

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 32-15 (Voting Units: Full Senate)

“Establishment of a Library Liaisons and a Library Advisory Committee”

I. Introduction

In the past, the University had a system where “library liaisons” were identified within academic units on the MTU campus. These liaisons served as intermediaries between faculty and the library, and coordinated discussions, information gathering, requests for purchases of books from the library acquisitions budget, and adjustment to the library subscriptions to scholarly journals. In about 2008 the library shifted to direct electronic submission of acquisition requests, and also shifted the scholarly journal subscriptions model to “big deal” bulk purchases from major publishing houses. Though the number and scope of journals available rapidly expanded, the cost of these purchases consumed an increasing proportion of the library collections budget and the ability of faculty, through liaisons, to drive individual selections was appreciably reduced.

In 2014, because of cost considerations, the library decided to move away from “big deal” bulk purchases of journals and return to a model where subscription was made to important individual titles. This shift raised significant concern among the natural constituencies of the library. The absence of library liaisons meant that there was no ready conduit of information from the constituencies to the library to aid in making subscription decisions, and the “institutional memory” from prior to 2008 when liaisons actively filled this role appears to have been lost.

To aid in the transition, on 21 January 2015 the University Senate established an *ad hoc* Committee on the Library. The committee charge was to consider, address, and bring forward recommendations of the Library during the transition regarding journal subscriptions.

The library needs input from its natural constituencies (faculty and students) on an ongoing basis that it can use to make acquisition and subscription decisions. Input on other issues of relevance to the library would also be enhanced if liaisons were in place, and there were a formal advisory committee comprised of a subset of active and engaged liaisons that met on a limited, but set schedule.

II. Purpose

The intent of this proposal is to (a) re-establish the practice of having library liaisons from academic units and other natural constituencies of the library; (b) to define a structure for a Library Advisory Committee; and, (c) upon approval of this proposal to dissolve the *ad hoc* Committee on the Library.

III. Proposal

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University recommends that the following policies shall be established.

A. Library Liaisons

Each academic unit (i.e., School or Department), as well as other natural constituencies of the library (enumerated below) shall be encouraged to select an individual to serve as a liaison to the Library. In addition to the academic units, liaisons may be selected from:

1. The Graduate Student Government;
2. The Undergraduate Student Government; and,
3. Any center or institute.

While the selection of a liaison is encouraged, no unit shall be deemed unrepresented if a liaison is not chosen. Units may establish their own procedures for selecting liaisons, and are encouraged to seek the assistance of their unit Senator(s) where advisable.

Liaisons are encouraged to meet with their constituencies not less than annually to facilitate discussion of issues involving the library, and to share those concerns at an annual meeting of the Library Advisory Committee.

B. Library Advisory Committee

There shall be a committee known as the Library Advisory Committee (LAC), whose membership is drawn from the library liaisons. The voting membership shall be:

- i. Two from each College (Sciences and Arts and Engineering);
- ii. One from each School (Technology, Forest Resources, and Business and Economics);
- iii. Three “at large” from the entire pool of liaisons; and,
- iv. The University Library Director, *ex officio*¹.

The liaison from the Graduate Student Government shall be a non-voting member of the LAC.

The LAC shall elect its own chair, which shall be one of the faculty members on the committee. Membership on the committee shall be for 3 years. Each member shall have one vote on issues before the committee. The initial members of the committee (other than the Library Director) shall have staggered terms such that three serve for 1 year, three for 2 years, and four for 3 years.

The charge to the LAC shall be as follows (drawn in part from the charge to the Graduate Faculty Council):

¹ Here, *ex officio* means that, by virtue of holding the title of Library Director, the Director is automatically a member of the LAC.

- i. Each year, not later than the end of October, the LAC Chair shall call a general meeting of all of the library liaisons. The agenda for this meeting shall include, but not be limited to, selecting new members for the LAC to replace those whose terms have expired. Once the liaisons have selected new members, the committee shall select a new Chair, who may continue from the prior year if continuing as a member of the LAC.
- ii. Operations of the LAC are the responsibility of its Chair. Agenda items may be brought before the LAC by any member of the University community. The committee shall operate on the principles of open and constructive discussion and consensus, to the maximum degree possible.
- iii. A copy of the agenda and minutes from every LAC meeting shall be distributed to all of the liaisons.
- iv. The LAC and the University Library Director shall make a joint report to the University Senate no less than once every academic year.
- v. A meeting of the LAC may be called by the Chair. If requested by any two LAC members the Chair shall also call a meeting of the committee.

C. Dissolution of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Library

Upon approval of this proposal, or an amended version thereof, by both the University Administration and the University Senate, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Library is dissolved.