Minutes of the meeting of the New Service Models Literatures and Languages Planning Team, 18 November 2009

Present: Robert Cagle, Miles Efron, Dara Goldman, JoAnn Jacoby (Administrative Liaison), Doug Kibbee, Kathleen Kluegel, Carl Niekerk, Curtis Perry, Bruce Swann, Caroline Szylowicz, John Wagstaff (Chair), Charles Wright. Tom Teper (Associate University Librarian for Collections) was in attendance for the first part of the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved after discussion of changes proposed by email since 11 November.

John Wagstaff described the planned agenda for the meeting. Agenda items included:

- a conversation with Tom Teper regarding current and possible future arrangements of library space, including Main Library Stacks and Oak Street
- discussion of results from the committee’s Web-based survey
- status of the Kolb-Proust in the committee’s consideration
- current and desirable division of collections among main stacks and Oak St.

Thomas Teper was given the floor. He addressed the points raised earlier by John Wagstaff via e-mail.

1. First matter: balancing collections between stacks, Oak St., unit libraries. Teper expressed his opinion that this division is negotiated on an ad hoc basis among distinct collections on campus. What is appropriate for LLTA constituencies is an open question. Usually, however, the majority of a collection is not housed in unit facilities. Collection distribution must take into account anticipated growth. The library has increased its holdings from 10 to 11M volumes in 5 years. 132,000 monographs were added to the library last year despite a large increase in electronic resources. Any decision must avoid juggling volumes. In other words, the committee must consider the situation of its associated libraries in the larger context of the university collection. Case in point: LIS redistribution involved Stacks, Oak Street, Main Reference (for Reference materials), ESSL (for serials) and other libraries with overlapping collections. Questions and comments were then invited:
   a. Kathleen Kluegel stressed that 90% of the English library collection is in stacks (ca 35,000 vols in the English Library, some 350,000 in Stacks). As such, in this case stacks and the working collection are tightly integrated. Over the years, English librarians have taken care to distribute discrete sub-collections (e.g. Medieval Studies) in locations that render them browseable. She encouraged the committee to be mindful that stacks is not simply storage, but rather entails an integral part of patrons’ access to materials. John Wagstaff elaborated on this point by noting ongoing concern for the future status of the stacks.
      i. Tom Teper’s response: This is difficult to address outside of hypotheticals, but planning over 20 years is an ongoing concern for administration. Older stack additions are dangerous and unworkable (ADA compliance, HVAC updates are intractable problems for improving these areas), and these factors threaten the long-term
viability of the stack structure.

b. Doug Kibbee noted that for LLTA areas, housing collections in the stacks is very important. Reconfiguring stacks to unify collections in anticipation of stakeholder use is highly desirable. Secondly, increasing use of electronic journals is less common in modern languages than in, say, English. Thirdly, what proportion of the stacks is occupied by collections whose associated library is housed outside of Main? For these collections, stacks serves a purpose little different from Oak Street’s.

i. Teper’s response: For most disciplines, stacks has traditionally served as storage. Administration does need to consider stacks more purposively, speaking to a lack of voice for stacks in deference to subject librarians. Tom Teper sees his own challenge as revising the model so that materials that should be browseable but do not justify retention in departmental library reading rooms are shepherded into stacks instead of by default going to Oak St.

ii. John Wagstaff asked Kathleen Kluegel to comment on the extent to which English materials are collocated in stacks. By a happy coincidence, all the English materials are close to each other. (This is not the case with Modern Languages stack holdings.)

c. Robert Cagle voiced concern that circulation stats provide a poor picture of journal use in the humanities.

d. Curtis Perry suggested that high use of online materials may be in part due to the ungainliness of stacks with respect to browsing. Due to splitting of materials, literature collocation in stacks provides a weak sense of the intellectual space being explored. Curtis Perry asked Kathleen Kluegel how decisions on the ultimate location for individual items are made.

i. Kathleen Kluegel’s response: This is largely dictated by a combination of availability of space in the appropriate call number range, in conjunction with author-by-author analysis. I.e., She deals with a combination of coincidental constraints and intellectual constraints.

e. Dara Goldman asked, what role might a reading space at Oak St. play in future plans? Are there any plans for the library to offer virtual/3D browsing?

i. Tom Teper’s response: Most Oak St. materials are shipped directly to patrons’ desks or to library circulation. But consultation of long journal runs might, for instance, typically be done in situ. There are currently no plans to enable virtual browsing. The catalog is the closest we have (and are likely to have) to this capability.

f. Caroline Szylowicz offered a clarification about reading space at Oak St. She cited the case of a patron who was not allowed to consult materials at Oak St. Tom Teper plans to examine the status of Oak St.’s reading space.

At 11:00 Tom needed to leave the meeting. John Wagstaff called for comments on Teper’s points. Doug Kibbee reiterated the value of an online browsing feature. Robert Cagle reminded the group that the libraries’ physical shelves already provide patrons with
a rich sense of the collections’ scope and contents.

Charles Wright pointed to data from the LLTA survey that suggest that physical browsing is critical for library patrons. Thus we must allow unit librarians to designate which items go to stacks, because, whatever its failings, stacks is more browseable than Oak St. is. JoAnn Jacoby stressed the competing agendas of unit libraries in claiming space in stacks. This committee’s report provides an opportunity to assert the value of housing literary and linguistic materials in an accessible space.

Kathleen Kluegel commented on the long history of visualizing collections. She stressed the value of representing the collection with respect to the facets that pertain to items.

Curtis Perry identified his concern that our recommendations will go to an implementation team that may translate our recommendations into something that we do not want. Thus the thrust of our report will be crucial. I.e., We must focus strongly on the tractable, crucial issues that face LLTA areas under NSM. He was especially concerned that we address Doug Kibbee’s earlier point about locating our collections in stacks, even if this comes at the cost of raising institutional conflict. JoAnn Jacoby encouraged LLTA members to volunteer to serve on the implementation committee to to ensure continuity of vision.

John Wagstaff indicated some of the general goals of the group’s final report. He hopes that our report will be concise in its efforts to avoid opportunities for problematic transition between LLTA and implementation.

Charles Wright called for consideration of our final recommendations in advance of John Wagstaff’s drafting of a report over Thanksgiving break. In particular, he asked: do we agree that the represented units should merge, with the proviso that the new unit occupies the spaces that have been identified as feasible. Curtis Perry seconded the importance of stipulating conditions that must be satisfied before we recommend merging. Charles Wright argued that 200D would act as a new periodicals room. The current Slavic library would house the monograph collections. Caroline Szylowicz proposed that advancement might move to a new location.

John Wagstaff expressed concern over demanding 227 as a precondition for merging, and it was agreed that this would not be imposed as a precondition. Dara Goldman suggested that we could supplement our request for 227 with an invitation for counter-proposals.

John Wagstaff asked if the Team felt ready to take a vote on a skeleton recommendation based on the space allocation voiced by Charles Wright. Kathleen Kluegel moved for a vote on the following motion:

To agree in principle to merge the English and Modern Languages and Linguistics libraries into combined spaces in 225, 200D, and 200, provided adequate office, collection, and patron space is provided. As part of the vision for this merged library it is
essential to rationalize the relationship between departmental and main stacks. This recommendation is contingent on the provision of adequate professional library staff.

Curtis Perry seconded. The motion was unanimously passed (with the exception of JoAnn Jacoby’s abstention).

John Wagstaff closed the meeting at 11:40 by requesting input on his continued efforts to craft the committee’s final report. He reminded the committee that we will not meet over the Thanksgiving break, and thus our next meeting will take place on December 2.