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Dean's Letter, August 2019

Dr. John Buschman

Let me begin by thanking the University Libraries' Program Review Committee: Profs. Ince, Shea, Deyrup, and Bloom, and especially Prof. Rose-Wiles for chairing and leading this long-running effort. Our internal reviewer, Prof. Renee Robinson and our external reviewer, Dr. Tom Wall, University Librarian at Boston College, are also thanked. I am gratified at the overall positive aspect of the report – picked up and remarked upon by both Robinson and Wall, encapsulated by the opening lines in the opening paragraphs of the Program Review document itself: "Academic libraries and the role of librarians have changed dramatically since the University Libraries was last reviewed in 2007", "Walsh Library has undergone major improvements since the last Program Review", and that the "University Libraries is at the forefront of implementing new services." This was supplemented by Wall's review comment – clearly implied throughout the Program Review document itself – that "Most staff seemed to have an overall good attitude about working at the library and felt the same way about Seton Hall in general. Overall the culture was positive, and virtually everyone was competent and ready to do what it takes to have the libraries achieve more. [T]the Libraries seem to have an overall healthy organizational culture." Since this is a *program* review, I will put the primary emphasis here on what the University Libraries are doing programmatically to forward the work of Seton Hall University. To begin that effort, I will focus on drivers of our work that I believe were somewhat underemphasized.

First and foremost, among those drivers has been the beginning of the new School of Medicine, the IHS campus (including SHMS and Nursing), and hence the essential new IHS Library. However, "since [as the Review document states,] the IHS Library only opened in summer 2018 it is not included in this Program Review." Interviews and hiring for Associate Dean Duffy and our three new Library faculty colleagues actually took place in 2017 and certainly took a great deal of Library faculty time and energy from Profs. Rose-Wiles, Bloom, and Shea. Review of technology platforms and capacities, existing resources, and initial pricing of new resources took place starting in 2016 and took the skills and energy of Profs. Bao, Kalyan, and Ince. The actual launching of cooperative services (ILL, Circulation) required the thoughtful contributions of Profs. Kehnemuyi (Access Services), Loesch (Cataloging), and Delozier wwho was involved in gathering for the Archives essential early materials. All of this supplements the information in the timeline (Appendix H), but importantly it indicates that there was significant work done by the University Libraries and the Library faculty on the launch of the IHS Library performed well within the timespan covered by this Review (for instance, a 2019 Library faculty publication is listed). It is without question the single biggest accomplishment as the seamless launch of the IHS Library and its almost-instant integration with the various curricula taught on the IHS

campus that took place. The quality of our preparations – hiring, resources, technology – showed in both the Library's smooth and effective operation and in our negotiating position with HMH. The IHS Library is a game-and-culture-changer for the University Libraries, mirroring similar changes at the university as a whole. It is a validation of the intense work we've been doing for almost 7 years to direct and shape our technologies, and a 180-degree change from our capacities in 2012. IHS brings new ideas about – and models of – service, new ways to use/deploy existing tools, new relationships to curricula and new partnerships that are changing and forwarding research agendas like our data services and didactic presence in course shells. It is in short shining a light on practices old and new in a positive way that was not possible before.

