



**Academic Assembly of Librarians
Steering Committee
Tuesday, February 16, 2021
2:00 pm
Zoom: <https://temple.zoom.us/j/93914634279>**

Attendees

Erin Finnerty, Leanne Finnigan (chair), Gabe Galson (guest), Sarah Jones, Joe Lucia, Caitlin Shanley (recording), Emily Toner

Agenda

1. Approve [Minutes of January Steering Committee Meeting](#)
 - a. Approved.
2. Report from Dean of Libraries (Lucia)
 - a. Trying to determine financial situation for next year
 - i. Bracing for another budget cut
 1. Budget office demonstrated heightened caution
 2. A tuition increase could solve the problem, but that is a complicated decision
 - a. June timeframe for making a tuition decision, as we would know about incoming class size at that time
 - ii. So far, Brian S. and Erin have worked to shield faculty from seeing our budget cuts by shifting money around, but another 5% cut could make this impossible
 - iii. Opportunities exist due to the library endowment

iv. Q: Is there any indication that open position lines will be permanently eliminated?

1. The university does not dictate which lines we have to cut, we decide that
2. Joe trying to keep all current lines, as these positions are important to ensure high quality operations

b. Institution-wide strategic planning

- i. Recognition that we need to be able to move more quickly to do things like establish interdisciplinary programs across colleges
- ii. Some ideas on the table include the library in fostering interdisciplinary program development (that is, the library may be considered a degree-granting entity)

iii. Q: Can you share examples of these interdisciplinary programs?

1. Science, Technology, and Society
2. Building skills to work in the gaming industry
3. Conversations during strategic planning include ideas for getting degree programs approved more quickly

c. Future of physical workplace, expectations around presence on campus

- i. ITS expectation is that many people will continue to work off campus 2-3 days per week
 1. Triggers an assessment of how workspaces are configured

2. ITS considering a hotel-like setup where no spaces are permanently assigned
 - ii. Conversations to continue over the coming months
- d. Q: How is the Digital Scholarship Administrator position impacted by our current budget constraints?
 - i. This position is a unique circumstance. This is not a new job line for the Libraries, and there is a critical staffing need in that area. There are a number of factors in play that Library Administration had to move on, for fear of loss of effort in that area.
 - ii. Regarding future hiring: LLC will devise a plan for prioritizing positions for recruitment, and will bring this plan to an ADC meeting for further discussion.
3. Report from Selection and Appointment Committee (Jenkins)
 - a. Latanya was unable to attend today's meeting. Leanne will follow up with her for any committee updates.
4. Report from Merit Committee (Galson)
 - a. Gabe assumed chair role after Kim Tully
 - b. 22 applicants for merit
 - i. 6 deserving
 - ii. 6 outstanding
 - iii. 10 highest
 - c. Revising ["Merit Steps" document](#)

- i. Adding recommendations for process
 - ii. Clarifying transition from outgoing to incoming chair
 - iii. Shared with Library Administration for their approval and suggestions
 - iv. Just an advisory document - what is the approval process?
 - 1. If something in the Bylaws needs to be changed, the full AAL body needs to vote on that
 - 2. Probably doesn't need ratification, but Leanne will ask veteran AAL leaders if there is precedent for this
 - v. Suggestion to write similar document(s) for other groups within AAL
- d. Merit Committee discussed the professional development freeze, impact on Merit process, crafted a statement:

- i. *Statement on professional development: Due to the unavailability of professional development funding for the entirety of FY 21, the current Merit Committee recommends that when the following year's committee is appointed, the members be reminded by Steering that candidates may not have the usual extent of professional development involvement and accomplishments, and that in no way should this be used negatively in assessing any candidate.*
- ii. [Further discussion of this issue has been recorded in agenda item 7a, below]

5. Agenda prep for March GA meeting

- a. This meeting will focus on an explanation of the library budget.

- b. In the interest of time, Joe and Leanne will discuss this via email.
6. Old business
- a. None.
7. New business
- a. PARA and professional development freeze
 - i. Joe curious to see what will look different as a result of this funding change
 - ii. One issue is that individuals might still pay for professional development using their own funds, creating inequity between those who can finance their own professional development and those who cannot/choose not to
 - iii. This is a significant issue because Merit is competitive (unlike PARA, where it could potentially be simpler to tell reviewers not to consider a particular aspect of the evaluation criteria)
 - 1. That is, those who have done professional development using their own funds might have done more than other colleagues
 - iv. This will also have an impact that we will not be able to see (eg, staff won't get training they need, which has an impact on their job performance)
 - v. Recommendation from Sarah Jones to weight the evaluation categories differently, in order to give less weight to professional development

1. There is a distinction between the committee's recommendations and the points - in order for this to have a material impact, *the points* must be weighted (not just the Committee's rating)
 2. Joe and Richie receive and review Merit applications in clusters based on the rating
 3. They try to give the same number of points to individuals in each ranking
 - a. The available number of points cannot always be divided evenly, so subtle distinctions between individuals have to be made
- vi. While it's important to continue these conversations, perhaps the most important step to take is that those staff who are currently participating in these processes (particularly PARA) must be notified about the expectations regarding professional development
1. This communication needs to happen soon, as the current fiscal year is more than half over
 2. While the option to "stop the clock" exists during COVID, postponing the promotion process has a significant financial impact on staff
- vii. Leanne will call a meeting with Richie, Gabe, Josue to discuss this issue

Adjourned 3:04pm.

LF 3/16/21
JL 3/16/21