Final Report
FY2016 LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

The University Senate Library Committee met five times this academic year, on Nov. 21, Dec. 11, Feb. 16, March 24, April 14. In addition, the chair held a public meeting and one private meeting with staff. The results of those meetings is listed below, in terms of the standing charges:

In general, most of the topics this year concerned digitalization, its positive and negative effects on the library (and on faculty in general), and budget, with respect to staff and to the collection. This summary is organized with respect to the charges to the committee:

1. Monitor the Libraries' long-range planning and allocation of resources—staff, physical space, equipment, collections, digitally-based information, etc.—in light of the needs of different academic disciplines and the flat budget situation. Assess the adequacy of these plans and resource allocations to support teaching (including both undergraduate and graduate) and research. Report issues and recommendations for action to SenEx.

This charge was specifically addressed in February and March. The long range budget situation, assumed it remains flat, will require increased reductions in collection acquisition, which will be somewhat offset by digital resources. The use of "demand acquisition," which seems to work in some fields, is not useful in other areas. But the collection will be negatively affected by a continued flat budget.

2.   Monitor the effectiveness of communication between the Libraries and students, faculty, and staff, about topics including but not limited to library-based instruction in classes and academic programs in support of university-wide learner outcomes. Report issues and recommendations for action to SenEx. (ongoing)

In December the committee was given a report concerning "Communications and Advancement." This office has an added responsibility of developing donors, as well as communication within the University.

3. Obtain a report from the Open Access advisory board concerning activities, and long-range planning for Open Access at KU.

The committee received in December a progress report on "open education resources," which should make texts available to students at lower cost. The library hosted a conference on this topic in late April.
A related program is "K.U. Scholarworks," which is an "online institutional repository of work by KU Faculty, staff, and students." Faculty can initiate having work entered in this program, but there is also library staff dedicated to collecting eligible material. (Marianne Reed, at the Nov. meeting).

4. Seek information from the KU faculty, staff, and students about their concerns. Report issues and recommendations for action to SenEx. (ongoing)

In March, the Deans reported on the ways user satisfaction is surveyed, but the committee felt in discussion that there could be a more direct assessment initiated by the committee, and that it should be included in the committee's charge.

5. Convene an open meeting with Libraries faculty and staff in the fall semester. Report issues and recommendations for action to SenEx by 12/1/15.

The committee met for the first time in Nov. 2015, and asked the Senate to allow it to delay this activity until the spring. Because of criticisms noted in last year's report, the chair held a public meeting at which only staff was invited, and the chair also held office hours for private meetings. Three items emerged from these meetings: the effect of the long period of no increases in budget was the first topic raised by staff. It has meant that real take-home pay for staff has decreased, due to increases in fees, etc. And the effect on the collection budget will be much more severe in the next several years. The second issue had to do with librarians with tenure and librarians without tenure, and this issue should be an issue the new dean addresses in the fall. The third issue is for the chair the most intriguing. The library reorganization, concerning which there is a charge directed to the 2017 committee, has led to the situation where faculty and student consultations occur with librarians whose special field is not their own, and this can have negative consequences. This is difficult to assess, and it has led to the recommendation above that the committee directly seek information from users.

Specific charges:
1. Continue to monitor the effects of the "Changing for Excellence" centralization of all University IT resources and services. Review in detail both the support and resources that are provided to the Libraries, and the support and resources that the Libraries need to operate effectively and optimally.

This is an issue of relevance to the University at large, and I will quote from the April minutes:
Dean Miller discussed the special charge to the committee, "monitor the effects of 'changing for excellence.' " The question of whether the library is receiving an adequate amount of support with respect to "information technology" is vexed, and will undoubtedly be a topic of discussion in the near future. Discussion among the members of the committee suggested that it is hard to assess the consequences of centralizing support services, because what is being centralized is only a part of the functions of the people whose positions are being redistributed. In specific terms, it was mentioned that these centralized support offices have trouble with the unique problems of various programs, for instance research being carried out in foreign environments.