

Envisioning the Library

Shared Notes from the academic roundtable

1. What are the purposes of the library at Middlebury College?

- Intellectual Center
- Acquisitions and Document delivery
- Faculty research & supporting student research
- Center for creative discovery and production
- Communal learning space for students - social and gathering space
- Library as guide to online resources/helping with teaching and learning
- MIIS Library beginning to merge with Digital Learning Commons
- Library as quiet place to work for students / library as study hall
- Provide students with policy relevant data (evidence)
- Still a provider of hard copy books as well as electronic books
- A place that encourages judgement and analysis (choosing materials)
- Libraries need to be forward-looking, anticipate needs
- How connected is the future of libraries with the future of books? (What are student preferences; student don't understand ebook printing models)
- Library as access points to technologies (hardware like cameras) and materials (like books and DVDs)
- Provides access to materials students could not otherwise afford
- What would students do if there were no library, or if the library were different than it is now? What do we need and what can we do without?
- To preserve materials
- Library as home for conversations about pedagogy, tutoring, and academic support (Middlebury College's Library as home literally for other departments which enhance the library.)
- Repository for student and faculty work
- Library as direct connection to other institutions (local history societies, other libraries, etc.) An access point to research for scholars outside of the institution.
- Much more than just the # of volumes owned.
- Library liaisons and the importance of support from librarians and the library.
- Growing importance of relationship to the research program

2. What can the college and the library do to help the library fulfill these purposes?

MIIS Group

Kristen Cardoso (Note-taker, Librarian), Nukhet Kardam (DPP), Lyuba Zarsky (IEP), Ed Laurance (DPP), Wei Liang (DPP), Renee Jourdenais (GSTILE, Dean), Ray Zilinskas (CNS), Katherine Punteney (IEM), Pamela Jungerberg (Librarian), Ann Flower (Library, Assistant Director), Peter Liu (Library, Director)

Key Points:

- Desirable to create a curated collection of student work, in addition to faculty and staff.
- More collaborations between faculty and library
- Workshops and panels to help develop research skills, with a focus on better developing literature reviews.
- Be a place where faculty can share the resources they've gathered that could also be helpful for students. Would be helpful for students become part of the field.
- Help managing and possibly translating raw data
- User Experience Librarian
- Orientation and Program-specific workshops early in the semester
- E-reserves no longer needed with Canvas
- Reconvene Library Committee. Librarians attend faculty meetings.
- Difficult for us to offer more without cutting/streamlining existing services and/or receiving more resources.
- Importance of having the Deans getting involved and encouraging faculty

Conversation:

- Digital Open Access Project starting at the library in July. There's an Open Access Task Force, chaired by Tsuneo Akaha. The open access policy will be voted on by December 16th. Faculty and staff publications can be uploaded to the digital depository, and possibly student work as well. Lyuba commented on how useful it can be to pull out examples of past student work to share with current students. Ann mentioned that we have shared some student work on our e-reserve system, but not extensively. Lyuba thought it would be great to have a curated collection of student work.
- Ann asked how we could have more conversations with faculty to learn more about what they'd like us to try and what students need and are having trouble with, especially when faculty are so busy and overwhelmed. Renee brought up having a partnership between the library and the writing center to bolster student research skills. Nukhet also suggested partnering with the DLC. What types of sources to use for literature reviews. We'd have to get creative to get students to attend, but it could be a valuable collaboration. Our reputation out in the MIIS world is fantastic, but we could collaborate more. Ann mentioned that Kristen taught some quick citation skills workshops and that we could do more of that, and that she and Peter had just spoken to Amy Sands about having a panel on research skills and possible collaborating with CNS. Also helping students with raw data. Translation for data only available in particular languages and not available in English. Ed talked about the faculty being a resource for the library and how important but also difficult it can be to do that.
- Ray and Ed talked about all the valuable resources they've collected over their careers and that it would be nice if there were some way to enable the library to have that information to make it accessible for students and to teach them how to navigate those resources. We will be accepting some documents and sources from Amy Sands and know the value of these types of resources on campus.
- Peter brought up that Kristen had been promoted to User Experience Librarian to better meet the needs of students and faculty can always share with her ideas or feedback.
- Wei suggested having program-specific workshops earlier in the semester. Pamela brought up that the library orientation mandatory status was eliminated, and that it would be helpful to have faculty support and demand so that we can offer these types of support and students can benefit because attendance is required.
- Lyuba brought up Canvas and that she doesn't need e-reserves anymore.

