



Senate Committee on Libraries Minutes

Monday, April 22, 2013

2:00 –3:30 PM

Octagon Room, Islamic Studies Library, Morrice Hall

Present: Prof. Nathalie Cooke, (Chair); Dr. C. Colleen Cook; Prof. Gillian Lane-Mercier; Prof. Kenneth Ragan; Prof. Guillermina Almazan; Ms. Sara Holder; Ms. Natalie Waters; Ms. Diane Koen; Prof. Elizabeth Gibson; Miss Cora-Lee Conway

Regrets: Prof. Andrea Bernasconi; Prof. Martin Chénier; Prof. H. Patrick Glenn; Prof. Emily Carson; Miss Kira Gossak-Keenan; Miss Isabel Vivas

1. Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was approved by Sara Holder and Gillian Lane-Mercier.

2. Introduction from the Chair

Delegate Chair Nathalie Cooke welcomed members to the fourth and final meeting of the year, noting that it was her final meeting as Provost's Delegate since her term as Associate Provost would end on 31 August 2013. Provost Anthony Masi would either return as Chair or the new Associate Provost, ASPI, would step in as his delegate in the fall. She noted that this was also the final meeting for Secretary Gwendolyn Owens, who is moving on to a position in another department at the university.

Nathalie Cooke gave a brief history of the Islamic Studies Library and Morrice Hall, saying that the Institute for Islamic Studies and the Library was founded in 1953 by Comparative Religion Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith. The library quickly grew from a small departmental collection to the impressive 150,000 volume collection that it is today, attracting many scholars from McGill and elsewhere. She noted that it is housed in Morrice Hall, the former Presbyterian College of Montreal. The Hall was renamed Morrice Hall in 1880, after David Morrice, Chairman of the Board of Management for the College, who donated funds to expand the building to its current size.

When the Presbyterian College moved to its new location in 1961, the Hall was donated to McGill by benefactor John W. McConnell, and was put to use by the Faculty of Arts.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of February 13, 2013

The Minutes for the meeting of 13 February, 2013 were approved by Colleen Cook and seconded by Nigel Roulet.

4. Dean of Libraries Report

Presenters: C. Colleen Cook

Dean Cook reported that the HSSL Reference Collection has now been moved; some items have been now integrated into the stacks on the upper floors and some remain on the main floor, but in a more central location. She believes that this issue has been successfully resolved.

Dean Cook reported the Voltaire collection, a highly anticipated acquisition, will arrive before the end of April. The Raymond Kilbansky lecture, *Meetings with Books: Raymond Kilbansky, Special Collections and the Library in the 21st Century* on March 20th was very well received and a huge success.

Cook reported that last week, the Therapeutic Paws of Canada dogs visited campus and the HSSL on April 10, 15 and 17 as part of Exam Stress-Relief Week. These dogs go over very well with students and they expect to continue the program in future.

Cook announced the Summer Professional Series will begin this year with a workshop on Copyright. She then noted that the Library has closed the postings for Head of the HSSL and Schulich Libraries. The new heads will be announced later this week. The Library is working with an external recruitment firm to fill the positions of Director of User Services and Director of Digital Initiatives.

Cook went on to report on various task forces that have been conducting studies over the past year. The Information Literacy Group has provided its final report as well as the RDA Strategic Committee.

Cook announced the implementation of two new committees: The Mobile Apps Committee, co-chaired by Liaison Librarians Robin Canuel and Jill Boruff, and the Summer Professional Series Committee, chaired by Brian McMillan. Colleen Cook reported that the library was recently audited, and Diane Koen added that the committee was internal to McGill. The LibQual and ClimaQual surveys will soon be coming to an end, and staff will be working on the results over the summer. The delivery service that was announced to the Senate Committee on Libraries began in March. Now faculty can request that a book be delivered to their office, rather than having to go to the library to check it out themselves.

Cook reported that she received the final word on the budget cuts only two weeks ago. The Libraries budget will be cut by seven percent, or just over 1.8 million dollars. This is the equivalent of half of the entire book budget, or 40-45 percent of staff budget. In addition to this grim news, she reported that the demographic of library staff is odd in that 45% of the staff currently working there are eligible for the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program recently implemented at McGill. Sixty of these 130 eligible staff members could potentially receive one year's salary with the Program, and anyone who takes advantage of the RIP would not necessarily be replaced at a 1:1 ratio. Colleen Cook expressed her concern at these facts, which would make the budget situation much worse than anticipated. Any academic staff leaving in the next while would not be replaced at a 1:1 ratio, but more like 2:1 or 3:1. Support staff jobs might not be filled at all.

