

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY
AY 2008-2009

To: Steering Committee, Academic Senate
From: Mark D. Van Ells, Chairperson
Date: 10 August 2009
Subject: Annual Report of the Committee on the Library

Committee Members: Mark D. Van Ells (chairperson), Virginia Cowen (secretary), Michael Altimiri, Nam Jong Moh (Steering Committee designee), Jeanne Galvin (ex officio).

Dates committee met: 9/24/08, 11/5/08, 2/4/09, 3/4/09, 5/13/09.

Narrative summary of committee work:

The primary work of the committee this semester involved physical changes to the library. Many changes have been the result of library space being allocated to CETL, as well as the reduction of library floor space in previous years. The library is undergoing a major reorganization of floor space, to include new shelving and quiet study areas for students.

Renovations began in December 2008. Professor Galvin reported that in addition to the generous contribution of QSA, substantial funding was given by the college. The whole library was re-carpeted. The main entrance was refurbished and additional security gates were added. New study carrels were purchased for the second floor. The perimeter of the third floor was tiled. The center of the floor and the library classroom were re-carpeted. Shelving was moved and the entire circulating collection was shifted. Group study areas with technology were created, an improvement that is line with current practices at other academic libraries. Desks and workstations for two faculty or staff members were created on the third floor. Professor Galvin reported that student response was overwhelmingly positive. The committee received no comments or concerns from faculty members about the physical renovations.

A ribbon cutting ceremony took place on April 21, 2009. Since the renovations, Galvin reported an increase in student use of the library, an increase in reference questions and book circulation, and a decrease in situations requiring disciplinary action in the library. In other words, more students are using the library in ways that are academically productive. The committee took several “field trips” to the library to inspect the changes, and was positively impressed with the work. It was the sense of the committee that library service for students had improved substantially during this period.

Another topic of discussion was the collection itself. Professor Galvin began the process of “weeding” books that have not circulated in years from the collection. Such a move was necessary due to the reduction in library floor space that had occurred in previous years. Galvin informed the committee that all of the librarians were assigned areas to weed, depending on their subject expertise. Frequent checks of circulation histories for individual titles helped in the decision making process. Weeded books were assigned to one of the following categories: discard (usually books in very poor condition or obviously outdated, e.g. an anatomy book from 1967), storage (not frequently used, but significant for the particular discipline) and largesse. She noted that the largesse practice is a time honored custom among librarians. In CUNY and in the world of academic libraries, she reported, librarians frequently offer books to other libraries. It was her idea that our largesse program would result in our books going to other CUNY libraries where they would still be available to the CUNY community. However, the library also offered largesse to the faculty at QCC. Books not claimed by QCC faculty or other CUNY libraries were offered to staff and students on our “Free – Take One” truck. It was the sense of the committee that Ms. Galvin’s professional expertise and judgment should be deferred to in the matter.

The committee also discussed the Middle States self-study. In a previous year, the committee developed a series of questions to determine faculty opinions toward the library and its services. Those questions – in modified form – were included in the self-study survey of faculty. In general, the faculty seemed quite pleased with the professionalism of the library staff, but believed the resources for scholarly research could be improved upon. Other topics discussed by the committee this semester included the problems with extending library hours, the library’s participation in the Learning Academies, the development of electronic resources, disability access, the possible renaming of the library, and collection development.

New Committee Members for 2007-2008: Virginia Cowen, Laura Freedgood, Lisa Yonker.

New Chairperson for 2008-2009: Virginia Cowen