- Nukhet talked about developing the core collections for each specialization. Ed responded that the books are there but students don't use them. How do we get them to use them? Pamela invited everyone to share lists with her for acquisitions. She is always happy to work with faculty to develop collections.
- The group agreed that we should not all be referred to Middlebury College, but Middlebury.
- Nukhet asked about a Library Committee, and although we have one, it is dormant. Ann agreed that it would be extremely valuable to reconvene the Committee and invite students as well.
- Specialization-specific collections
- October and February for workshops/events. Katherine interested in citation managers and would be interested in research skills for faculty.
- Wei suggested having a list of basic databases and journals for each program.
- Katherine said she would love to have us visit their faculty meetings to help collaborate and brainstorm.
- Ed said he's a great fan on the library and think we do a good job.
- Pamela said it will be challenging for existing staff to do more unless we identify some things that can be stopped/streamlined, and/or the Library is allocated more resources. Need to carefully prioritize in accordance with annual goals.

Group One

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Group Two

- Very strong at bringing the Library to the class and the class to the Library. Especially helpful with research and citations.
- Once students are introduced they need to be reconnected periodically.
- *We would be poor without a library!*
- Requires active cultivation: what is working well? What needs to change? Starr is a good example, it was not serving the need.
- If the Library does not change it will become a relic, or be marooned.
- Are the many activities that the Library helpful? They have served us well.
- What are the most desirable spaces? Pods? Tables? Need to analyze spaces.
- Could be helpful in bringing collaborative group work into the curriculum.
- Needs to stay as a place to have access to things that are hard to get, especially where students have challenges finding resources.
- Do we still have a reliance on books?
- Make ALL of the benefits of the Library apparent at Circulation.
- Current interaction with Library is transactional, needs to move to a relationship.

Group Three

Brenda Ellis (note-taker, Librarian), Mary Ellen Bertolini (Writing), Jason Mittell (Film & Media Culture), Joy Pile (Librarian)

Conversation focused on developing the research skills of our students, librarian support for teaching those skills, and the need for librarians to be involved in conversations about where these skills are taught in the curriculum.

Points raised:

- In-person librarian class support is vital for First Year Seminars (FYSEs) and could be better utilized in other classes.
- Faculty use of librarian support for classes runs the spectrum of high use (example Mary Ellen) to no use at all – what is the average and why? Depends on the department and how that department has structured their courses and learning goals. Faculty aren't maximizing available library resources.
- Library support for classes (liaison support and collections) can be recruitment tool for attracting the best faculty.
- Because of the largely unstructured curriculum, there are no guarantees that students are graduating with the research and information skills we want them to learn. Distribution requirements are content-based, not skill-based. FYSEs are a good starting point and there are successes there, but there are no guarantees after that and more needs to be done at the department / majors level.
- College and department learning goals could be better defined to help, but there are power factors at play and to get consensus, goals get watered down and become more aspirational.
- Suggestion that the College develop new distribution requirements based on skills. Jason recommended this article that makes the case by Nicholas Lemann: [“The Case for a new kind of Core”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 27, 2016. It proposes “information acquisition” (library research skills and the whole sociology of knowledge and how it is created and used) as one of the skills. A research designation for courses could be one part of the solution, as we have with College Writing (CW) designations, but even that is difficult to negotiate because of power factors and the varying level of willingness of departments to offer these courses.
- Assessment is needed of graduating students' skills to see which students are achieving the college and department learning goals (particularly research, writing, critical thinking) and which aren't. Without this it is difficult to identify where improvements need to happen.
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Group Six

- Include the library in the strategic plan
- Maintain spaces for students
 - Study spaces
 - Knowledge hubs
 - Staff who help
 - Group interactions
- Retain commitment to have students interact not just with each other but with materials
- Continue instruction on how to find and use information
 - Lifelong skill
 - Not just a faculty responsibility
 - How to ensure all students learn how to do research
 - Integration into the curriculum
 - Why not have this as a requirement?
- Respond to the crisis in scholarly communication
- Continue to be forward-looking and to foster collaboration
- Be thoughtful and strategic about space changes
 - Consider removing classrooms due to noise
 - Better access for holding programs in the building
 - Rethink how space is currently used
 - Keep using lobby to showcase campus happenings
 - Keep up exhibits that respond to contemporary events

- Ensure sufficient budget to support the curriculum
- Benchmark staffing to ensure sufficient staffing to support students
- Identify what we can STOP doing
- Shift from service-based reactive to more of a forward-looking partnership/leadership role
- Future of Middlebury turns on the future of the library; it is the home for 'the digital' conversation
- Include library in the digital conversation; library should lead this transition/transformation
- Commit to print and the book