

Minutes of the Meeting of the Department Heads, February 5, 2003

Present: Harold Billings, Jo Anne Hawkins, Carole Cable, Drew Racine, Peggy Mueller, Dennis Dillon, Jean Hamrick, Laura Schwartz (*for Marcia Parsons*), Damon Jagers, John Tongate, Ernestine Potter, Kathleen McDonagh (*for Suzanne McAnna*), Ann Hartness, Janine Henri, Molly White, Anita Farber, Nancy Elder, Sue Phillips, Kay Sewell, Robin Fradenburgh, Christian Kelleher, Stephen Littrell, Carol Johnson, Jim Dougherty, Curtis Ohlendorf, Robert Foster (*recording secretary*)

Absent: Suzanne McAnna, Marcia Parsons, Susan Ardis, David Flaxbart, Dennis Trombatore, Mark McFarland

Emilie Algenio began work on February 3 as the Assistant Licensing Coordinator. Joseph Dobbs began work on January 27 as the Virtual Reference Coordinator for the Digital Library Services Division.

Mr. Billings noted that the last meeting of department heads had been concerned with the likelihood of the Information School moving to new quarters to be located on the 6th floor of PCL, perhaps in 2004.

Since the last meeting of department heads, President Faulkner sent a letter to staff discussing both the immediate need to return \$19M of the University's operating budget for this year to the state, and the upcoming reduction (estimated \$25M–\$30M) in the state's budgeted funding for the University for the biennium beginning September 1, 2003. The present funding crisis for the state government naturally means that the University too faces a serious and significant contraction in the scale of its programs.

The University Leadership Council met on Monday morning, January 27, to hear more discussion of these urgent budgetary matters, including a more detailed analysis by Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Kevin Hegarty,

While the University administration cannot know the exact scale of the financial situation for the next biennium, they must take measures now to deal responsibly with the immediate shortfall as well as make specific plans over the next 6–8 weeks to deal with this long-term shortfall.

Short term salaries and wages have been “frozen,” though it is still hoped that some modest extra compensation can be managed for staff for the biennium in order to remain competitive in national talent markets.

This may prove very difficult to provide, particularly while the University must reduce the scale of what it does and as the cost of staff insurance is almost certainly going to continue to rise.

A number of measures to try to cope creatively with the funding shortfall are being floated, including implementing initiatives of the efficiency taskforce, charging processing fees for using credit cards to pay bills with the University, greater control of supplies and suppliers for offices and office copiers, right-sizing offices, outsourcing, prospective consolidation of departments, centers, and schools, monitoring of express shipping, incentives for retirement, and other strategies.

One measure that has been quickly revised to raise some extra monies is the student library fee. Mr. Billings had just recommended an increase from \$10 to \$10.45 per semester credit hour in order to pay the originally projected 3 percent wage increase for the supported staff and also add some monies to the book budget during the next fiscal year. But his recommended fee increase was first bumped to \$11 per semester credit hour, and then \$12 by involved University administrators.

Students who have discussed this proposed fee increase, including the president of the student government and student members of the University Library Committee, have been generally unruffled by the proposed student library fee increase. (Student comment is required before all such fee increases.) This increase will only provide a modest \$1.34M in extra funding per year.

Mr. Billings reviewed his strategy for dealing with the Library's need to reduce its operating budget by \$495.5K for the current year. The bulk of the monies (\$334.5K) will likely come from book funds, with the remaining \$150K coming from classified vacancies, professional salaries, permanent salary savings, saved wages, and freezing the travel account.

Mr. Billings noted that when the Library's seasonal hourly employees start quitting in May, he may have to ask for an exception for the Library to hire replacements.

A discussion followed of "floating" staff to fill some gaps, problems staffing the branches during evening hours, and the minimal returns from cutting building-use hours.

—Robert Foster