Second, we have put much energy, personnel and targeted resources into Special Collections and the Gallery. The two-page writeup included in the Review does not reflect the work shared in a summary chronology (with Profs. Bloom and Ince) in September of 2018. Let me review some of the most significant of these during this time period:
- Rare Book culling evaluation (2013-15); conducted via Rare Book consultant Cynthia Gibson; followed up by Rare Book cataloging (with the assistance of Profs. Loesch and Deyrup), inventory and barcode projects.
- Transfer of Seton Hall University Museum of Art and Archaeology collection to Gallery (housed in the Vault, 2014) to catalogue, preserve, and make available the collection to the Seton Hall community; the Jennings Petroglyph moved to Walsh Library from Fahy Hall in 2015.
- The Gallery rescued endangered art from the Art Center (2014); a leak and construction required urgent transfer of the Asian Art Collection and paintings and prints.
- Project to catalog the D'Argenio Roman coins collection begins (2015).
- Transition to ArchiveSpace (2016); successful transfer of archival records from Archivist's Toolkit was accomplished.
- Inventory project begun (2016); track the location of every item in the Vault, belonging to both the Gallery and Special Collections and evaluate its condition, finished May 2017.
- Thomas Jefferson book & 17th century Papal bull conserved (2017); found during the course of the inventory and delivered to CCAHA for restoration and stabilization.
- Preservica implemented, Vault upgraded (2017-2018); web archiving begun enabling secure digital preservation; numerous upgrades to Vault security with Ipad sign in, swipe card access and cameras, and upgrades to lighting to LED.
These were important contributions to housing and preservation of significant University assets and historical artifacts and the stewardship of space and resources. In turn Special Collections and the Gallery were (and are) significant drivers of our technology planning and upgrades: digital preservation (Preservica is an enormous step forward for an institution of our size), IT servers and server space to host software and database applications (Omeka, ArchiveSpace), targeted high-end computers and equipment, and terabytes of IT "swing" space. These took a great deal of the time of Profs. Ince and Mita as well as professional employees and staff, as well-summarized in the relevant parts of section 6, New Technology Initiatives in the Review.

I will now turn to other notable areas of the University Libraries that did receive attention.

Third is budget. This is an area that received a great deal of coverage and rhetorical weight in the Review. I agree with our external reviewer's comments (echoed by our internal reviewer) that "There are no easy answers to maintaining appropriate levels of collection funds …

[an] ongoing problem (which ALL libraries have), but like most places the pace of inflation, the preponderance of digital information, and the heightened expectations of students, faculty and researchers cannot possibly ever be enough. … It is also clear that an increase in the collections budget would be handled with intelligence and committed stewardship." That is, Seton Hall is not unique. In matching our academic ambitions to our resources, the University Libraries share a common fate with many aspects of Seton Hall: graduate assistantships, classroom facilities, data and technology support for researchers, and even salaries to name a few. However, I also believe that we should credit the six-figure increase provided by the Provost in FY19, and that we have established a venue for input and consideration of inflationary increases in the new RCM budgeting process. Those are important steps. It is also worth noting that the times when I have not felt I could or should sign off on new academic programs because of a shortage of resources (discovered through the Libraries' program review process – our "Impact Statements") are rare: we can always improve resources (and we point out where), and that improvement would make us more comparable to aspirational peers, but it is rare that we can't support a program with decent resources so far. The credit for that must of course go first and foremost to Prof. Kalyan for her work with Acquisitions and the budget: she helps us essentially "surf" from one consortial program and price to another to maintain and even expand our resources. That said, the efficacy of those efforts along with dropping a resource to add another is coming to an end; we are at the point of cutting important and essential resources for our faculty and students, and our non-humanities monographs (electronic and print) are very underfunded. I concur that we cannot keep chipping away at Library spaces (hosting the Writing Center, the Gallery proposal) and provide a collection that still meets our academic and research needs, and also meets the students' needs (as noted below, the collection is used). Our spaces are used heavily. For instance, we get between 525K-600K+ visits per year and the Group Study Rooms are used @ 13K+ times per year, with @ 9K reserve requests when they are all in use.

Fourth is services. I need not go too much further than to quote the Review here: "The library faculty are known for their service to the university and the community at large." I concur. To give one example, not only do we reach a great number of students through our Instruction Program, but I see a steady stream of thanks from our teaching faculty colleagues for that instructional work and they note the improvement in their students' research papers. Prof. Bloom has built a fine service. The same can be said for our one-on-one services and research consultations: I see the grateful e-mails from students (especially graduate) all the time. And circulation figures have held steady or grown, which is unusual in higher education these days. This is a testament to our deep dive into work to clean up our records – my most recent figure is that we fixed/corrected 265K records of all types in our system. This data point and the Review itself highlights the other services noted that are often thought of as back-of-the-shop operations: these directly serve our community by making access to curricular and research resources more easily findable – whether print or electronic. Well done and correctly identified. The same can be said for interlibrary loan – that service to our community and our scholarly ecosystem benefits from those improvements as well. I could go on, but our internal reviewer Prof Robinson said it well: "new … initiatives that advance student information and digital literacy of course content further illustrates the library faculty's commitment to the core values of learning and access to information that helps the academic community recognize that the 'library is indispensable' (as noted in the vision for 2020)." External reviewer Wall concurs: "the library staff seem to be in a good spot, with high energy and an unwavering service commitment."

