Notes from Library Committee Meeting, May 21, 2014

Ground Rules
• Create a safe space for discussion
• Allow one another to speak without interruption
• Don’t take offense at disagreement
• Work toward inclusive discussion,
• Focus on the ideas, on shared common purpose
• Courtesy and respect

When necessary, to maintain constructive momentum, ideas introduced into our discussion space can be moved to a “parking lot”

Leadership: The chair should set the agenda, in consultation with the rest of the committee
The committee elected John Turner to this position

Timeline: A final report summarizing our findings and recommendations is expected by April 1, 2015. We are free to develop and present this report in whatever ways seem best to us. Faculty meetings provide a natural forum for broader discussion of our efforts with the faculty:
• To be prepared for a April 1 deadline, with faculty input, a presentation at the March faculty meeting is absolutely necessary
• To make optimal use of the March meeting, we should be prepared to initiate discussion and/or voting at the February faculty meeting
• A preliminary presentation at the December faculty meeting seems wise then, which means a great deal of our work needs to be done during the fall semester of 2014 (we’ll need to start right away)
• We could announce what we’re up to even earlier (as an announcement, just so everyone will know what we’re up to)

With this timeline in mind, we should plan on meeting twice per month starting at the beginning of September (we can always cancel meetings, if they are not needed). Committee members will contact John with availability details for the fall semester.

Perhaps some of the larger issues of “process” surrounding the renovation can be moved to the parking lot for now. Let’s focus on recommendations for the future?

How to get input from broader community? Surveys or town hall meetings? Both? The committee strongly agrees that both qualitative and quantitative data will be informative. We should do everything we can, reaching out to as many constituencies as possible.

Student input:
• Dean of Students office may be able to help us
• While first-year students haven’t been on campus long, they have expectations that may be interesting or informative. We have 9 years of surveys from first-year students we could consider.
• Older students will have more experience using library resources and will have a different perspective that is equally important to include

Other ideas about data collection:
• Let’s get more specific about what has happened from year to year. How many books are in the stacks? How much space has been converted to what?
• We should consider all three libraries, not just Miller
• We might want to be careful when evaluating information obtained after Phase I was completed but before Phase II was completed?
• Reference librarian use is another easy data set, though good deal of correspondence is electronic (not simply visiting during set hours)
• There does not seem to be an easy way to quantify browsing, but libraries do have some data on “in-house” use (books taken off shelves but not checked out)
• What about usage of study spaces? We could do informal head counts in various places over the course of the semester, to see how and when different spaces are used. Our goal should not necessarily be having visible, public study space for every student at peak study hours though.
• The Office of Institutional Research is another valuable resource

Bigger picture:
• We may want to do some thinking about what it means to read, about the importance of reading. There is a cultural shift under way; we want to be sensitive to changing needs and expectations but also not get too caught up in it.
• We may want to do some broader reading on the future of libraries, the future of books. There are a variety of prominent voices in this debate. Clem will compile a few suggestions.
• We could consider visiting other libraries or bringing speakers to campus. These would require we put together a preliminary budget and request funding.