

Minutes of the Student Library Liaison Group Meeting 18 June 2008

Present: Cathryn Gallacher (chair), Charlie Done, Sarah Harrop, Peter King, Chris Prior, Mike Wall

Apologies: Alison Allden, Emma Feggetter, Jennifer Scherr, Tobin Webb

1. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be correct.

Item 1 - TW did not attend the meeting, so further information on his progress on creating wider student involvement the Student-Library group was not available.

Item 3 – PK said that £100,000 had been earmarked for extending library opening hours following a budget proposal made earlier in the year. See Item 3 below.

2. Issues to be raised by student representatives

No issues raised.

3. Library opening hours

PK reported on the bid for £100,000 to be allocated for a trial period of extended library opening at the Arts & Social Sciences Library (ASSL). The bid had been successful and though fine tuning of arrangements might be required, PK was able to circulate a document to the group summarising the proposed extension of hours.

Should the library hours be extended PK and SH stressed the importance of student feedback on the changes to ensure that funding was being appropriately spent and to make a case for its continuation if required.

PK said he had received comments that raised concerns about student welfare and security issues that might be caused by late-night opening.

CD responded that in her view students should be regarded as young adults, and must take a responsible attitude towards use of facilities at all times of the day. Since longer opening hours is what students want, concerns of this nature should be addressed, but should not prevent longer opening being introduced. She noted that security issues are a concern for the University around the campus: proper lighting and a late-night bus service would help. She also suggested that information and reminders about personal safety might be placed in the Library, along with personal attack alarms.

PK said that two other branch libraries' opening hours were being addressed:

- The Geography Library would extend opening until 7pm in term-times, in response to demand from, and with the support of, student representatives in the Geography Department.
- In past years the Wills Library had received some external funding from a firm of lawyers that enabled longer opening hours. This funding was coming to an

end, but the Library would find replacement money to ensure opening hours were not reduced.

4. Refurbishment plans

MW gave an overview of the library refurbishments in progress. While a bigger project to create a new library (Libris project – see item 5) is under way this will take some years to deliver. Therefore a programme of refurbishments for the benefit of current students is in progress.

The ASSL & Medical Library refurbishments are in progress; improvements at the Education and Chemistry Libraries are in planning stages; the Physics, Geography and Queen's Building Libraries are also on a prospective refurbishments list, though implementation of refurbishments is funding-dependent

Reviews of library users' requirements have indicated the need for social learning spaces in the libraries: it is expected that by providing areas for informal group study there will be consequential improvements in the areas provided for silent study.

MW said that the Library was doing its best to minimise disruption in the ASSL and Medical Library. Alternative study locations are available in other branches and also in the Student Refectory, where wireless networking facilities would be installed.

CD acknowledged that there would never be an ideal time for building work. The plan to conduct much of the work over the summer vacation is sensible, though consideration should be given to postgraduates engaged in writing up.

5. Libris

PK reported on the Libris project. The project has come about following the realisation that the previously proposed project – the Nucleus complex – did not fall within the capacity of the University. The Libris project provides a new plan for building new accommodation for the Library and Computing Service on the Hawthorns site. (On completion of the Libris building the refurbished ASSL building will be converted into academic space.)

The latest progress with the Libris project had seen the invitation of expressions of interest from architects (the invitation was published in the Official Journal of the European Union). Around 100 expressions of interest had been received so far, with shortlisting to take place in the near future.

This is an ambitious project: the completion date is estimated to be 2012, and the investment is currently expected to be around £65 million.

6. Enquiry Service review

CG reported on a library project to look at the provision of enquiry services across all branches of the Library. This had involved consultation with staff providing services, and would result in a report with recommendations for improving the service. These recommendations would be piloted and adapted following feedback from students.

Action: CG will report on the findings of the review and piloted measures at the next meeting.

7. AoB

None raised.

PK thanked CD for attending and said he would like to see much more student representation at the group.

CD agreed that this would be beneficial, and that she would look into this issue with Union colleagues. Ideally at least 2 undergraduates and 2 postgraduates should attend.

CD said that she and TW would be working over the summer to encourage course representatives to become much more involved with library matters, along with other matters in their departments and across the University.

Action: CD to report back on progress made with course representatives in the new academic year.

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