Fifth is staffing. I will address a variety of items under this topic. When I arrived at Seton Hall University Libraries, our technologies were woeful, and our relationship with IT not on a good footing. There was essentially no administrative structure, and as a result the library system then (Voyager) was never fully implemented from the mid-1990s.[1] IT let the server Voyager was running on run out of memory twice around the time I arrived. Staff were using used student laptops that failed at a 40% rate. Our labor force was not slotted where it needed to be. Things change and had changed as the Review acknowledges ("Academic libraries and the role of librarians have changed dramatically since the University Libraries was last reviewed in 2007"). Without diminishing – and in fact increasing – the size of the Library faculty or its voice, we have moved salary savings and some few staff positions to address our technology and systems issues along with severely understaffed strategic areas like the Gallery and Special Collections. As external reviewer Wall put it in his 5-3-19 clarification memo, "senior leadership [should] tak[e] an interest in and shared responsibility for issues and concerns in all areas, not just the chain of operations and people reporting through them. For example, if a vacancy occurs in cataloging, the senior team [should] look at the needs of the entire library." A new faculty member at the IHS Library serving SHMS and Nursing has allowed more focused assignments

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[1] I will address here the adoption of WMS that was remarked upon in the Review in rather stark terms. In terms of the old Voyager system itself, there were 90K smart barcodes left unmatched to books, creating 3-4 possible problems per record, a massively inaccurate inventory as a result, five separate tools to track periodicals – including a paper Kardex – that did not work together, and so on. We had manifest technical and user problems with Voyager that drove this decision:

> (from a 9/26/12 e-mail from Prof. Bao): "Voyager 8 was not even available when IT/Library signed up the contract with Ex Libris to upgrade 7.2.5 in the middle of 2011. Voyager 8 came out only after when IT prepared the server for version 7.2.5 in July/August."
> (from a 4-29-13 e-mail from Assoc. Dean Barry to Exlibris): "The Voyager problems on Sunday appear to be the same as the problems as experienced a few weeks ago. Is there anything in the server logs that indicate a problem? (I see that those have already been sent to Ming and Ex Libris in a separate email.) Much of the mystery around this ongoing problem seems to revolve around the issue of 'not being able to start a new Voyager Client session but are able to work with existing active sessions'" – and referencing 4 separate and recent tickets/incidents. This follows up a 4-12-13 e-mail from Barry to all Library faculty alerting them to this problem.
> (from a 8-1-13 email from Dean Buschman to IT): "right now Voyager is not solving nor following up on a fairly serious problem we've had with users being blocked out of the catalog. With 24 simultaneous staff users and 40 public ones, we should not have this happening, but it did even in early May…. Voyager has just let it drop despite frequent follow ups. Our conclusion is that … we don't have much faith in Voyager to do much to fix it in the next 10 months." We received an additional charge on our renewal for $5,200 from Voyager for a test server to perform a needed upgrade via e-mail that day as well.
> "Voyager has had no new sales since 2012. We can anticipate that the libraries remaining … have migration plans under way" (https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2017/05/01/library-systems-report-2017/). In all, over 115 libraries dropped Voyager between 2013 and 2014 (https://librarytechnology.org/ils-turnover.pl) as we were making our change. WMS is currently installed in 565 libraries (https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2019/05/01/library-systems-report-2019/), including the University of Delaware, Bucknell, Pepperdine, Montclair, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Butler, University of New Brunswick, University of Winnipeg, University College London, Claremont Colleges, Utrecht University, Carnegie Mellon, and Connecticut College among others.
> (from the 9/17/13 Senate Library Committee Minutes): "Voyager, the current library management system, will be phased out and replaced by a more affordable cloud-based system. The expected savings for the university are about $50,000 per year. The new system will be more flexible allowing control through the library."

