

Library Council Draft Minutes

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Hybrid Meeting: Zoom & Library Instruction Room (L3-314)

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Present: Gohar Ashoughian (Chair), Kathy Behrendt (Faculty Rep), Deborah MacLatchy, Scott Gilles, Gordon Bertrand, Debbie Chaves, Pauline Dewan, Dillon Moore, Amanda Oliver, Joanne Oud, Matt Tales, Bruce Arai, Michael Steeleworthy, Mark Weiler, Irene Tencinger, Charlotte Innerd, CJ Nyssen, Fiona Inglis, Helene LeBlanc, Christina Kerr, Jennifer Robertson – Wilson, Meredith Fisher, Tina Liu, Siu Hong Yu, Mona Elayyan, Matthew Rohweder, Jennifer Dufton, Alik Sarian, Greg Sennema, Joahua Manuel, Lauren Bourdages, Liam Chopin, Matt Thomas, Melanie Ross, Murray Tong, Ryan Robinson, Sarah Brophy, Shane Symington, Shirley Chen, Ian Fraser, Ewa Kuczynska, Roberta Ellington, Suzanne Luke.

Regrets: Peter Genzinger

1. Welcome and introductions

Gohar Ashoughian welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced President Deborah MacLatchy.

2. Approval of the agenda

Motion: Charlotte Innerd moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Michael Steeleworthy.

3. Approval of the minutes from January 19, 2022

Motion: Gohar Ashoughian moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Matthew Rohweder. Matt Thomas abstained.

4. Business arising from the minutes

None.

5. New Business

President's Strategic Direction - Dr. Deborah MacLatchy, President, and Vice-Chancellor

Inspiring Lives

President MacLatchy expressed her gratitude and thanked everyone at the Library for their hard work during the last couple of years, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The President commended the Library for its critical contribution to student and staff/faculty services and support.

The President highlighted multiple testimonials from students and faculty celebrating the Library for its contributions: The Makerspace and its ability to engage students, the WLU Press and their global effect and work on accessibility, the RLAG Gallery for its in-person events and exhibits, the Archives project and their involvement in the Laurier Legacy Project, and the Indigenous Mural Project, for example.

President MacLatchy thanked Gohar Ashoughian for her service as University Librarian and wished her the best in her next steps.

Questions:

What are your opinions on emerging AI programs and ChatGPT, and how can an academic Library make use of these applications/software?

These applications/software are here to stay, and this situation is somewhat similar to when Wikipedia was introduced to the world of academia. We have to develop new policies and train staff and faculty in the best ways of integrating AI into our academic work. In summary, we must adopt best practices to utilize these tools to elevate the quality of academic work. Finally, the university and Library are creating a mini task force to discuss this in more depth and develop the next steps.

How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect retention rates of students?

We have been developing more digital interactive interfaces and working on increasing in-person engagement opportunities for students.

Do you have any hints on when we are expected to be back to normal hiring/funding rates?

The government has formed a panel called the Blue Ribbon Panel to review the financial health of colleges and universities and make recommendations. We expect these motions to be enabled for fall 2024-2025. If these budget reductions continue, larger universities will also have to start implementing cuts and changes to their operations.

Any updates regarding the Library in Brantford?

One of the main challenges we are faced with is how to balance investment and return on these projects. In terms of planning for the Brantford Library, we are still unclear on how we want it to look and what kind of services to provide. For funding, we are looking for potential donor(s) to help out with the finances. Our vision for Brantford is a dynamic Library with equitable service distribution across the Laurier campuses.

How did the university adapt its disaster planning before and after the COVID-19 pandemic?

We have been utilizing things we learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to develop a post-pandemic playbook to be better prepared for emergency situations in the future.

Have you noticed any shifts in the value of university education at Laurier after the COVID-19 pandemic?

I believe that the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us to better understand the contemporary needs of our students and ensure that they receive the support they need in a timely manner.

6. University Librarian Report

Gohar prefaced her report by expressing her gratitude to the Librarians and staff as her term as University Librarian comes to an end. She added that she has mixed feelings of sadness for leaving but also joy and happiness for all the memories she made at the Library and the projects she worked on.

Gohar added that during her term as University Librarian, the Library has undergone significant changes in its organizational structure.

Gohar and Scott Gillies provided a brief overview of the Transform Laurier Library (TLL) project and commented on its current state. They covered TLL's 6 major themes revolving around: 1-Facilities and Spaces, 2- Online and Multi-Campus Operations, 3- Library Core Services, 4- Cultural Programming, 5- The Integration of WLU Press, 6- and Improved Communication.

Gohar mentioned two pieces of exciting news for the Council - The first, pertaining to the new storage capacity for archives and special collections and art collection. Gohar announced the storage facility at 232 King Street and expressed her excitement to move the archival and art collections there. Second, Gohar also noted that the Indigenous Mural Project was also in motion, and an artist has been selected.

Finally, Gohar concluded her report by mentioning that she was going to pursue a PhD in education at the University of Western Ontario and wished her colleagues the best of luck on their projects after her term.

Questions:

Do we have some sort of inventory for the art in storage?

We currently have an outdated Excel sheet with the inventory, but it needs to be updated.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Next Meeting

Thursday, October 26, 2023.

9. Adjournment

Motion: Gohar moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 2:56 p.m.