

## **CORNELL UNIVERSITY FACULTY LIBRARY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT, 2007-08**

The University Faculty Library Board met monthly during the academic year 2007-2008, with good attendance at all meetings. One meeting was cancelled as it clashed with interviews for the University Librarian.

The board focused its attention on several major topics: the search for a new University Librarian, the renovation of Olin Library, future access to the library catalog, developments in scholarly communication, and the book digitization projects.

The board wishes to acknowledge the great assistance provided by Anne Kenney, as Interim University Librarian and now Carl A. Kroch University Librarian, Vice Provost John Siliciano as representative of the Provost, and Charles Walcott the Dean of the Faculty.

### **Search for a new University Librarian**

The search for the University Librarian ended successfully with the appointment of Anne Kenney in March. The board thanks her for efforts as Interim University Librarian and wishes her every success in her new position.

Members of the board met with the candidates during on-campus interviews and attended their presentations. All members of the board were invited to dinner with the candidates and many individuals provided their observations to the search committee. The chair of the search committee, Vice Provost John Siliciano, provided updates on the search at each meeting.

The board thanks the Provost Office, and John Siliciano in particular, for the care taken to solicit input from the whole Cornell community as part of this search. We noted two problems in the process: confusion over the level of confidentiality was unsettling, especially to the library staff, and the elapsed time for the search was extremely long.

### **Olin renovation**

The library administration twice briefed the board on the renovations to Olin Library. Board members Lewis, Otto, Parmenter, and Russell agreed to serve as informal advisors to the design process. The board strongly supports the goal of installing modern HVAC and sprinkler systems for the protection of the people who use the building and the irreplaceable collections housed there.

Development of plans for any new library building is difficult because of the dramatic changes that are taking place in libraries. Overall, the board is supportive of the plans that have been developed. There were detailed questions about faculty offices, carrels for graduate students, and the number of group study spaces and the use to be made of them. The commitment to keep unchanged the size of physical collection housed in the building

is important to many disciplines. The board asks to be kept up to date with more information next fall.

Disruption during construction is a serious concern. The board urges the university to complete the work within as short a period as possible, hopefully no more than two years, and asks the library to work very closely with the faculty to minimize disruption. It is important that secure study space be available, even during the renovation.

### **Future access to the library catalog**

As more library materials are in digital formats, particularly digitized books, the future of the traditional catalog is in doubt. The technology on which they is based is obsolete and the data standards far from optimal. However, for some disciplines, the information in the catalog remains extremely important. To provide better access to this information, the library plans to implement OCLC's interface known as Worldcat Local. This would be parallel to the existing Voyager catalog system for at least a one-year trial period.

Advantages of Worldcat Local are that it allows the user to view Cornell's holdings alongside those of some 60,000 other libraries worldwide, and it has the potential for augmenting data about items in Cornell's holdings from Worldcat's master records. Disadvantages include very little control over the user interface options, the inflexible way that it presents results, and the potential loss of Cornell's added data if Voyager were replaced. The board expressed concern that the purchasing option directs users exclusively to a single vendor, Amazon.com.

The sense of the board was that Worldcat Local is probably the best option available at present, but that all catalog systems are falling behind the best online information systems.

### **Scholarly communication including copyright**

New forms of scholarly publication and communication are a long-standing interest of the board. While this year the board did not have an opportunity to discuss this area in depth, there is a general sense that it is important to the university, needs overall coordination, and that the faculty should lead it. The board encourages the University Librarian to discuss this area with the new Dean of the Faculty.

This year, John Saylor of the library has convened a council to study and coordinate activities in scholarly communication, particularly those aspects that concern the library. Members of the library reported to the board on how they are supporting new federal regulations requiring deposit of publications funded by the NIH on public websites within twelve months of publication. They also distributed information about the new publications initiative at Harvard, Arts & Sciences.

In 2002/03, a university committee recommended revisions to the university's copyright policy. The University Faculty endorsed the recommendations, but no action has been

taken on them. The chair of the Library Board was asked to write to the Vice Provost for Researching urging him to consider the proposals and, if agreeable, to forward them the Trustees for consideration.

### **Large-scale digitization of books**

Large-scale digitization of books is likely to be a very important development for the library and the university over the next decade. Cornell has digitization projects with two commercial companies, Microsoft and Google, and with the not-for-profit Open Content Alliance. Last year, the board raised questions about the long-term legal restraints in the commercial contracts; while recognizing these problems, the Provost decided to accept the risks and continue.

The challenges this year have been more practical: issues of quality control and metadata. Hopefully, these are short-term problems, but they are serious and need to be addressed. In the medium term, there are serious problems about works that are still under copyright but not actively maintained as backlist by publishers.

### **Membership**

During 2007/2008, the members of the board were: William Arms (Computer Science, chair), Wilfried Brutsaert (Civil & Environmental Engineering), Debbie Cherney (Animal Science), Clete Daniel (Industrial and Labor Relations), Paul Ginsparg (Physics), Rebecca Harris-Warrick (Music), John Hermanson (Biomedical Science), Van Dyke Lewis (Fiber Science & Apparel Design), Mary Beth Norton (History), Christian Otto (Architecture), Jon Parmenter (History), Nerissa Russell (Anthropology), Charles Walcott (Dean of the Faculty, ex officio), Brad Anton (Associate Dean of the Faculty, ex officio), Anne Kenney (University Librarian, ex officio), Robert Buhrman (Vice Provost for Research and Advanced Studies, ex officio), John Siliciano (Vice Provost, representing the Provost). Many members of the Library prepared materials and joined the meetings by invitation. Sandie Sutfin of the Dean of Faculty Office and the staff of the University Library provided administrative support.

Submitted on behalf of the University Faculty Library Board.

William Y. Arms  
21 May 2008