IDEAS FROM THE APR REPORTS REVIEW

Notes from the open meeting discussion of March 12, 2013

10:30 – 12:00 pm

Education-Psychology Library

Present: Adnan Malik, Bernie Hurley, Beth Dupuis, Carlos Delgado, Charlotte Rubens, Corliss Lee, David Eifler, Elliott Smith, Gail Ford, Gisele Tanasse, Hilary Schiraldi, Jan Carter, Jason Schulz, Jeffery Loo, Jianye He, Jill Woolums, Jim Church, Kathleen Gallagher, Lisa Ngo, Lydia Petersen, Lynn Jones, Lynne Grigsby, Margaret Phillips, Mark Marrow, Mary Elings, Michael Sholinbeck, Michaelyn Burnette, Myrtis Cochran, Norma Kobzina, Paul Hamburg, Shayee Khanaka, Susan Koskinen, Tom Leonard, Toshie Marra

ABOUT THE MEETING

At this meeting we discussed the Library’s collective review exercise of APR self-study reports1; and the issues, the library impact, and the library enhancement ideas identified from liaisons’ review of the APR self-study reports (which was conducted in winter 2013 and detailed in the draft report distributed on March 1, 2013 to the re-envision@lists.berkeley.edu listserv).

This meeting was divided into three parts:

- As part one, we had a large group discussion to reflect upon the value of the APR reports and our review process in general.
- In the second part, we broke into smaller discussion teams of approximately five members to discuss priorities and any refinements for one of three wide-ranging themes identified in the final report (Change in Academic Departments, Interdisciplinary Activities, and the Value of Academic Libraries). The teams then shared a summary of their discussion to the larger group.
- And in the final part of the meeting, we re-grouped to explore the future of the Library’s engagement with the APR reports.

The following sections outline the questions for each part of the meeting and then summarize the ensuing discussion.

PART 1. REFLECTION UPON THE LIBRARY’S APR REVIEW EXERCISE

What is the value of the APR self-study reports? What is the value of our review exercise?

1 http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/Staff/APR/
The narrative parts of the APR reports give a valuable overview and summary of a department that are especially helpful for new liaisons. They communicate a department’s tone, climate, and folklore; what they value; where they sit politically in the campus; and what their priorities and directions are (e.g., new institutes being built, new faculty hiring trends).

Additionally, the statistics given help quantify a department’s priorities and provide greater certainty and confirmation to liaisons’ anecdotal understanding of departments.

Together, these details may inform strategic directions for collection development and many library services. We may also discover pressing departmental needs that could be met by existing library resources and services, which would be a great catalyst for promoting the library.

**PART 2. PRIORITIZATION AND REFINEMENTS OF IDEAS IDENTIFIED**

*For the three themes Change in Academic Departments, Interdisciplinary Activities, and Value of Academic Libraries, what do we feel should be priorities? Any refinements or new ideas?*

**DISCUSSION THEME 1: INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES**

**Fundamental issues**

As interdisciplinary studies and activities between departments increase, liaisons are working with more diverse patrons. Students take more classes outside of their major and they bring different perspectives and levels of experience in working with disciplinary information resources and tools. Furthermore, boundaries are becoming unclear. Students in cross-listed classes view the content as falling under discipline A or B and even sometimes C, and this may lead to confusion and complications as library liaisons try to address the different information needs.

With interdisciplinarity, liaisons also face a tension between being a specialist versus a generalist. Do we focus our expertise on a specific genre, like Dante’s works, or should we cultivate a broader expertise on comparative literature instead? In any case, there is a greater need for liaisons with expertise in a wider range.

**Languages**

There is a need for language training materials and resources for students from different backgrounds and disciplines.

Collection development in non-English languages should span a wider range of subjects. We need to pay attention to a variety of subjects instead of focusing on literature, compositions, and exotic works. For instance, different disciplinary researchers may
need works in a foreign language – like the economist studying Russian finance may need economic works in the Russian language.

**Organizational structure**

Library and subject silos complicate patron access to resources across disciplines. This is a space problem and may require changes to the Library structure. For example, consolidating libraries might facilitate interdisciplinary research as more resources are conveniently together.

A philosophical question was raised about liaison roles. How are liaisons organized to serve patrons? Currently, the model is configured along academic departments, but is this the best approach? Where do research institutes and centers fit into this model?

**Collections re-structuring**

Many questions were raised about the variety in collections needs.

How do we assess collections needs – particularly for emerging needs? Who are the key stakeholders when assessing collections needs? How do we find out more about departmental scholarship and their collection needs?

How to fund for interdisciplinary collection development? How do we increase funds for interdisciplinary materials?

How do we build a structure that supports interdisciplinary disciplines and collaboration? What changes are necessary?

Additionally, there is a need for balance to support emerging research areas as well as the unique programs at Berkeley, to fill in gaps for disciplinary areas not currently collected, and to embrace new media and information formats.

**Website**

We could make the library website more helpful for interdisciplinary research by creating pages and guides that bring together different disciplinary resources – particularly surrounding big campus themes like globalization or sustainability.

**Collaborative services and cross-training**

Increase collaboration among librarians to address interdisciplinary fields (e.g., collaborative library instruction, service partnerships).

Cross- and peer-training may develop liaisons’ skills to work with different disciplinary resources and to broaden the knowledge base to work with different domains.
Connections and communication across departments

Forging connections between disciplines is mostly ad hoc. What is the role of the Library in connecting faculty across disciplines? How does the Library become aware of interdisciplinary activities on campus?

Some proxy measures for interdisciplinary awareness include studying the grants being funded at Berkeley, following news and reports from the Sponsored Projects Office, and reviewing campus and journal publications.

