

Library Student Advisory Council Meeting Notes

Tuesday, November 26, 5-6:30PM

Present:

- Mariana Batista, VP: Student Affairs (USC)
- Tessa Smith, Social Science Students' Council (USC)
- Casey Lin, FIMS, 4th year
- Bruce Yu, Social Science, 2nd year
- Duaa Abbasi, Social Science, 3rd year
- Yousuf Ali, Health Sciences, 1st year
- Anna Oliveira, USAL, Arts and Humanities, 2nd year
- Anthony Cruz, VP: Academic (SOGS, Social Science)
- RJ Dill, SOGS Councillor (MLIS)
- Fatemeh Aminjafari, Chemical/Biochemical Engineering
- Geoffrey Robert Little, Vice Provost and Chief Librarian, Chair
- Sara Poulin, User Services Manger, Taylor Library
- Jennifer Robinson, User Experience Librarian, Outreach (Notes)

Regrets:

- Chantel Bennett, Music Students' Council (USC)
- Jaylin Marriott, Science, 2nd year
- Jiyon Shim, Arts and Humanities

Agenda

1. **Update from the Vice Provost and Chief Librarian (Geoffrey Robert Little)**

Geoffrey welcomed the group and thanked everyone for their engagement. As the newly arrived Vice Provost and Chief Librarian he has been using his time since July to get a sense of Western Libraries and Western. He is looking forward to listening at Council to learn more about how we can better support students and their academic goals.

2. **Brescia Library update (Mariana Batista)**

Mari asked for an update on the timeline for transferring resources (i.e. the book collection) from the Brescia Library and future plans for the former library space.

Geoffrey provided the following update: Brescia became part of Western last year, and Western Libraries has been charged with absorbing Brescia's collection. This work is underway and materials will start to become available in January. Given the size of the collection and the time needed to handle and process physical items it will take until late winter or early spring for everything to be in place. Geoffrey noted that our current catalogue, OMNI, easily allows one to search across Ontario and borrow materials as they are needed, so we can get people the content they require quickly. The Brescia Library space was never handed over to Western Libraries and is outside of our sphere of control. Western Libraries is aware of the pressing need for study space, and will be soft launching a new silent study room space in Weldon in December, with additional study space opening up on the newly renovated ground floor sometime in the near year.

3. Library Exam Hours (Bruce Yu)

Bruce asked for more information about how extended library hours are set during exams. He assumed consideration included the need to cover additional expenses incurred to run extended hours, including facilities and security costs.

Geoffrey, Sara, and Jennifer provided the following response:

There are additional expenses incurred by the library to stay open extended hours, as well as health and safety considerations. The library pays for security services as well as for additional housekeeping during the extended exam period. At this time, Weldon stays open until 3AM on select dates. Head counts conducted in prior years have indicated use of the library drops off dramatically after 3AM, which informs when we close. With no way to secure only a portion of the library for the small number of students who wish to study after 3AM, it becomes expensive and a health and safety risk to keep the building open largely unoccupied.

Mari shared that the UCC is open 24 hours and has new study space that students can use. It was recommended that this information be added to library hours information, especially posters on the front doors, directing students to this space after 3AM, as it should be large enough to meet demand. **Action: Jennifer will take this back to Western Libraries for consideration.**

We also factor in public transit and USC shuttle service availability when setting our hours, as we want to make sure students are able to get home safely. The last USC shuttle departs campus at 3AM.

A follow up question was posed about the length of extended hours, as they seemed to return to regular operating hours sooner than the end of the exam schedule last year.

We use the exam schedule to set extended hours, and keep Weldon Library open up until writing time of the last exam on the final day of exams, which usually means closing at 7PM. Jennifer reviewed Weldon exam hours after the meeting and confirmed extended hours will run until Friday, December 20, when the Library will be open until 3AM. It will then be open 9AM-7PM on December 21 and 22.

A follow up question was asked about how Western's exam hours compare to other Universities.

We have compared our hours to other Universities and find we are in line with most. Some have more hours, some have less. It can be difficult to do a direct comparison as library facilities vary so widely; for example, some facilities have a 24/7 area in the larger Library building. Creating a 24/7 study space was considered as part of the Weldon Revitalization Project but was not viable due to a number of factors arising from the nature of the building.

There was a suggestion to collate and share information about all study spaces on campus, especially around the exam period. **Action: Jennifer will take this back to Western Libraries for consideration.**

4. Library environment (Casey Lin)

Casey asked if there was more we could do to encourage students to leave library spaces clean after they use them.

Other students shared their experiences sharing library space and agreed that the environment is not good. Too many people treat Weldon as a cafeteria and disregard signs and any enforcement of the food rule. The UCC is too full for people to eat so they move over to Weldon and crowd out those trying to study. People have also observed students leaving packages and bags unattended on library tables and going to class to hold a seat all day. In this way, the library is not being used for how it was designed.

It was noted that there are other spaces available on campus to study, such as the Rec Centre which has added tables and chairs. It was suggested that the library do more to promote these spaces. Preferably a large map that shows people where they can go to study and eat. **Action: Jennifer will take this back to Western Libraries for consideration.**

Students asked if Western Libraries could do more to enforce the food and drink policy. Not only do people eating take away study space, the tables are often sticky and full of garbage after people leave. Discussion ensued about possible ways to do this, noting that we want to have a culture where people are welcome but still accountable to how the

library was designed to be used. **Action: Jennifer will take this back to Western Libraries for consideration.**

5. Leisure reading collection (Jennifer Robinson)

Jennifer shared that there is an opportunity to curate a leisure reading collection for the mezzanine Reading Lounge in the Weldon Learning Commons. This arises out of feedback from students that they would like access and exposure to more leisure reading materials. Jennifer is recommending a small group of Advisory Council members be identified to help select a theme for the leisure reading collection this year, which would help define the type of books chosen to be displayed. The collection will be held in the Reading Lounge on the mezzanine of the Weldon Learning Commons.

Students asked if books from the Brescia Leisure Reading collection could be used as part of the collection. Jennifer indicated that yes, they definitely can, and should be! There is also a small budget that can be used to add new books to this collection.

After some discussion and ideas for making the initiative successful, there was general enthusiasm and support for the idea of curating a Leisure Reading collection. **Action: Jennifer will follow up with a more specific ask to Council members about helping to curate the leisure reading collection, with work to begin in the Winter term.**