

Library Management Team

Notes from December 21, 2005 Meeting

Attending: Ross Atkinson, Karen Calhoun, Lee Cartmill, Tom Hickerson, Anne Kenney (by phone), Janet McCue, Jean Poland, Sarah Thomas, Ed Weissman

1) Announcements

a) Lee handed out a draft of the Emergency/Inclement Weather Contact List for 2005-2006 and asked for it to be reviewed with any changes sent to Tami Magnus.

b) Tom acknowledged the library staff who will be working together over the holidays to migrate Voyager to the Unicode release.

2) The Materials Budget

Ross briefed LMT on the workings and rationale of the materials budget. The materials budget accounts for approximately one-third of the total library budget and the endowed side accounts for 80% of the materials budget for the Ithaca campus. The purpose of the materials budget is to respond to the information needs on campus by acquiring specific information objects. The best approach for fulfilling this purpose has been to divide the campus into programmatic areas with individual subject specialists focusing on these areas. The subject specialists spend the materials budget according to the following criteria: 1) what's needed in the departments (for curriculum, research); 2) what's going on in the subjects/disciplines; and 3) what's already in the collection (building on strength, maintaining consistency). The subject specialists are accountable for their funds which gives them authority and confidence in their dealings with the faculty. Ross described the budget allocation process in which the subject specialists teams present their cases for increases to their teams in budget hearings attended by the members of CDEXec. Following the hearings, Ross creates a preliminary budget which he reviews with CDEXec in order to arrive at the final allocations. Because the process is an open one and the subject specialists have had a fair hearing, there is a high degree of acceptance of what is, by its nature, a very political process. Ross explained that this process of having a set of individual decisions lead up to the final allocation was better than alternative approaches, e.g., deciding ahead of time on the amount to allocate to specific areas, or allocating based on formulas such as the number of faculty in a department. It allows the budget to be most directly connected to the on-going needs of the campus. Ross then presented "pressure points" areas on the endowed side.

LMT discussed what we want to accomplish with the materials budget. Ross said that it must be used to support the creation of knowledge by the faculty and that the materials budget provides the tools that enhance faculty productivity. This productivity is increased by providing lesser used tools (information objects) more rapidly. This explains the advantage Cornell and other large research libraries have over smaller institutions--bigger and faster is better. Ross argued that if we are to continue to be able to provide services at the necessary level, however, it will require greater coordination within Cornell and with other institutions--not just other libraries but all the stakeholders including publishers. LMT also discussed the growing importance of the "academic internet"--the vast amount of academic information available on the web--and how it relates to the materials budget and selection decisions.

Edward Weissman