

To: Bill Fry, Dean of Faculty

From: Mary Beth Norton

Re: Annual Report, University Faculty Library Board, 2011-12

With library consolidations and moves largely planned before the year began (and completed during the year), the faculty library board could turn its attention to other pressing issues. Most importantly, and throughout the year, we focused on the problem of appropriations for collections development. Cornell's acquisitions have fallen significantly behind our peer institutions since the budget crunch of 2008-9, thus seriously endangering the university's goal (stated in the strategic plan) of returning to a position in the top 10 university libraries in the country. At its first meeting in the fall semester the board affirmed its support for such a goal, and it has worked consistently to further that affirmation. To that end, we met with Provost Kent Fuchs and Vice-Provost John Siliciano in November to express our concerns about the funding for collections development. Partly as a result, we believe, the provost designated library collections as a high priority in the current capital campaign. In addition, the library was chosen as Cornell's candidate for a major NEH Challenge grant that would support collection development.

Subsequently, a great deal of work by numerous people, especially Abby Cohn (Linguistics), the co-chair of the Library Humanities Collections Committee, and myself, as chair of the Library Board, culminated in a petition drafted and circulated to the faculty under the auspices of the University Faculty Committee and the Library Board. This petition (included with this report is the transmittal letter, summarizing the petition and comments by signers) attracted more than 500 signatures from faculty members supporting increased support for collections development in the library. We distributed it to the President, Provost, and the deans of all the colleges in Ithaca. We have been very pleased by the positive response of the central administration to the petition, and conversations with the provost are planned to continue over the summer.

We also spent time on the following:

- 1) what seems to be a perpetual topic, revising aspects of the library's web site to improve access to collections and respond to student concerns.
- 2) the HathiTrust, of which we are a member, which is digitizing books and hopes to distribute out of copyright and "orphan" (those for which the copyright holders cannot be identified) works to other members of the trust and eventually to other institutions, but which has now been sued—with Cornell as a named defendant—over copyright issues.
- 3) advising the library staff on planning a new graduate study space on the 5th floor of Olin library (replacing what are now staff offices).
- 4) Support and development of the VIVO database to allow people at Cornell and elsewhere to find each other by linking different data systems. Jump-started by NIH

funding in 2008, the system has been so successful that it is being adopted throughout the world.

5) Considering the new NYC tech campus, which will not have physical collections, but will have “library” research space (we had an initial discussion that will surely expand as plans for the new campus proceed).

6) Issues involving journals, including an expanding boycott of Elsevier, one of the major international publishers; and interest in open access journals (which appear attractive from a financial standpoint, but which are by no means “free,” as we know from hosting arXiv, an open-access system for physics research in process). The library is attempting to move arXiv to a sustainable funding model through contributions from other institutions (and it’s working, thanks in part to a planning grant from the Simons Foundation).

7) The possibility of purchasing books from university presses in e-book format only. Cornell has been approached by two different publishers’ consortiums but the library has made no decision yet about what to do. Faculty are being consulted.

8) Access to Cornell dissertations in digital form during the first five years after submission (should they be open or closed for that period?).

9) Library access for retirees who are not professors emeriti.