Library Committee
Annual Report Academic Year 2014-2015

In FY15, the Library Committee held five meetings. The primary item of business was participation in the "Libraries Organizational Review," conducted by DJA Consulting at the behest of the Tufts libraries and provost office.

As part of this review, the Library Committee met in September and November 2014 to broadly discuss its members’ views on the future challenges and opportunities for the library, and their visions for the 21st century library. The November meeting included guest faculty from Tufts’ Boston and Grafton campuses as well as the Fletcher School. The overarching sentiment was to continue localized decision-making and provision of services, in the context of the Committee's high level of satisfaction with current library functions and personnel. In December 2014 members of the Committee then met directly with representatives of DJA Consulting to convey their and the Committee's views. After DJA Consulting submitted its report, the Library Committee met in April 2015 to evaluate the consultants’ recommendations. Here is the full text of the Library Committee's response to the consultants' report, submitted to the provost's office:

Library Committee Response
to "Libraries Organizational Review: Final Report and Recommendations"
Submitted to Associate Provost Boris Hasselblatt
by Daniel Abramson, chair, on behalf of the Library Committee
11 June 2015

The members of the Library Committee are grateful to have been included in the process of the "Libraries Organizational Review" conducted in 2014-15 by DJA Consulting. The Library Committee not only had the chance in September to discuss general priorities for Tisch Library, we also met specifically in November to prepare for DJA's visit. We then spoke directly in December to DJA representatives. Finally, we concluded with a meeting in April to discuss DJA's "Final Report and Recommendations," and this response was subsequently vetted by the whole of the Committee. The Library Committee was extensively engaged with the Review. We feel our input has been both valued in the process and reflected in the Final Report. The Committee looks forward willingly to continued engagement in discussion of possible changes.

The Library Committee at its final April meeting did not come to a consensus in favor of one or another of the four Scenarios contained in the "Final Report and Recommendations." Members of the Committee did express wariness of authority being divested too far up into the central administration, especially for key financial decisions. All through the year-long review process, the Library Committee has stressed the importance of 'localism' in the delivery of library services and priority setting by each individual Tufts library, as well as our high level of satisfaction with the current, decentralized operations. Therefore, the Library Committee is concerned with any scenario that erodes the individual libraries’ autonomy, which we feel best serve faculty and students.

On the other hand, the Library Committee recognizes the challenges of the current decentralized structure, particularly the extent to which library staff must regularly engage in coordination and negotiation across units, which wastes time and resources. The Tisch library leadership team made a strong case for a more integrated structure (Scenario 4) that would free them to pursue initiatives to the benefit of individual libraries’ faculty and students.

In sum, our response to the "Final Report and Recommendations" is this: 1) The Report does reflect our strong, year-long involvement in the review process; 2) The Library Committee warns against dramatic change to the status quo in terms of decentralized and localized delivery of services; 3) The Committee's top priority is the maintenance and enhancement of the existing superior level of service and resources currently provided to faculty and students and; 4) The Committee places a high level of trust in the Tisch leadership team’s capacity to make correct strategic decisions not only in the library administration’s best interest but, more importantly, those of faculty and students.

The Library Committee considers it one of its chief tasks to remain engaged in the organizational review, its ongoing process and eventual result. The Committee looks forward to continued conversations on this subject with library staff and administration.
Only at the Library Committee's January 2015 meeting did it extensively discuss business other than the "Libraries Organizational Review." At this meeting, the primary topic was the "Faculty Research Study" to be conducted by Tisch Library staff. The Committee helped to frame the questions that would be asked of participating faculty, specifically in regards to research, publishing, and the present and future of open access.

Through the year the Library Committee also received and discussed updates on the following issues: update on service desks, print management strategy, budget, and TTS integration.

Submitted by the members of the Library Committee
Daniel Abramson, Art and Art History and Chair of the Library Committee
Rachel Bonoan, Graduate Student Council Representative
David Ekbladh, History
Patrick Forber, Philosophy
Janna Karatas, TCU Senate Representative
Ning Ma, German, Russian & Asian Languages and Literatures
Malik Mufti, Political Science
Matthew Panzer, Chemical and Biological Engineering
Sophie Pearlman, TCU Senate Representative
Michael Reed, Biology
Chris Rogers, Mechanical Engineering
Sam Thomas III, Chemistry
Laura Walters, Associate Director for Collections and User Services, Tisch Library, ex officio
Laura C. Wood, Director, Tisch Library, ex officio