

August 31, 2017

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN, Elizabeth Cowell
University Library

Re: COLASC Review of the Science & Engineering Library Business Case Analysis

Dear Elizabeth,

The Committee on the Library and Scholarly Communication (COLASC) reviewed the Science & Engineering (S&E) Library Business Case Analysis (BCA) in Executive Session during our meeting on 4/27/17. The renovation of the S&E library represents an exciting opportunity and a major investment by the University. Thus, we appreciated the opportunity to review this document. While it is unclear whether the BCA was intended to address campus stakeholders, our reading of it raised many questions both about the consultative process in which plans for capital projects are developed on our campus and about the specific vision for the S&E library represented in the BCA. The committee believes it is extremely important that the BCA be released to the full campus community, and we urge the CP/EVC to do so as soon as possible. In addition, we strongly recommend that additional details about the administration's vision for the S&E library be provided. These recommendations and further feedback are detailed below.

Proposed Vision and Future of the Library

The BCA makes a strong argument concerning the facilities challenges (e.g., mechanical, electrical, plumbing) that must be addressed in this 25-year-old building. The need for modern technological infrastructure is clear. The increased spatial demands are also clear, in that the number of students at UCSC has nearly doubled since the S&E library was built. However, the planned renovations go beyond merely providing additional study space and upgrading facilities; the renovations encompass a vision for the function of the library. The floor plans suggest a vision that differs quite a bit from the current vision, yet the bulk of the BCA focuses on different timetables for implementing this vision, rather than an argument for why this is the best vision for the campus at this time.

We would like to see such an argument, and we additionally recommend that the description of the vision be more explicit and detailed. For example, the BCA states that there is a "need for flexible, innovative spaces that support project-based, collaborative, and interactive learning" and advocates for "the emerging role of digital scholarship" (p. 4). How much demand is there on campus for this type of teaching or learning and these types of spaces? What does digital scholarship mean in the sciences and in engineering, and what is the demand for resources related to this type of scholarship? To what extent are these ideas driven by external vendor offerings or donor interests?

Some additional questions include the following. We would like to know the definition of terms such as "spatial flexibility" (p. 2) and "richly supported informal learning environments" (p. 4). What are examples of the "innovative information technologies" (p. 9) that an enhanced information commons would provide? What does it mean for processes of teaching and learning to have "high visibility" (p. 9) and why is this necessary or desirable? The BCA describes "an imperative to rebalance the space devoted to collections and the space devoted to users and services" (p. 4). In the wake of the removal of so many volumes from the S&E library in the summer of 2016, we seek clarification of this statement. Has this rebalancing now been accomplished? Or is further conversion of square footage from stacks to user study space planned?

There are several elements of the BCA that lead us to seek this clarification. The schematics show an area devoted to collections that comprises only a very small fraction of the Lower Level, smaller than the current situation. We have been told that this should not be interpreted literally (i.e., one can't determine the number of bookshelves planned by counting the icons on the diagram) but the space devoted to stacks in the schematic is clearly smaller than the current amount of space devoted to stacks on that floor. In addition, a version of the schematic shared with COLASC in Fall 2016 gave seat counts for each floor. The total number of seats was 1836, which aligns closely with the number of

seats envisioned in this BCA (1700, according to the goal on p. 9). Table 3 shows the number of bound volumes and associated square footage increasing over time (from 389,149 volumes and 31,132 sq. ft. on 6/30/13 to 405,418 volumes and 32,434 sq. ft. in 2013/14 to 568,108 volumes and 45,449 sq. ft. in 23/24), but the amount of square footage devoted to users is also shown as increasing. Both cannot happen, of course, which is why the square footage projected for 2023-24 shows a deficit of 40,783 square feet. Has the full deficit been eliminated through the recent removal of volumes? We are unable to assess this question because we do not know how many square feet were freed up through the 2016 action. If the full projected deficit has not been eliminated, how does the administration plan to deal with this problem?

In concurrence with the Senate resolution passed on November 18, 2016, we are currently opposed to any further large-scale reduction of the physical collections in the S&E library. We are worried by the goal to “efficiently manage the physical core collection” (p. 9) because efficiency (while a laudable goal in the abstract) is sometimes used as bureaucratic code for slashing positions or resources. Would it not be more accurate to use phrases like “responsible curation” or “responsible custodianship” (and, ideally, include definitions of these terms)?

One very important request is that more details be provided concerning the proposed funding sources for the BCA plan. The figures in the small boxes on the floor schematics suggest that the plan will cost an estimated \$59 to \$95 million if the final phase is completed by 2024. The plan implies that this funding will need to be raised from non-State sources. If so, we would welcome learning more about the specific fund-raising strategies (and possible target sources) that have a reasonable chance of eventually generating such a large amount.

Consultation Process

Although it might be standard practice for a Senate committee to review the business case analysis for a capital improvement project after it has already been approved by the Chancellor, we believe that such a process is inadequate for projects that involve the libraries. A library is unlike almost any other single-use building on a campus because it is used (potentially) by every member of the university. Moreover, the library (both as a physical space and as a set of operations based on its contents and staff) is vital to the success of our core missions of research and teaching. Therefore, in planning a new vision for the library it is essential that the entire campus community be involved and that this involvement go beyond mere consultation to include an actual role in decision-making.

Because decisions about library functions and physical space have implications for educational policy and research we believe it is a threat to shared governance if the Senate is not a partner in making these decisions. Senate consultation in this case should go beyond COLASC. Especially if the administration envisions the library as a space for diverse teaching and learning activities, both CEP and COT must be involved in the planning. Otherwise, choices about pedagogical practices may be limited and constrained by the physical plant decisions made prior to thorough consultation. Such an approach would threaten shared governance principles in which the Senate has plenary authority over decisions about educational policy and pedagogical practice. Because decisions about collections impact faculty research activities, COR should be involved in this review. Graduate students are key users of library services, so Graduate Council should also be involved. The larger planning and budgetary issues make it essential to include CPB in any consultations. Other committees that might wish to consult include CAAD, CER, CFW, CIT, CIE, and CPE.

In addition to much broader consultation with the Senate, other campus constituencies should be actively involved in decision making about the future of the S&E library. In particular, undergraduate and graduate students are major stakeholders. We therefore recommend wide outreach to students and close consultation with the Student Union Assembly (SUA) and the Graduate Student Association (GSA) to ensure that the physical facility meets the needs of both undergraduate and graduate students.

In order to ensure the Senate’s involvement in the planning process going forward, we request that the administration provide a detailed list of the next steps that will be taken, so that the Senate can best ascertain when and how to contribute to the planning. We are especially interested in knowing how concrete is the administration’s current vision for the S&E library and how committed to that vision they are. Is the floor plan in the BCA merely some rough sketches that were prepared as one possibility among many? Or is it the graphical representation of decisions about the future of the library that the administration has already made? We hope that there is still time for the Senate and other constituencies to make contributions to the vision for the S&E library.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the BCA. We look forward to continuing to contribute to discussions about plans for the future of the S&E library.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eileen Zurbriggen". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Eileen Zurbriggen, Chair
Committee on the Library & Scholarly Communication

cc: Chancellor Blumenthal
CP/EVC Tromp
Divisional Deans
Senate Chair Einarsdóttir
Senate Executive Committee
Director Mednick