

Portland State University Library Committee: 2022 Annual Report

Committee Roster

Faculty and Students:

Katrine Barber (History), Alida Cantor (Geography), Susan Chan, (Music), Carrie Collenberg-Gonzalez (World Languages & Literature), Richard Dozal-Lockwood (School of Public Health), Simon Gunderson (ASPSU, Student), Abbee Mortensen (ASPSU, Student), Gerald Recktenwald (Mechanical and Materials Engineering & Library Committee Chair), Jelena Schiff (Music)

Consultants from Library Faculty and Staff:

Karen Bjork, Michale Bowman (Ex-Officio member of Committee), Jill Emery, Molly Gunderson, Cristine Paschild

Yearly Summary

The Committee met remotely (via Zoom) approximately twice per term. Agendas and meeting notes (minutes) were shared as Google docs.

The ongoing COVID-19 health emergency was a strong influence on the operation of the Library during the 2021–2022 academic year. Regular access to the Library was limited to members of the PSU community. Curriculum delivery via remote, hybrid and attend-anywhere formats was supported by the Library via loans of laptops, scanning of course materials, facilitation of video streaming, and consultation with discipline specialists on the Library faculty and staff.

Throughout the year, the Library Committee was a sounding board for these issues and a communication channel to the PSU Faculty and Administration.

Budgetary Impacts and Concerns for 2021–2022

Like most units in the University, the Library budget has a large fixed cost for personnel and equipment. Managing the budget requires careful planning for the costs of services and supplies. The Library is a resource for the entire University, and expectations for Library services can be set by units without the knowledge of, or in consultation with, the Library Faculty and Staff.

The rising costs of streaming media was a major focus of the Library Committee work in AY 2021–2022. During Fall Term 2021 and Winter Term 2022 the Committee learned about the rising demand for streaming media and the rising fees charged by service providers. The Committee discussed options for lowering costs to the Library without shifting the costs to students, e.g. by requiring students to subscribe to commercial services such as Amazon Prime, Netflix, and Hulu. This work culminated in a [presentation](#) at the Faculty Senate meeting on 7 March 2022.

Library Faculty and Staff alerted the committee to the budgetary impact of the coming no-cost and low-cost course designations for PSU courses. The Library Faculty and Staff, and the Library Committee fully support the goal of minimizing the costs incurred by students to purchase materials or services for courses. The Library Faculty and Staff are concerned that in some cases Faculty may be inadvertently shifting the costs of course materials to the library. Examples of shifting costs are through increased demand for streaming services, increased requests for purchasing ebooks and some specialized (high cost) print materials, and added workload for collecting and distributing physical and digital resources. Concerns of increased demand for streaming services for low-cost and no-cost courses were included in the presentation to the Faculty Senate.

The cost of journal subscriptions has a big impact on the Library budget for services and supplies. The Library Faculty and Staff have begun negotiations with Elsevier, a major provider of journals for STEM, business, environment and related titles. Negotiations with Elsevier are also underway at the University of Oregon and Oregon State. Each of the three large public universities may ultimately have different budgetary goals and lists of desired Elsevier titles. Currently the three Universities are discussing options for collaboration on our existing joint contract with Elsevier. Negotiations with Elsevier began in mid-May and will likely continue through the Summer and into Fall Term. The Library Committee will consult with the Library Faculty and Staff and will serve as a communication channel with PSU Faculty in the 2022–2023 Academic year.

Shifts in Services as COVID-19 Evolved

The Library has changed, and will continue to change, its services in response to health advisories related to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the start of the Fall 2021 Term, textbook vendors and other Copyright holders reinstated Copyright restrictions that were temporarily lifted to support remote instruction. This change may not have been realized by faculty who assumed that scanned copies of textbooks would continue to be available. Library Faculty and Staff worked with faculty and the Library Committee members to communicate the change to their home departments and colleges.

When the University stopped in-person instruction in Spring 2020, access to the Library was restricted. In Summer 2020, Faculty, students and staff with PSU IDs and key-cards had access to only the first floor of the Library. In Fall 2021, Faculty, students and staff had access to the other floors. The Library administration is planning to open the library to non-PSU patrons in mid-August, but implementation of that policy will require additional logistical planning to integrate the turnstiles that were installed at the main entrance. The Library Committee does not have a direct role in the logistical planning or implementation. The Committee can assist by communicating the role-out of the change in physical access.

Other Issues

A search for a new Dean of the Library is likely to occur during the 2022–2023 Academic Year. Interim Dean Michael Bowman has been serving since the sudden death of Tom Bielavitz.

In honor of Tom Bielavitz, the Library has renovated a section of the fourth floor of the Library to create a Collaboration Hub for graduate students. Installation of some furnishings and accessories have been delayed due to supply-chain bottlenecks. The current plan is to allow use of the space during the Summer and have a well-publicized grand opening near the start of the Fall 2022 term.