TISCH LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT
Library Committee, November 4, 2015

Collections Update:
The Collections department regularly reviews usage data, applies our subject expertise, and talks to patrons to ensure we are renewing resources that are a good fit for the AS&E community. After a careful review, we have made a number of cancellations of underutilized, not core reference titles, as well as a more expensive resource that was simply not getting used by AS&E faculty to justify its cost. Additionally, this year as part of our regular review of resources we cost-share with the other libraries on campus, we will realize some additional savings as the share has been rebalanced in our favor in a couple of packages. We expect to save approximately $50,000 this year, which we will direct into new expenditures to support the AS&E community.

Budget Season:
Work is ongoing to prepare the budget proposal for Tisch Library. Regarding collections, in order to maintain existing collections, the library would need a 5% increase to cover the expected 4-6% cost increases from publishers and a further 1% to enable growth for new materials. A 6% increase is roughly $500K. New pressures on the collections budget have come from curricular changes, including the Film and Media studies major, special collections materials to support humanities and some social sciences faculty, a minor in Portuguese, and the cumulative pressures from Economics and SoE for materials related to finance, innovation, and new product development. Additionally, we are developing requests for funding for staffing and facilities needs for the library. Re-allocating staff resources due to turn-over has been helpful, but the growing demand for library services cannot be met through attrition alone. Regarding facilities, given that we are as yet unable to move to architectural plans for renovation, we must make some investments in maintenance (especially new carpet) and upgrades (especially to replace and improve seating and collaborative space).

Parents and Families Weekend:
We had great success in our experiment with new programming for Parents and Family Weekend last month. Our traditional Author Talk program drew a large audience to hear from GSAS alumnus Noah Wilson-Rich discussing his book, The Bee: A Natural History. Following the talk, we offered our first “open house” on Friday afternoon, with an additional open house Saturday. The open house included tours (both guided and self-guided), explanations of how we work with students, and a rare books exhibit. The interest in the rare books exceeded our expectations. Christopher Barbour designed the exhibit to allow visitors to enjoy the works themselves, as well as to see descriptions of how some faculty use these works in their courses. To get a taste of the event, see his Flickr tour.

Expectations for increased fundraising for the library are rising. We hope that parents will be a core audience for these efforts in the future.

Iron Mountain Storage:
The Library Committee for the academic year 2013-14 focused on the growing shortage of shelving at Tisch Library. While we are still a few years away from absolutely needing off-site shelving, a new opportunity was presented to the Boston Library Consortium (BLC). The company Iron Mountain is attempting to enter the library storage market with a three year pilot program to establish the business model. Having developed the pilot in collaboration with a Pennsylvania consortium (PALCI), Iron Mountain
is looking for additional institutions to join the pilot and store materials in their warehouse. The company has engineered a new model for higher density of storage and thus is offering better pricing for a preservation quality environment. Members of BLC are able to participate without any minimum volume count required. Tufts plans to join the pilot, with storage of volumes from Tisch and the Webster Library in Grafton. This will be an opportunity to test their new model, see if it works for our needs, and if so, be able to expand our use of the storage as collection growth and/or renovation opportunities necessitates.

SMFA:
Dorothy Meaney and Laura Wood travelled to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts on Friday, Oct. 30, to meet the director of Library Services and Visual Resources and tour the SMFA library and a few of the MFA Curatorial Libraries. The possibility of Tufts acquiring the SMFA requires some careful considerations of the existing library resources and services. The SMFA library specializes in contemporary art, has a small but interesting special collection, and is developed as one node of the MFA library system (with a large portion of new materials coming from donations to the Museum). The SMFA/MFA is also a member of consortia to which Tufts does not belong. If the Tufts trustees approve moving forward, we will need to negotiate this complex environment and further examine the opportunities and challenges.

Accessibility Working Group:
Over the summer, I convened a small working of staff to evaluate the state of accessibility of all aspects of the library—physical space, collections, services, and technology—for community members and especially students needing accommodations for various disabilities. The working group has provided a report with recommendations to the library management council (senior leadership and major department heads) for next steps in improving our environment. We intend to prioritize a culture and practice of universal design wherever we can. Library collections and often especially electronic resources present innumerable accessibility barriers. We plan to increase efforts to pursue accessibility features with publishers. Future work will be in partnership with the Office of Accessibility in Dowling Hall to ensure alignment with student needs.

Teams Revamping:
For numerous years, Tisch Library has accomplished a variety of important task through the use of “teams.” Staff from throughout the library accepted assignments to contribute to initiatives such as managing our exhibit and gallery space, coordinating special events such as the holiday party, pursuing sustainability goals, and establishing our social media presence. Other teams had more consistent members and oversaw our data assessment efforts, website development and maintenance, and coordinating the staff that supervise student workers. Simply stated, we don’t have the staff size that would allow us to fully assign these roles to designated personnel.

Based largely on feedback from team leaders annually, we’ve decided that the merits of this form of group work has run its course. We have sunssetted all the teams. Some of the work can cease, but much of it still needs to continue. Much of the work has been reassigned to departments or will be written into job descriptions. In addition, we will have a much smaller number of standing committees, as well as a few year-long volunteer opportunities for staff who still desire opportunities for new challenges and variety. It remains to be seen if we can sustain the work with these new models, but we will adjust as needed.