I. Operational and space planning summary and opportunity for input

Prior to this meeting, Lori distributed a SAHS operational/space planning grid document that was based on discussion among the library sub-group. Beth Sandore introduced the document as a representation of the planning process thus far, specifically coming from conversations among the library members about an operational plan for the two East foyer spaces (BEL and ESSL). As a first step, before looking at how to arrange the space, we were encouraged to think about operations/functions and how we might bring services, collections, and staff together. The library group met once with Jeff Schrader (library facilities director) to discuss the programming statement, then again without Jeff to brainstorm about the many aspects of services, collections and staff that would need to be considered in the combined space. There are many questions and many qualifications yet to explore.

During the discussion process, we considered one scenario: the idea of locating all the circulating collections on one side, along with a circulation access point (desk and perhaps self-checkout stations), plus non-public staff functions, study spaces, browsing area (current journals and new books), public computers and printers and copy machines. In this scenario, the other side would offer space for functions and collections that require more dedicated staff control and service, including special collections. There was a question about the definition of special collections. Considering that this merger will integrate the collections of four units into the space of two units, there will not be room for any particular collection to be enlarged. In fact, all collections will need to be substantially reduced to fit into the new space and still offer high quality user space. Other functions served on this side would include a combined service desk, a technology lab, printing/scanning/copying, individual and group study space, collaborative/seminar space, consultation space, area for specialized databases.

Joe Mahoney introduced the idea of a user centric approach to allocating space, whereby we would examine use-based patterns to co-locate collections based on users’ need. The Library does have circulation/use data that could be examined. What would be the cost of using this approach? Can we co-locate materials thoughtfully, so that materials that are used together most are located in close proximity? Can we identify materials that are available digitally, acquire those, and move their print equivalents elsewhere (to storage)?

Several questions were posed about what is driving this exercise? How to maintain the same level of excellence at a lower cost? Bring together similar disciplines? Efficient management? How to focus on students? What are the common topical/intellectual bases? What is the purpose of a university library? How can we focus on students and their learning? Lori mentioned that some of these questions would be addressed through the affinities exercise that will occur over the next two weeks. Beth addressed the questions related to what is driving the purpose of the group, circling back to the charge and guiding principles.

Our current task is two-fold: 1) What is possible to consolidate? What makes sense? 2) How to partner with departments/colleges to understand user needs?

Beth Sandore shared a point from the recent Mortensen Center annual lecture related to digital libraries. Looking at libraries in the historical context, libraries weren’t about content before the invention of the printing press. They were places where people came together and learned together.
Joe Mahoney offered the example from business of making the library “their third place,” like Starbucks aspires to do. The third place is where people are when they aren’t at work or at home. One strategy we might choose is to offer the important amenities that will bring students back to the library. Bill Stewart emphasized that the focus on students is an important part of the College of AHS mission. AHS has a high retention rate, especially of students from underrepresented groups and first generation college attendees, and these students appreciate the sense of place/home/belonging that is offered at the library. Using the AHS Library offers them a sense of community, a high-quality transition space where they can work together and aren’t lost in the crowd. Zoe Revell indicated that BEL offers this same type of environment for the large number of international students in the College of Business.

Lori welcomes additional input on this topic; email suggestions to her.

II. Guiding principles
Beth Sandore asked the group to identify how to bring important disciplines as well as interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary relationships together. How can we best support clusters of disciplines? A sub-group is working on re-vamping the guiding principles document.

III. Time frame for this group’s work: Due to the many issues and tasks for this group there was discussion about asking the Library Executive Committee for an extension, as well as extending our remaining two meetings to be 90 minutes, rather than one hour. Beth and Lori will follow up on possibilities.

IV. Working name of the new integrated unit
Thus far, only the following names have been proposed: Social and Applied Health Sciences Library, and Social, Behavioral, and Applied Health Sciences Library. Everyone agreed that the name is important in signifying who/what belongs inside. Students need to be able to recognize the name and immediately understand what is inside. The group brainstormed other possibilities, such as labelling the two doors of the two spaces with all the disciplines (half on one side and half on the other; or all on both doors)?; finding a donor to name the library after (as in Grainger); ask students and faculty what to name it?; come up with a catchy acronym, using all the words that describe the various disciplines? The name has implications for how space is organized and what is inside. Think about options and send ideas to Lori.

V. Affinities
Lori provided a handout with tasks to accomplish for by the next meeting. Faculty are asked to provide their core teaching and research areas so we can discuss affinities. Scott Johnson and Anna Marshall noted that the recent social science initiative identified 8 areas of social science on our campus. The challenge is to develop these lists at the same level of granularity. Each person should develop an initial list and send to Lori.

Next meeting: November 3, time TBD, but 1.5 hours in late afternoon.