

# QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The City University of New York

## Academic Senate Committee on the Library

Date: April 19, 2005

To: Ken Pearl, Secretary, Academic Senate

From: Matthew Trachman, Chairperson, Library Committee

Subject: Report on the State of the Library

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We offer this report with the belief that a library ought to be the intellectual cornerstone of a college campus, and that all constituents benefit from a facility that is safe, pleasant, and up to date. Indeed, statistics from the college fact book indicate interest in, and heavy use of, the Kurt R. Schmeller Library. It is the intention of the Library Committee, through this report and the assistance of the Academic Senate, to help the Queensborough Library become one that leads the way into the new age of information and be a facility that we all may continue to be proud of.

The story of QCC's Library is both one of tremendous strengths and formidable challenges. One of the greatest strengths of the Kurt Schmeller Library is its personnel. As indicated by student surveys, satisfaction with the Library remains high because of the friendly, helpful, and professional staff that assists all Library patrons. The Library has also begun to transform itself into a facility better equipped to take advantage of the digital revolution of our day. In addition, given the increasing skills needed to navigate through our digitalized information society, the innovative staff has introduced an experimental course LIB-101 "The Fundamentals of Information Literacy."

Furthermore, we support President Marti's initiative to create a "community of learners" at Queensborough and believe that a reimagined library facility could provide a central institutional setting for this vision to be realized. While acknowledging these strengths and opportunities, we believe there are immediate areas of concern that need to be brought to the attention of the Academic Senate. They are as follows:

**SPACE**  
Concern:

When the College was first opened, the Library utilized four floors to service 5,000 students. Now, Library space is down to approximately one-half of its original allocation, while the student population has increased to over 11,000. The trend has been to divide up the Library for other, no doubt important, uses. Yet the reallocation of physical resources has been a step backward in providing QCC students and faculty a useful study and research environment. While we believe that Queensborough deserves an expanded and enhanced facility, we understand the constraints imposed by the larger campus-wide space crisis.

Recommendations:

1. The Library should be preserved in the space it currently occupies.
2. The needs of the Library should be considered in any future expansion of the College.

## **SECURITY**

Concern:

The division of the Library building into a multi-use facility has resulted in major gaps in security that make protecting the current collection impossible.

Recommendation:

3. The College should take measures in security to protect the current collection.

Concern: Student behavior in and around the Library (socializing and being excessively noisy especially near the reference area, congregating outside of and blocking the entrance) diminishes the usefulness of the facility and occasionally compromises personal safety.

Recommendation:

4. We believe that security resources need to be redistributed to ensure a safe and secure Library environment. Campus security officers making regular rounds through and around the Library facilities would help to ensure appropriate and safe behavior.

## **PRINT AND ELECTRONIC COLLECTIONS**

Concern:

Individualized Library assistance to students is the Library's budgetary priority. However, the entire material budget is the lowest in CUNY, the expenditure amount per FTE is the lowest in CUNY, and the amount spent on databases is the second to lowest in CUNY.

Recommendation:

5. Increased funding of the Library's print and electronic resources is essential if the facility is to maintain a college-level collection and enable quality research by both faculty and students.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Concern:

The general environment of the library facility has been neglected for far too long and the facility has grown dismal and dirty. The furniture, carpeting, and curtains are worn and/or in disrepair. Especially troubling, given that it is both a health and fire code violation, is that garbage accumulates at the rear entrance of the Library.

Recommendations:

6. Buildings and Grounds needs to make adjustments to the regular schedule for cleaning in order to respond to the heavy volume of traffic in the Library.
7. A schedule for more frequent removal of the accumulated clutter and garbage should be arranged.
8. A general “sprucing up” of the Library would make it a more welcoming and usable facility.

**PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY**

Concern:

As it is a multi-floor facility, the Library has a variety of challenges with regard to physical access (particularly access to the second floor). In addition, there are only two ADA accessible restrooms (one for each sex) in the building and those are inconveniently located in the basement.

Recommendation:

9. The College should improve access to the Library and its collections and facilities for students with physical disabilities.

**SUNDAY HOURS**

Concern:

While enrollment in the weekend college has increased, the Library remains closed on Sundays. This means that students taking Sunday classes do not have access to research materials and study space when they are on campus. In addition, faculty who teach Sunday classes do not have access to audio-visual equipment. This omission is particularly notable given that all other CUNY community colleges now offer Sunday hours. Weekend and evening faculty and student surveys also note this lack of services.

Recommendation:

10. The Library should have Sunday hours and services that adequately support students and faculty.