The choice of WMS was not simply the cheapest, it was a good choice in stewarding our resources, improving services to our community sooner rather than later, and has proven adaptable and stable by and large (witness our award-winning cooperation with Ebsco integration). Is the system perfect? No. There are improvements and enhancements we would like – and some which we've gotten. No implementation is ever perfect – if we abandoned every new software or tool when we encountered difficulties, we would have none. It is worth noting there were no other viable options and there still are no viable options: hosting a system locally did not work well; Voyager's successor (Alma) did not and still does not integrate with EDS; open source is unsupportable; proprietary systems (Innovative Interfaces, Alma) are very expensive. The WMS implementation was successful and completed. We need to remember this history, context, and our many internal discussions at the time and move forward.

for Science (Rose-Wiles) and Instruction (Bloom, now Duffy) and two Term positions were made tenure track during this time. As for the comments on the new administrative structure, I concur with internal reviewer Robinson when she notes that "While library faculty play a fundamental role in library success, a significant number of library initiatives are brought to fruition through the efforts and labor of library administrators, staff, interns, and volunteers. Administrators have worked to position University Libraries for success via the development of infrastructures, processes, and procedures to guide internal operations, external engagements, and workflow practices to meet the ever-changing nature and role of libraries in higher education environments. … A good example of administrative guidance and infrastructure involves the creation and implementation of the IHS library initiative and how this new campus initiative would interface with the Walsh library. Understanding the underpinnings of information and resource sharing and the building of a second library site extending from Walsh in collaboration with our medical school partners, Hackensack-Meridian, was no easy feat." The goal was to bring focus, structure and direction to our collective work – and for these new types employees to perform some of the non-faculty work needed. This is part of the "major improvements since the last Program Review" already noted. The Review also mentions turnover. The research in our field is thin, but what there is settles at around 7% to 10% turnover per year, very much in line with SHU Libraries. (Amusingly and coincidentally, a recently unearthed photograph of personnel on the 10th Anniversary of the Walsh Library building in 2004-2005 revealed that 36% of those pictured were no longer at the Library by late 2011.) We need to reconcile ourselves to the fact that people take their well-earned retirement, move on and up to other jobs (I'm quite proud that we are nearing ten people who will have earned a graduate degree while here, several of whom have gotten professional positions elsewhere and/or are poised for promotion here at SHU), and that the changing nature of libraries' work is also a factor. As one recent report put it, "'I learn new skills, but I still need to do my old job.' Library staff face competing demands and a proliferation of new and changing services" (http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/33891/). There is no question that we could put more support and labor into some areas of our services in support of student and faculty research and learning – both reviewers understood and expressed that clearly. But with every new hire we've had very positive outcomes: enhancement of services and each one has been able to move us to the next level. We've been able to quickly fill positions with very talented people. My goal here is to point out programmatically that the changes we have made have been positive (as noted), in service to the changing nature of the needs of our university (as noted), and they've been accomplished over the better part of a decade by repurposing salary savings and openings.

Sixth is the Library faculty role. I concur entirely with internal reviewer Robinson's comments after reviewing the section on scholarship that "These accomplishments illustrate the library faculty's core values of learning and collaboration as they contribute to one another's projects, celebrations of individual accomplishments, recognition in the field, and engagement in meaningful scholarship that contributes to the broader community of scholars interested in library sciences, information literacy, and subfields of the discipline." She goes on to note "Another area of import to the library faculty is service. As noted in the 2007 Internal Reviewer Report as well as the 2018 self-study, the library faculty serve on a variety of university committees, subcommittees, and Faculty Senate. Library faculty work is highly impacted by service work given the limited number of them in relation to faculty in the broader university. This commitment to service has assisted them in carrying forward the University Libraries mission, message of support, and helped the broader campus become better acquainted with library services." The Library faculty