Cook reported that 24-hour access at the libraries will cease. The libraries will essentially go back to 'regular hours' (a return to the schedule before 24-hour access came into effect). However, SSMU has committed funding for 24-hour service at three libraries during a two week exam period. Travel and entertainment budgets have been slashed as well. These will not produce a large savings but it has been cut similarly across the university. Seventy-five percent of the budget for casual [student] employees has been cut. Colleen Cook said

that this poses a unique problem in that the Collective Bargaining Agreement states that librarians cannot perform the duties or tasks normally done by support staff. Some work might not get done with take-up of the Retirement Incentive Program likely at 25-40 staff members, and there being no funding to hire students to help with the backlog of clerical tasks.

Cook emphasized that the role of librarians has never been more important. They need to be embedded in the classroom and within faculties to help students and faculty members access digital materials. When given the choice between digital or printed/microform material, people almost always choose digital. Circulation of actual books is low (she noted that 45 percent of the books in HSSL have not circulated in over 20 years), so while the building usage is gradually declining, the need for collective space for students to study and gather is becoming increasingly important and needed. She noted that it costs about \$4.80 per year to keep a book on open shelving, as opposed to 80 cents for keeping it in compact, closed storage. No data was provided on retrieval costs.

6. Discussion of community feedback on Libraries

Cook stated that libraries as spaces are iconic to academia and change is very hard. She is engaged in conversations of this nature right now with many people. She said that the three most fundamental things that are most important to libraries are being constrained due to the budget cuts; access to librarians; maintenance of collections; and creating and maintaining spaces that are conducive to student use and learning.

Cook said that the old library in the Bronfman Building in the Faculty of Management has been converted to a student-friendly study space and has been very successful. The Geography library has had a similar conversion. Nigel Roulet asked if the space left over from the Education and Life Sciences closures would be guaranteed to remain student space. Colleen Cook responded that the Dean of Medicine and the Dean of Education were both aware of the acute need for student space. She noted that 21st century librarianship has changed dramatically from the past. The university must deal with its libraries in a more systemic, centralized way.

Nigel Roulet expressed his concern that the Life Sciences Library would be converted to labs and research space, which, while generating revenue for the university, would not be available for students to use for studying and learning. He said that students are a very large constituent and that "it behooves the Library to try to satisfy students". Cook responded that the library administration has attended SSMU council meetings in order to set up and facilitate more forums for student input on the matter of space in the Libraries.

Guillermina Almazan asked if it was certain that the Life Sciences Library would close. Cook responded that she could not answer either way at this point.

Cora-Lee Conway asked what possibility exists for the Education library to remain open. All the students that she has spoken to about the closure are categorically against it. She expressed her disappointment at the lack of communication about these plans, and said that most people only found out about this through the CBC News. She noted that this news was not communicated through any of the McGill channels (*what's new*, MRO, etc.) and felt that it should have been, before getting out to the wider media. Students, she said, want to know what is actually at stake regarding the library closures. She noted that the PGSS (Post Graduate Student Society) is about to hold a referendum to increase student contribution to the library improvement fund, but fears that the negative tone in the media about the cuts to McGill will sour them on the idea of future contributions.

Cook acknowledged that the dissemination of this information did not go well, and noted that there was no time to explain to students and staff the real facts before the media got hold of the story. She agreed that communication within the university was extremely important. She did note that the furniture would remain in the Education Library space, but the compact shelving and many of the materials would be still be used, if in different library spaces.

Kenneth Ragan asked how closing a library would save money for the university. Colleen Cook answered that unfortunately the savings would come from the loss of personnel. Elizabeth Gibson noted that this was problematic.

Cora-Lee Conway mentioned that there would be a Town Hall scheduled shortly on the subject of the Education Library closure, where the McGill community could hear more information and weigh in on the issue.

7. Other Business/Discussion

There were no other business, but Nathalie Cooke thanked everyone for all their feedback during her time as delegate Chair, and Colleen Cook expressed her gratitude to Nathalie Cooke for her role on the Committee.

Nathalie Cooke asked for a motion to adjourn, which was approved by Kenneth Ragan and seconded by Gillian Lane-Mercier.