

Minutes of the Student Library Liaison Group Meeting

16 March 2010

Present: Darcy Ahl, Cathryn Gallacher (chair), William Dean, Emma Di Lorio, Sarah Harrop, Louisa Pittman, Mike Wall

Apologies: Jennifer Scherr

Overview of current matters

1. Money for books (CG)

The Arts and Social Sciences have been given £250K for new books. CG reported back on the progress being made in purchasing books (roughly 700 books per month) and the process by which students can make requests (online, through Subject Librarians, or on printed forms in the ASSL).

Next year the book budget will increase again (10% over inflation for a total increase of 11.5%). There is not expected to be a change in the budget for journals; however, the book and journal budgets are now separate from each other.

2. Opening hours (CG)

CG reported that there have been significant increases in opening hours for the ASSL throughout the year (eg, the library will be open over the Easter holiday weekend) and that this is an ongoing area for review. There have been recent discussions surrounding 24/7 opening for ASSL with Derek Pretty and cost projections for this during certain periods. Students will be asked to prioritise their various requests which require additional resource.

3. Noise/food in upper floors of the ASSL (CG)

Noise continues to be an issue on the 1st and 2nd floors, as does the consumption of food; signs are not sufficient as students ignore them and it is not possible to patrol enough to make a significant difference. Discussion as to the causes: the ASSL is not associated with a single department and therefore has less of a 'community' feel; students don't necessarily feel the same peer pressure to respect silent areas as in other libraries. Solution isn't clear, but CG asked student reps for opinions and help in solving issue as it must be driven in part by students and self-regulated to be successful. Sanctions (fines/expulsion from library) were discussed as a possible solution, although it was agreed this would be a last resort.

4. Library refurbishments (MW)

Largest current project is the refurb of the Education Library, due to finish by the beginning of April when the new library will re-open. Other refurbishment projects in the works are:

- upper floors of the ASSL – areas to be addressed are carpets, furniture, décor; new space configurations limited but possible. Funds look likely for 2011/12; work may be carried out in two phases. Students will be consulted re furniture/configuration closer to implementation.

- Wills Library – temperature and power are the main issues, along with improving the library entrance/signage and the student common room. Funded by UoB centenary campaign so not driven by the LMT, but work carried out will be sympathetic to the building.
- Chemistry – Bids are going forward but will need alternative service elsewhere during any major refurb so quite a big project. Emma reported that there were student complaints about the space and the fact that it was seemingly being given a lower priority than Wills. MW explained that this wasn't the case as the funding for Wills was being provided from another source.

Smaller scale refurbishments will continue on a rolling basis to address urgent needs and key issues. There is University support for this as they recognize the need especially as the Libris project is on hold.

5. Library systems (MW)

Projects are in hand to update and provide better systems for the electronic resources, online library catalogue, and journals database; work should be completed over the summer holiday and during the autumn term.

6. Roving service in ASSL (SH)

The outcome of the roving service which was trialled last year is that the start of the autumn term is the key time to provide this service.

7. Issues raised by student reps

Acknowledgement of book requests: LP raised the issue that there is no feedback as to whether books requested have been ordered or not and wondered whether this was possible. CG commented that due to the number of books being ordered it is too labour-intensive to email students individually, and that generally one should assume that the book has been ordered unless otherwise informed. (A general email has now been drafted sent out to UGs in the Arts and Social Sciences and Law faculties thanking them for their requests and encouraging them to continue to do so.) It takes a couple of months for the book to show up in the catalogue once it has been ordered; students can check back at an appropriate time to see if it has been added.

Library inductions (EDL): These are not mandatory but are recommended and offered to all departments. Library staff believes them to be useful and necessary as often a complaint that we 'don't have something' is not true but the student does not know how to find the resource in question. Alternatives to sessions at the start of the academic year are targeted sessions at appropriate times (eg, dissertation research skills, as suggested by WD) and for information literacy skills to be built into academic department assignments and/or curriculum. Training can be delivered by an academic-librarian team, or by subject librarians. Although it was agreed to be more relevant for certain subjects (eg, Medicine, Law), the level of awareness of the importance of these skills is increasing.

Inter-library loan vouchers (LP & EDL): Issues with the distribution of vouchers in some departments; students find it difficult to negotiate system as inconsistent across departments. LP reported a 'delay' in receiving ILL vouchers. MW explained that the departmental library reps are responsible

for the distribution of vouchers, but that there shouldn't be any delay or problem in supplying additional vouchers to the departments. The departmental library reps are responsible for working with the subject librarians to ensure the flow and allocation of ILL vouchers is appropriate to current needs; departments/schools/faculties have independent budgets for ILLs. Contact details for the library representatives can be found on the specific subject pages, accessed through: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/is/library/subjects/>. DA has agreed to try to locate a list of these reps to send to EDL.

8. Library issues raised in the 'Change One Thing' initiative (EDL)

All books on course reading lists available in the library on short-term loans (109 votes): Only possible with if there is good communication with academics and advance notice of reading lists. Short-term loans generally are 3 hrs but there may be the need for better communication about what SL is and how it can be used, as there are other limited loan options as well (24-hour, 3-day, etc).

24-hour opening (95 votes): This is an ongoing area for review; see item 2 above.

Free printer credits (this appears in three different variations with a total of 118 votes): EDL suggested that this is mostly an issue as some departments give free printer credits whereas many others do not. The discrepancies are perceived to be unfair and cause dissatisfaction among the students who are not given the credits (esp in the Arts and Social Sciences). The bottom line is that Information Services cannot afford to give free printer credit to all students; the departments who choose to do this are using money from their own budgets and therefore have autonomous control over the decision. Derek Pretty, in the Registrar's Office, is the person who should be contacted to take this issue forward.

Union/student notice board in library (58 votes): EDL asked whether it would be possible to have a notice board for student information/events in the ASSL. The LMT feel that this is too labour-intensive and that the upkeep is too difficult and prefer to have only official IS information posted in the library.

Other suggestions, which were not discussed in full, include:

- Lockers in library (no appropriate place for this)
- Latex software on computers (to be raised with Computing)
- More books in ASSL (see item 1 above)
- Order more journals, and stop cancelling online subscriptions (journal budget is fixed; the library liaises with academics to decide which journals to cancel to meet budgetary constraints)
- Increased privacy/isolation in libraries (students will be consulted when refurbishment happens in the ASSL); the intention is to provide areas for both silent (individual) study and group work, bearing in mind that the noise level is an issue so will need to be carefully done.