Library Renovations Working Group Charge

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Background

Faculty, Staff, Students, and many administrators have been aware of the severe design and maintenance deficiencies in The George T. Potter Library for many years. The existing structure, which was built in 1977, and renovated in the 1990s, has a long record of water damage, mycological infestations, and microbial contamination. These have been well documented (see Appendix A), and have resulted in the loss of holdings (books, artwork, sheet music, etc.), as well as a reduction in the ability of library patrons to use the library as a location for studying individually or in groups. Surveys of prospective students who selected other colleges show that the library is one of the reasons they do not choose to come to Ramapo. Potter Library houses many significant and unique items, including works of art, but we have inadequate space to safely house the items. The administration is aware of the library's deficiencies. The Dean of the Library, Liz Siecke, applied for grants and a bond issue in 2013 that might have been used to renovate the library. Regrettably, despite the details of the library's problems, and the strong case made for modernizing the facility in the application, the funds were denied.

The 2013 Campus Facilities Master Plan,[1] detailed several disturbing issues facing the present condition of the Potter Library. These are some highlights:

> "Improvements to the Phase 1 Academic Building and **Library** have been slow, and they remain out of step with contemporary pedagogy and Ramapo's unique strengths and reputation."[2]

> "Located at the southern end of the Phase 1 Academic Building, the existing **Library is in need of significant renewal.** A Library Master Plan is currently underway to address building condition and space programming issues."[3]

> "**The Library is in need of significant renewal to meet contemporary learning needs.** New study areas would support group learning, new furniture and improved technology would improve comfort and usability, and acoustical improvements will reduce user conflict. Building envelope and systems should be repaired and/or replaced to improve efficiency and protect library holdings." [4]

The Master Plan proposed an extensive renovation project that would place the library at the center of a new "learning Commons" and serve essentially as the 'public face' of the college (see Appendix B):

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[1] http://www.ramapo.edu/construction-projects/files/2013/10/Campus-Facilities-Master-Plan-September-30-2013.pdf (accessed 31 October 2015).

[2] Ibid., 9.

[3] Ibid. 30.

[4] Ibid. 59.

"The **Heart of Campus** provides an opportunity to reinforce and expand campus life functions. An addition to the Phase 1 Academic Building and Student Center will create a new Campus Center, providing new space for student services, social and study space. A proposed Administrative Hub and Welcome Center will create a new front door for the campus. The new facility will accommodate a range of public, administrative and academic uses and support placemaking [i.e. multi-faceted approaches to the planning, design and management of public spaces] investments to create a ceremonial campus arrival point. **The library will be renewed and expanded as a Learning Commons, and serve as a new and high profile main entrance to the Phase 1 Academic Building."**[5]

"Through reprogramming, renewal and physical expansion, the **Library** will grow into a larger role as a Learning Commons for the entire campus. In addition to supporting library and learning functions, the Learning Commons can be home to a consolidated campus Art Gallery."[6]

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The Charge

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The Faculty Assembly Library Renovations Task Force (FA LRTF) will prepare a white paper with detailed quantitative and qualitative data on the current condition of the library, draw comparisons with libraries at competitor institutions, and present its recommendations to the Faculty Assembly for approval. Upon approval by the FA, the proposal will be presented to the President's Cabinet.

Data sources:
Data sources will include:

- Institutional data regarding maintenance / repairs in the Library over the last 15 years.

- Surveys will be conducted of students and faculty, investigating the ways they currently use the library, any problems they face with the library in its present physical condition, and the ways they would like to be able to use the library but cannot currently.

- Obtain information from other campus' libraries and the ways they are used by students and faculty. [COPLAC schools in the region, NJ public colleges and universities, and the University of Delaware, which consistently draws away prospective RCNJ students.

- Best practices documents including the Association of College and Research Libraries' ACRL/LLAMA Interdivisional Committee on Building Resources,[7] and the 2015 Library

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[5] Ibid., 21.

[6] Ibid., 30.

[7] http://www.ala.org/acrl/academic-library-building-design-resources-planning#Space_Planning [accessed 31 October 2015]

Design Showcase published by the American Library Association.[8], as well as the 2013 Campus Facilities Master Plan.

• Consultation with various campus constituencies including the library convening group, Student Affairs (including Enrollment Management), Institutional Advancement, and Administration & Finance.

