, and is nearly full. Explore off-site storage (a module can hold 2.5 million volumes). Envision the storage building as a library service center with possible staff space, reading room.
- Main Library services should be relocated and integrated on the 1st and 2nd floors. Baker noted that consolidating service points makes it easier for people who come in to get better service. Wedge confirmed that there are many benefits including better staff collaboration as they become less fragmented.
- Special Collections, IWA, and Conservation spaces - create more space and a better environment, with a shared reading room and a seminar/classroom, while maintaining separate IWA identity.

Freeman noted that there is significant space in Main, and wants to bring a "gateway" concept to the building. Moving collections to storage is the only way to relieve and release the building. Life and activity need to be brought into the building by exposing users to media and technology when they enter, and moving study spaces and collections higher in the building.

Wedge moved on to Hardin, noting that generally the same themes apply as Main, but the architecture creates more of a problem.

- A major idea is to take back the stairwell that currently bisects the building. Gaining this space would enable current services on the third floor to be reshaped into a service hub, also change how people enter the library.
- Explore moving simpler technology tasks from the Information Commons to the third floor/reference area, thus leaving the Commons for more complex technology
- Create better staff spaces, currently scattered all over the building
- Reshape the first floor, possibly with 24 hour study, and some sort of service area

Committee members had several questions:

How would retrieval from an off-site storage unit work? High-density storage at other universities was described. Loss of browsing capabilities was discussed but when weighed with other factors such as preservation and guarantee of availability of materials, it was felt to be an acceptable loss. Although possible sites for this facility are unknown at this time, it was discussed how the facility needs to be at a site with flexibility for growth, in case more modules need to be added in the future.

For the recommendation to combine service units in Main, a committee member wanted to know what “service” encompassed. Wedge explained that at other universities where space redesign has been implemented, service elements include combining computing, reference and media.

Staffing concerns were raised. The storage facility would have to be staffed. But Baker noted that consolidating service areas in both buildings would allow more flexibility with current staff, allowing the Libraries’ to use staff differently/to redirect them.

Freeman noted that if the recommendations are accepted, more issues would need to be explored by the Libraries: what are possible relationships with the ITC and academic technologies; what would bring faculty into the library; what is the next generation of the Arcade and Commons.

The consultants will next put their recommendations into a report and present this report to the University before the end of this fiscal year.

III. Adjourned at 3:52 pm

Remaining meeting: Monday, April 21, 2:45 - 3:45 PM, 2058 LIB (classroom on second floor, northeast corner)