role entwines librarians into the campus community in positive ways. The expectation that librarians in this system produce some scholarship for promotion and tenure is, when well-matched to the person, a recipe for a robust and intellectually interesting and healthy career. These accomplishments – and the work accomplishments noted above – belie the more strident Review language about the 12-month contract, and as external reviewer Wall put it, "it's safe to state that the future is bright. Most of the suggestions above are meant to expand an already rich dialogue…. I am especially encouraged by the gesture of trust, and the 'can-do' attitude and willingness of the library faculty to do their best work, always." We work hard. So do our teaching faculty colleagues and as I've pointed out often. The model and image of the professoriate the Library faculty tend to compare themselves against is not necessarily the current reality. A 2019 ad for a tenure track CEHS position called for a great deal.[2] Clearly *all* faculty have challenging demands on their time that require judgement, balance, hard work and intellectualism. While the *Faculty Guide* calls for 35 hours of assigned work per week, we have a workable *modus vivendi*. The reality is that service is largely during that time, and the sine wave of work patterns means that productive time forwarding some of their writing and research can be accomplished in fallow times (around the holidays or graduation, etc.). I am supportive of the Course Release program and would urge that it be continued – even if only for us: Library faculty have put it (20 days of release) to enormously productive use. And last, the University Libraries' Merit structure acknowledges and rewards proportionate accomplishments within our framework (as does R&T).

Conclusion

It has been a busy and productive seven years (my time at Seton Hall). We have made massive strides forward in the quality and quantity of support we provide the University in all areas. The work to establish the IHS Library, our major improvements in technologies and collections access/control, our work in Instruction, and improvements in Special Collections and the Gallery all point to that (and we've done much more). Our programmatic remit is to do so in a sustainable and supportable way. Both the internal and the external reviewers clearly – and repeatedly – recognized these and other accomplishments. I believe we occupy a sweet spot within academic librarianship: we are poised to monitor the (expensive) experimentation of our larger (ARL) academic library colleagues, and intelligent and nimble enough to move forward areas in the details and thereby take advantage of their work and our skills to the betterment of Seton Hall services and collections (first and foremost), but also in service to the broader academic library community. This is the *advantage* of being a "mid-major" library as I put it. As for the

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[2] "[T]eaching courses on curriculum, organizational structures, as well as other agreed-upon courses; utilizing blended learning technologies, conducting impactful research and publishing scholarly work; advising students; supervising/mentoring doctoral dissertations and/or field placements; assisting with student recruitment and the growth of the Ed.D. weekend Cohort Program in Educational Leadership and assisting in the development and administration of program level assessment for both NELP accreditation and university level program review. Faculty members are expected to be active members of the College of Education and Human Services and the broader Seton Hall community in addition to relevant disciplinary and professional organizations. Required … An earned doctorate in education leadership or a related field by September 1, 2019; Ability to teach courses on curriculum, leadership, organizational structures and other related areas; An active scholarly research agenda in K-12 education; Background and knowledge of research methods; Ability to supervise and mentor doctoral dissertations. Desired … Experience as a K-12 school leader (assistant principal, principal, school district executive level director, assistant or associate superintendent, or superintendent); Interest in teaching courses in nontraditional formats (hybrid, online, executive models); A demonstrated record of scholarly achievement (such as peer-reviewed publications or conference presentations); Experience mentoring doctoral dissertations."

recommendations by the reviewers, I had/have already begun to act on those: a communications retreat following up my one-on-ones, devolving more decisions to Library faculty-led committees, moving away from a project-and-deadline-based workflow (no longer necessary), addressing contractual cost increases, moving to address some of our labor needs (interlibrary loan and data services) this year, and of course we are beginning a new round of strategic planning that will be used to mesh with what President Nyre and the SHU community produces. The Review document's "Moving forward: Plans to implement recommendations" should be a part of that planning discussions going forward. They are productive ideas for all the University Libraries' personnel – administration, staff, and Library faculty. Well done.