University of Arkansas Libraries

Extreme Makeover Task Force
Meeting Summary
March 9, 2010
9:00 a.m., Rm. 486

Present: Alberta Bailey, Donnie Blagg, Molly Boyd, Allon Callahan, Anne Marie Candido, Todd Cantrell, Ben Carter, Donna Daniels, Elaine Dong, Sheri Gallaher, Judy Ganson, Tess Gibson, Lynaire Hartsell, Roy Hatcher, Jimmy Jackson, Necia Parker-Gibson, Drew Siebenmorgen, Sarah Spiegel, Mary Walker, Juana Young (chair), Tim Zou

Juana opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and everyone introduced themselves to the members representing UIT and the Chemistry Library.

Juana explained the purpose of the Task Force and emphasized that what needs to be considered is not the building so much as library services and that this is not to be her task force but the Libraries’ task force, charged with reconfiguring space in the public services area in the interest of the Libraries’ patrons, first and foremost. Any recommendations and suggestions should be offered in light of what our services should “look” like to our patrons in order to meet their needs in the best way possible so that they can study and conduct their research most effectively. She indicated that she would like to have the Task Force keep in mind that change is inevitable, but at the same time she wants the group also to be realistic and have common sense and not let “perfect” get in the way of “good enough”—thus, the group is to be forward-looking, but practical at the same time. She and the dean expect that the group will consider their service on this Task Force to be a priority within their job duties, and she hopes that all members will be able to attend most of the meetings, which at least in the beginning will be scheduled on an “as we go” basis.

To the extent possible, the recommendations of the group to be data-driven, and yet sometimes we will not have the data we would like to have. Thus alternatives to data (mainly observation, first-hand experience, and best practices) will have to be used, and in some cases data might be able to be generated if it can be done in a timely manner.

The GACL area definitely needs to be reconfigured by the time classes begin, and it is the goal of this Task Force that the rest of the public services areas will be, as well. April 15, 2010, is the target deadline for the “design” work of the Task Force to be completed. The group will probably have to meet at least two times a week, and often three times a week. Scheduling will focus on late afternoon to accommodate members from the night crew and hourlies who have class obligations.

She noted that some other considerations may affect the Task Force’s assessments and planning logistics: 1) the expansion of the Library Commons, which shares the target date of completion by the beginning of Fall 2010 semester with the project to relocate the Reference collection stacks and re-define the service desk; 2) the projected library renovation in 4 to 5 years; 3) a proposed asbestos abatement program and upgrade of the air handling system, which will be
presented to the Board of Trustees in May and if approved could see work beginning in Spring 2011 semester.

Donnie Blagg reported that the number of students bringing their own laptops to Mullins is steadily rising, so much so that IT is not purchasing new laptops and letting attrition and the natural life of the existing laptops in checkout service reduce their numbers. In discussions with the ASG and the student tech fee committee, the top priority for both groups was expanding wireless service and computer workstations in Mullins. He will create a Listserv for EMTF (Extreme Makeover Task Force) at EMTF@LISTSERV.UARK.EDU (done).

A Sharepoint site has been created for the group at https://sharepoint.uark.edu/sites/MULN/committees/Extreme/default.aspx on which has been posted more than a dozen videos or PDF documents related to previous work done by the furnishings and the GACL committees. Members will post relevant information and documentation there, such as building use numbers, circulation numbers, etc. May use Sharepoint to generate a survey to determine the parameters of services, user needs, and define the library.

After reviewing these documents, members will decide what questions need to be answered before beginning the project. Questions will be posted by noon Wednesday on Sharepoint. Questions should be divided into those for staff and those for users. Some examples are:

1. What should library service look like to users? Should it mirror Wal-Mart, Zapos, Google, Amazon??
2. How important is the physical reference collection to users?
3. Where should the reference collection be relocated?
4. From whom do users want service provided, or do they care?
5. Are there services we are providing that we should not, or are there services that we need but are not providing?
6. What are the limits of physical boundaries and logistics to the renovation?
7. What are the patterns of use? (post all available data)

The Task Force will meet again at 3 p.m. on Thursday afternoon to discuss the information posted on Sharepoint. The goal is for Task Force members to identify different components of the project, set up sub-groups to work on those components, and set appropriate deadlines for completion of various components. Some examples of possible sub-groups are: expansion of GACL, define service at desk for all parties (together or separate; who provides what service; location), and reference collection relocation.

On Friday, March 12, at 4 p.m. in room 102, a webinar by Steelcase will present information on learning spaces they collected for the Grand Valley State, Michigan, library project. All task force members are invited to attend.