

**University Committee on Libraries (UCL)
Minutes of the Meeting of March 19, 2009**

8:00 a.m. Hesburgh Library, Room 222

Present: Dennis Doordan, Ed Edmonds , Sherri Jones, Barry Keating, Malcolm Phelan (undergraduate student representative), Joseph Powers, Andrew Sommese, Kasey Swanke (graduate student representative), Laurence Taylor, Paul Turner, Jennifer Younger (ex officio)

Absent and excused: Jennifer Mason McAward, Mary Keys, Semion Lyandres, Mikolaj Kunicki

Observers / guests: Michael Daly—Office of the University Architect, Gay Dannelly—Associate Director for Resources and Collections Services, Hesburgh Libraries, Dan Marmion—Associate Director for Information Systems and Digital Access, Hesburgh Libraries, Alexander Howe—Design Principle, Alicia Monks-- , Denise Shorey—Associate Director for User Services, Hesburgh Libraries, Tracey Thomas (recorder),

The March 19, 2009 UCL meeting was called to order by Laurence Taylor at 8:05 a.m.

The meeting began with the presentation by the architects for the renovation of Hesburgh Library.

Alexander Howe, Design Principle of--- introduced himself and Alicia Monks , noting that they work exclusively with libraries and are pleased to be working on the Hesburgh plans which are at the diagrammatic planning stage. He explained that he would provide a brief snapshot of the schematic designs for the first and second floors, leaving a lot of time for discussion. The plans are still in flux; the schematics phase will end after the April 2009 Board of Trustees' meeting, when the architects will report to the Board on the latest stage of the designs.

Using power point slides, Howe briefly laid out the first and second floor designs. A significant aspect of the first floor will be a central transaction point where all user transactions will occur, a consolidated presence in the library. The area around the transaction point will be an open design with an intense communal area in the center. This will be banked by group study areas, including study rooms. The space closer to the windows will have a more 'traditional' library arrangement. Staff space on this floor will also be redesigned for quick access between staff and the transaction area. There may be an additional navigation point at the back of the open study area, providing further support for users.

For the second floor, three designs are under consideration. This space will include stacks for the collection and scholarly reference works, staff space, instructional areas, open study space and enclosed group study spaces. Staff is being collected from all over the building and brought together in this space, improving flexibility and opportunities for training and collaboration. The study space on the second floor provides a quiet commons. The design is keyed to creating small spaces within the vast area of this floor; these areas will be carved out by small barriers backed by stacks. The prime area will be near the two windows spaces, with the more traditional reading room area away from them.

Concluding the presentation, Howe opened the discussion for questions. Several members complimented the balance between the active commons, with an emphasis on social environment, and the more traditional quiet scholarly research and collaboration areas. The design has built in a wide variety in the mix of spaces, with an effort to serve the needs of the greatest range of patrons.

Ed Edmonds noted that Ann Firth is leading a study on campus undergraduate study space usage. Howe noted that when that report is finalized, its findings will be incorporated into their thinking. The architects have toured the newest study spaces and discussed with campus planners the plans for future spaces. Members discussed the data on student use of study space, noting that students appear to study individually but in communal spaces, such as in Coleman-Morse or the basement of LaFortune. One student will use a booth for four. Howe said the plan for furnishing the study spaces is very student-oriented, accommodating a wide variety of possible arrangements as well as enhancing sight lines between users and staff. He affirmed that the design will not reach the desired seat count by placing six chairs at a round table since it is well established that students do not use the space in that way. The instructional rooms also can be opened up in evening hours, making the spaces multipurpose when possible.

Members discussed staff space. University guidelines for staff space are being determined at this time. The library design allows for slightly more staff area than in the previous space, in part because staff is being pulled together from throughout the building for better coordination. Collaborative work spaces are being designed, increasing available work space. Also a small amount of group meeting space is included, rather than the current approach of meeting in offices or instructional library spaces. The work space for staff is geared to open versus office space. If private offices are created, they will be situated away from the exterior walls, on a corporate office model.

Noting that signage and wayfaring in the current building is poor, Doordan asked about signage plans. Mike Daly, of University Architects, said that signage is an important part of the project but not the architects' responsibility. Howe said that clustering the instructional spaces around the core, near the elevators, was an effort to simplify users' navigation of the building. This design keeps the mass of people together, out of the realm of the quiet study areas, and these instructional spaces are easy to find. On the question of 24 hour study usage, Howe noted that likely one or both of the floors will be fully opened, rather than a discrete area of one floor. Failures in 24 hours study areas have occurred where such areas are located in out of the way spots. Lines can be drawn, however, to open a discrete area if desired.

Members discussed power needs. Howe noted that the design includes all new power and air transmission, as well as new lighting throughout the building. While keeping in mind the transitional nature of technological developments, the design includes both plug-in and wifi options, serving current user requirements. Perhaps more important is the location of power sources for increased availability for users. It is likely that the column design will be in use, to bring power into the middle of the space.

Turner asked about an earlier design which included future space for IT needs. Howe noted that that space, located on the second floor, is still conceptually designated for future redesign; it can easily be closed off. Infrastructure plans will also accommodate that future possible use.

Powers asked about aesthetic considerations as part of the design for the renovation. Howe said “the ambition, within budget, is to tie the whole building together with a coherent aesthetic.” The current building is a modernist building, so it would be inappropriate to clothe it with a lot of wood. The design must be more spare to fit the building’s own aesthetic. Replacing the lighting is a significant aspect of the design, from the architectural point of view; current lighting has a ‘supermarket aesthetic.’ Suspended fixtures with an up and down illumination are planned. Additionally, the vast space will be subdivided in creative ways to give individuality within the coherent whole. The marble of the columns will remain as a benchmark to be built from, but the color palate will be warmer, with carpet as a possible source of color, warmth and unification. If used, the carpet will have a high recycled content to balance the sustainability goal.

A topic of interest to all was the proposed café. Members indicated a strong preference for a café which offered more than prepackaged, dry foods. The Jordan Science Building café, proposed as model for the library café, was not acceptable, although Food Service concerns for a small staff and a efficient operation were acknowledged. The Bond Hall café was enthusiastically proposed as a better model, one in which some food preparation is possible, even in a very small footprint. The new Law School Commons model was also suggested. All members proposed further negotiation with Food Services about this operation. Sherri Jones noted that a café was one consistent request from all stakeholders. The proposed café will seat about 30.

Daly, from University Architects, emphasized that the design is still benefitting from feedback by constituents. A letter will be sent to department heads and deans to gather additional input. He agreed to return to Food Services for further discussion of the café, and thanked members for all their comments and observations.

Taylor thanked the architects for providing this explanation of the schematic design.

Noting that time was short, Taylor asked for approval of the February 12, 2009 minutes. Powers made a motion for approval; Edmonds seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 am.