On a small scale, interdisciplinary collaborations come and go, but joint programs could be more long lasting. We could focus on the latter.

DISCUSSION THEME 2: CHANGE IN ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

Space shortages
Concerns were raised about a space grab by academic departments for library facilities.

Library space is also a great opportunity to heighten Library identity as an interdisciplinary place to congregate, collaborate, and share ideas among faculty and students alike. Additionally, the Library could serve as a learning and instructional space that provides faculty with a wide range of teaching tools and technologies.

Growing enrolment in core classes
Growing faculty teaching load, fewer Graduate Student Instructors, and larger enrolment in core classes are challenging trends.

Large core classes are taken by a diverse range of students (e.g., majors, non-majors, transfer students) so there may not be a common knowledge base among the students. This has a great impact on instruction and reference services.

The growing enrolment also online reserves and reference services. But it also raises the issue about prioritizing between the library needs of majors versus non-majors.

Curriculum and program reform
New degree programs are developing with greater interdisciplinary partnerships among faculty and researchers with research interests that have a wider scope.

Online learning and e-resources
While there are online degree programs in Public Health and Engineering, we wonder if it is too early for online learning to be a top priority for the Library. Is it “real” enough yet?

In some classes, faculty are going back to printing course packs for students to buy. Electronic course packs and readers can impose a large printing cost and inconvenience to students.
Alignment to changing campus research
The Library exhibits could highlight emerging research at Berkeley.

DISCUSSION THEME 3: VALUE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES
The Library could support overworked faculty by developing and supporting more advisory services like research advisory support for student projects and theses, peer-to-peer advisory services like peer learning or peer mentorship, and programs to help students develop their academic skills.

The Library should focus on our unique expertise and role in information literacy. We could create dynamic and visually stimulating research instructional modules – and put them front and center on our website. Ideally, there would be a generic research methods module that is complemented by departmental or discipline-based research modules.

To build these information literacy training resources and tools, we need a team-based approach that includes instructional designers, library instructors, graphic designers, along with IT and multimedia support.

The Library could be more aggressive in promoting what we do and our available resources. Some options may be pursuing course-integrated instruction with faculty or conducting large-scale orientations that reach a wider range of students.

COMMON THREADS ACROSS THE DISCUSSION THEMES
There are twin issues related to awareness. First is the Library’s awareness of academic departments. What does the Library know about academic departments and their work? What can the Library take in to stay current with academic departments? Second is academic departments’ awareness of the Library. How do we enhance what the campus knows about the Library? How do we promote and communicate how library services, resources, and expertise can match and support departmental goals?

Another common thread is the impact of e-resources. There is a need to connect different disciplinary e-resources together, to remove boundaries and foster convenient access, and to understand their impact on the printing and print-based needs of patrons.

A third common thread is fostering social, research, and learning connections between faculty, between programs, and between students.
PART 3. FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY’S ENGAGEMENT WITH APR REPORTS

How can the Library engage with our collective APR review ideas/findings?

Library personnel can make use of APR review ideas/findings at three separate levels:

1. At the individual liaison/staff level, we have identified many smaller ideas that we could individually implement. Pick up an idea and try it out.
2. At the function or subject council level, we can form collaborations or teams to work on ideas and issues that require a supportive network.
3. At the administrative level, liaisons/staff could start a dialogue to vet and identify those library-wide ideas and issues that need administrative support. We can bring up discussions with library administrators on issues related to library organizational structures, professional development needs, funding needs, etc.

Should we hold a future collective review exercise?

Yes, the collective review exercise of APR reports by liaisons should continue. The group effort is a motivating force and it provides a wonderful opportunity for peer-learning and an exchange of ideas. Furthermore, this APR review exercise has been an interesting channel for communicating new ideas across the normal subject and function council channels allowing for a broader reach.

How can we improve this Library review exercise?

Administrative direction
There needs to be clear direction on how the APR review outcomes and findings will be used and how they fit within administrative and liaison practices.

To keep the momentum going, there needs to be an administrative structure (that includes unit/department heads) to continue discussions and refinements on liaisons’ APR analyses.

Greater access to review documentation
It would be great to look at APR reports over time to compare the departmental plans and accomplishments over each review.

Ideally, the Library will have access to the review details and other supplementary information (like the outcome letter) surrounding the APR process.

For research centers and institutes that don’t undergo APR review, is there a channel for their review and self-study documents?

Encourage departments to discuss the Library in their APR reports
Include a library question in the writing guidelines for APR self-study reports. This could help collect departments’ perspectives on libraries and their specific library needs for academic advancement.

In the preparation of self-study reports, academic departments are informed by a quantitative “Summary of Central Data” prepared by the Office of Planning and Analysis. This report collects data from campus-wide surveys to help departments quantify their services and activities. It would be helpful to insert more library questions into the campus-wide surveys in order for there to be library statistics for departments to review.

**Resolving the conflict between the Library’s goals and departments’ goals**
What do we do if Library roles and priorities do not align with what departments report they need?

How do we reconcile divergent views of the Library? In some APR reports, the Library is held in high regard, but in other reports the Library isn’t mentioned.

**Formalizing communication between liaisons and departmental administrators and departmental libraries**
There needs to be a formalized process or channel to connect departmental administrators and faculty with library liaisons. This will foster better communication on meeting library and information needs.

Additionally, what can the Library do to articulate the pressing issues and needs of the Library with central campus administrators and academic departments?

Finally, there are departmental libraries across campus that would benefit from support. Should the Library take on departmental library collections and services in order to avoid duplication and grow the fund base for more robust library resources and services? How do we encourage collaboration and discussion?

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2 [http://vpapf.chance.berkeley.edu/apr/guide/guide.html](http://vpapf.chance.berkeley.edu/apr/guide/guide.html)