

ANNUAL REPORT

University Standing Committee: University Library Committee

Academic Year Covered by Report: 2020-2021

Date Report Submitted: June 30, 2020

Report Submitted by: Dr. John Gadsby

Number of times committee met: 4

Name of Chair Elect (if known): Not Known

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION ITEMS/ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEE

The University Library Committee (ULC) is a Standing Committee of North Carolina State University. In 2020-21, its 18 members included 12 faculty members, two staff members, two graduate students, two undergraduate students, and an ex-officio representative from the Association of Retired Faculty. The Senior Vice Provost and Director of Libraries also served as an ex-officio member.

The ULC advises the Provost and the Director of Libraries on issues of library policy related to the allocation of collection funds, the allocation of library space, and the development of resources for instruction, research, and the general program of library service to the institution as a whole.

COVID-19 and Libraries Academic Continuity Services

The committee devoted substantial time at each meeting to review and provide feedback on proposed safety measures and changes to Libraries services required in response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2020-21 academic year. As regional and campus conditions permitted, the Libraries was able to expand the hours that the buildings were open to the university community, with a goal of returning to pre-pandemic building hours by the start of the fall 2021 semester.

Technology lending continues to be a focus of the Libraries' academic continuity activities. Access to the technology required to access remote teaching and learning content is a continuing challenge for many members of the university community. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020, the Libraries rapidly converted all technology lending devices such as laptops to long-term loans to support students and instructors who needed them for online learning. We used one-time emergency funds to purchase additional laptops, webcams, headsets, and document cameras and made them available for long-term lending.

The ULC reviewed the Libraries' **faculty support** efforts. Libraries staff meet regularly with academic support staff from across the university to address urgent issues related to academic continuity that require coordination across the university. Librarians were available for research consultations, digital media support, and in-class library instruction in this year's hybrid and virtual environment.

The Libraries developed new modes of **student support** and efforts aimed at creating engaging virtual activities. The Libraries usually relies heavily on our spaces to connect with students during orientation but had to pivot this year to create a variety of engaging online experiences. We updated the website to highlight the resources most in demand in a virtual learning environment. We also connected with students and parents on live-streaming platforms, providing informal opportunities to connect with Libraries staff in real time. We assigned Personal Librarians to all first-year and transfer students, reaching out personally to every student several times during the semester to help them feel more connected to the university and offer resources and support.

Library Collections Budget

The Committee approved the Libraries' plan for allocating the collections budget of \$11,600,000. Inflation continues to reduce the Libraries' buying power. Endowments and one-time funds help to fill the gap, but consistent annual shortfalls remain a concern.

The COVID-19 pandemic's effect on enrollment and its larger economic impact on the global economy are uncertain at this time. The Libraries shared information about how we would manage a possible budget reduction while maintaining access to critical research collections. The Libraries also shared strategies it has employed to increase the sustainability of cost models for accessing journal content, including consortial purchasing, using the collective influence of the research library community, and supporting open access publishing.

Supporting Open Research and Scholarship

The committee discussed the Libraries' expanded investment in "open interventions" in infrastructure, projects, and initiatives to improve the cost sustainability of the scholarly communications environment required to sustain the academic research lifecycle. Some examples of open infrastructure include the Dryad data repository and our investment in ORCID for researcher identification. Some examples of collaborative open research projects include open textbooks and other open educational resources, as well as programs and initiatives that build cohorts of researchers who are interested in open research practices, such as the Open Incubator program.

The ever-increasing costs of publishing and accessing scholarship are unsustainable, and we are rapidly reaching an inflection point where even large universities will not have the budget to sustain the current model. We expect that this will lead to fundamental structural changes to the ways that scholarship is published, shared, validated, and recognized. The Libraries seeks to advocate for and promote efforts to validate and incentivize open research and publishing, including in the Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure process.

Research Computing and Data Facilitation Service

The Committee reviewed plans for the Research Computing & Data Facilitation Service (RCDFS), a new university initiative supported by the Provost and led by the Libraries, OIT, and the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) to develop a robust service in support of NC State's research enterprise. The RCDFS will provide a single point of contact for faculty members and researchers to connect them with appropriate and available research computing and data services, while serving as a communication hub for service providers and enabling continuous assessment of researchers' needs and available services. A Service Design Task Force has been formed with representatives from the Libraries, OIT, ORI, the Statistical Consulting Core, and departmental IT groups. This team will make recommendations on the initial scope of services offered by the RCDFS, propose a roadmap for the initial launch and future development of the service, and propose appropriate communications strategies to publicize the service. The RCDFS will launch in early 2022.

Hill Library Renovation

The major renovation of the Hill Library to create the Academic Success Center and other new library spaces was completed in fall 2020. The center embodies a collaborative partnership between the Libraries and the Division of Academic and Student Affairs (DASA) to support "the whole student" over the course of their entire academic career and beyond. Patrons in the Hill Library now have convenient access to a number of exciting new spaces and an expanded range of services supporting student success, innovation, research, and data science and visualization.

Organizational Changes

The Committee welcomed two new, critical members of the Libraries' management team: Adebola Fabiku, Department Head, Access Services; and Jennifer Garrett, Associate Director for Organizational Design, Equity, and Talent.