Composition

The task force's working group will be composed of representatives selected by faculty within each School (including the Library). One member of the task force will be elected among the faculty of each school/unit, along with an alternate faculty member task force representative from each school. Only the task force members will have voting power, and when both the primary and alternate are present for the meeting, only the primary will vote..
Two student members (one primary and one alternate) will be recruited from SGA.
Administrators will be consulted on an as-needed basis.
Only members of the Faculty Assembly will have voting authority within the Task Force.

Administrators who will be consulted include Liz Siecke, Steve Rice, Steve Perry, Chris Romano, Cathy Davey, Beth Barnett, Dick Roberts, Brittany Goldstein / Peter Mercer. Sydney Jenkins and Robert Modafferi will also serve as consultants.

A Town Meeting (or meetings) will be held once the LRTF is composed. These will take place during the Open Forums after Faculty Assembly.

Timeline

The timeline laid out here assumes that each item is completed / approved.

Faculty Assembly will vote on the proposed task force 2 December 2015. Units will elect representatives at the 12/16 Unit Council.

Task force immediately commences.

Bring final report back to FA no later than April 20, 2016

By end of semester: Present proposal to Cabinet

By June: Present to BOT

Timeline will change as needed.

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[8] http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2015/09/01/2015-library-design-showcase/ [accessed 31 October 2015]

Learning Commons Initiative

The existing library faces significant building condition and space utilization issues. Localized improvements have recently been implemented, including the Center for Reading and Writing. The Learning Commons initiative will see the renewal and expansion of the Library as a contemporary Learning Commons for the entire campus community.

This initiative will support the implementation of the Library Master Plan alongside an expansion of library facilities through an addition to the southwest corner of the building. A second main entrance will face directly onto Library Walk, creating a more public and accessible face for the Library. The Learning Commons may also be home to a consolidated Art Gallery, ensuring proximity to the current art storage in the basement of the Library. Located at the southern edge of the campus where long-term campus growth is expected to occur, the Learning Commons will ultimately become a central place within the academic complex. Figure 16A and 16B provide further detail.

With a large footprint that can accommodate significantly more development, the Learning Commons initiative would house compatible ancillary uses already existing in the Library, providing appropriate space for meeting, support, and research, while also potentially acting as a home for other secondary functions that may benefit from this location. Improved study spaces will also be pursued in other areas throughout campus. Implementation of the Learning Commons initiative can occur in phases, with the first phase being renewal of the existing Library, which is currently under consideration.

As Table 7 indicates, the total space need for Scenario 1: Current Enrollment is 66,445 ASF, which represents an additional 19,585 ASF in new space just to meet current needs. Under the most intensive growth scenario, Scenario 3: High-Growth, the total space need is 74,517 ASF, which is 27,657 ASF more than the actual space currently provided for these uses. With approximately 24,180 ASF in development capacity, this site has nearly enough capacity to accommodate the additional space needs under all three scenarios. The difference could be accommodated by increasing the intensity of development (e.g. increasing the floor plate of the new building), locating some ancillary uses elsewhere (e.g. the Welcome/Administrative Center), or a combination of the two.

Core Uses:
Library/Study

Ancillary Uses:
Center for Reading and Writing
Holocaust Center
Testing and Placement
Art Gallery
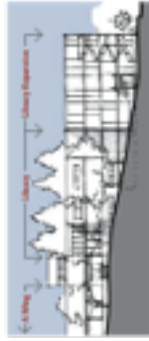
Table 7: Potential space need in the Library (in ASF)

	Actual	Scenario 1: Current Enrollment	Scenario 2: Moderate-Growth	Scenario 3: High-Growth
Core Uses	43,574	60,663	64,058	67,915
Ancillary Uses	3,286	5,782	6,192	6,502
Total	46,860	66,445	70,260	74,517

Enabling Projects:
Pedestrian enhancements (south side)

Coordinated Projects:
South Quad landscape initiative
Library Walk
The Grove
Arboretum Quad

Group Study Area
(Mercy College Library, Dobbs Ferry, NY)

Section C-C'

Figure 16B. Learning Commons - first floor plan

Campus Facilities Master Plan 67

Figure 16A. Learning Commons - third floor plan

Common Space ▢ Programmed Space ▢ Atrium Space ▢

◄► Internal Pedestrian Unit

Learning Common Atrium
(Health Care and Wellness Training
Institute, Amsterdam)