University of Arkansas Libraries

Extreme Makeover Task Force
Meeting Summary
March 11, 2010
3 p.m., Rm. 486

Present: Alberta Bailey, Molly Boyd, Allon Callahan, Anne Marie Candido, Todd Cantrell, Donna Daniels, Elaine Dong, Sheri Gallaher, Lynaire Hartsell, Roy Hatcher, Jimmy Jackson, Jeremy Smith, Necia Parker-Gibson, Sarah Spiegel, Juana Young (chair), Tim Zou

Steelcase Webinar will be Friday at 2 p.m. in Room 104.

The formation of the Task Force and its charge has caused concern among faculty and staff who want to provide input. To better accommodate this, all minutes will be posted to the StaffWeb in a timely fashion and an e-mail alert regarding their posting or a notice in Tuesday Times will be sent out on the library listserve. Each member of the Task Force should solicit feedback from interested and affected parties throughout the process. Any preliminary drafts will be posted for library-wide feedback and comments.

Discussion of questions submitted by Task Force members as charged from Tuesday’s meeting:
Would it be useful to divide the questions into categories or look for commonality among questions? Questions should be divided into those intended for students and those that should be answered by this group. Those for the students, like those submitted by Roy, should be collected for the proposed survey of students. These questions are not the same as those covered in the LibQual survey of users two years ago.

Printers should be removed from main thoroughfare. Printers are limited to access to electrical and network connections. Printers might be decentralized and sent to zones, but they are harder for lab ops to maintain. May send more lap ops to zones as well, but expensive.

Photographs on the Windwood Community College Powerpoint show possibilities for reconfiguring space. Must consider how many bodies can the building accommodate safely, and at what point the number of persons will degrade the quality and usefulness of the space. Although the lottery scholarships and poor economy make projections for fall enrollment difficulty, the university projects there will be 400-500 more students.

Juana reviewed the floor plan of Mullins Library’s second level to indicate structure, non-movable components, that include square interior vent columns as well as structural columns throughout the floor; however, the office walls and periodicals reading room walls are non-structural. Relocating the Reference offices might cost more than $200,000.

Tim Zou posted a Powerpoint of questions considered by Windwood Community College during the creation of their learning commons, and it contains questions relevant to our charge, for instance, the creation of a mission statement to guide development. The mission statement from the proposed building renovation was modified slightly for the current Task Force: “To build for
the University a collaborative and interdisciplinary space that nurtures and inspires student-centered learning, creativity, and engagement.” How do we best achieve this mission?

Question 1 should take careful consideration before proceeding with any questions—What are we trying to encourage most—to be a Learning Commons vs. just another lab in the library? Deciding this answer will affect everything under consideration by the Task Force, but also affects other levels in Mullins. The possibility of building-wide abatement processes frees up the consideration of space; as each bay or floor of materials is moved for abatement, we can replace materials in a better configuration to meet current needs of students better.

Roy from ITS says as far as the ITS Department is concerned, the primary consideration is more computers, with a goal of 45 new workstations. Find the space in Mullins lobby level and fill it with as many computers as possible. There is no consideration of library services or materials.

Another question from the library perspective: What does service look like to users? Do we need a behemoth desk? Is the current Reference Desk space the best configuration? The GACL lab is currently set up as individual user space. A Research Commons would have more variable space, including collaborative space and a smaller room set aside for wireless lap top usage. The Furniture committee recommended opening up two bays on levels 3 and 4 for tables and wireless for both laptop users and collaborative work.

Should we work for a WOW change, a real difference students see when they walk in next semester, or should we work on a stop-gap measure to free up the minimum space needed for forty-five computer workstations, waiting for the library renovations to take care of other issues?

By calculating the standard workstation, we should be able to calculate the space needed for 45 computer stations as they currently are, then this will show us what we have left to work with and its possibilities. Approximately 35 square feet for workstation and clearance needed for movement per station. A possibility is to create variable spaces, with smaller spaces for quick computer access, larger stations for more involved work using books and notes, and larger spaces still for collaborative work. Might cause disagreements as users take first available computer without consideration of other users’ needs.

The University of Kentucky mobile help desks provide flexibility. They have been used for 3 years and are very popular. They are satellite desks with circulation services provided elsewhere in the building. Can migrate to hot spots during the flow of the semester. Make sign and top visible to be easily located throughout the floor. If we moved away from the central help desk, how many pod desks would we need to provide service to users? What materials and components are necessary for reference librarians to do their work at the desk? Modular desks could be lined up to make a single large desk, then broken apart for flexibility when needed.

ACTION ITEM: Review the submitted questions, which will be posted on Sharepoint and numbered consecutively, pick out the top five questions that the group must answer to proceed in a timely and useful fashion with this charge, and submit those top five questions by number to Juana via e-mail (jyoung@uark.edu) by 5 p.m. Friday, March 12.
Next meeting, Monday, March 15 at 3 p.m. Will answer the top five questions chosen by group consensus.