

Proposed Library Learning Center Comes Under Fire

By Jan Travers

Controversy is building on the proposed \$15 million library at Penn State University, Harrisburg. The new library, thought long overdue by members of the campus, has generated two arguments, one with the location and the other with the inclusion of a computer center within the building.

The physical plant master plan, recently presented to the college community by H2L2 Master Planners, calls for the three story library learning center (library plus computer center) to be located adjacent to the CUB, with walkways to connect it to the Olmsted Building.

For a campus with the majority of classes in one building, many have questioned, both during the presentation and since, why the library isn't more centrally located. According to Douglas Steele, H2L2, an attempt was made to create a totally balanced campus atmosphere.

Agreeing with this reasoning, Robert Graham, associate provost and associate dean of faculty, later explained that the decision of the location was preceded by an assessment of several areas of the campus. "When I saw the different

models, I was sold on the choice of location because with two massive buildings (Olmsted and library) near each other the campus was definitely thrown off balance," he said.

But Student Court Chief Justice Todd Hammaker doesn't buy it. "The location is horrible. They are sacrificing efficiency just for aesthetics and that is stupid. Most of the classes will still be in Olmsted and it will be impossible to efficiently spend a free class period in the library. Half of the time will be spent going there and coming back," said Hammaker.

Likewise, SGA President Jeanette Brinker stated the library should be the center of activity on a campus. "I think the students will complain. The planners could have done a better job of asking students what they want. They are the primary users," said Brinker.

Even more controversial is the planner's recommendation that the library be combined with a computer center, to be called a library learning center. According to R. Graham, H2L2 met with "a wide range of people on campus and collected information, and the things coming up most often were that PSU, Harrisburg needed, in

addition to a library, an auditorium and a computer center. Choosing a computer center was more in line with the charge made to the architect.

Ruth Leventhal, provost and dean, commenting on the charge said, "We told them (H2L2) to imagine a library of the twenty-first century. I personally envision information transfer taking place

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by wire and computer. A library with access to a computer facility will be more functional," she added.

However, not everyone agrees. "I think the idea of a library learning center should be studied more carefully with more discussion," said William Mahar, humanities division chairman.

Agreeing, Theodora Graham, humanities professor, said, "I'm concerned with how

the library/computer center evolved," T. Graham was a member of the Library Task Force from January 1986 through September, 1986. The task force final report recommended a new library was needed and included three possible other building which could be incorporated into it. These included a computer center, an auditorium, or instructional services with film preview rooms.

Throughout their presentation, H2L2 maintained that the library learning center was agreed upon because the climate control and security systems for each was compatible. A theater is not feasible because with that combination there are different security considerations, like controlled access, according to Leventhal.

Disputing this, R. Graham said he is in favor of a library/performing center. "I don't agree with the planners. I don't think they looked hard enough for examples at other universities of this combo," said R. Graham. Nor did T. Graham. She stated that previous architects of campus buildings (who according to R. Graham was also H2L2) were not interested in looking at what is

not conventional. "That unimagination is why we often have ugly buildings on campus," T. Graham said.

"I am not totally against the plan. I just want to be sure that we investigate different combinations," explained T. Graham. In a letter to Faculty Council Chairman Donald Alexander, T. Graham outlined her feelings and recommended the quality of life on campus be "dramatically improved" rather than only enhanced. "This will not be achieved by the addition of a computer center to the library nor the naming of this add-on a 'learning center'," the letter stated.

T. Graham argues that the campus desperately needs a performing theater and classrooms with projection capabilities. "Penn State has an obligation to support the good teachers," she said.

The plan, approved by the trustees on January 17 is in no way binding, according to Leventhal. "It is simply a proposal for the future; it does not reflect final decisions about any of its parts, including the proposed library learning center," said Leventhal.

"Isms" Committee Addressing Problems of Discrimination

By Tom McGovern

A committee has been put together to handle what the college considers to be a growing number of complaints that are discriminatory and demeaning in nature. The group, known as the "Isms" committee, wants to organize a task force that will avert problems before they arise, rather than respond to complaints once they are lodged.

Dr. Jerry South, associate provost and director of student affairs, heads the committee. His office reports approximately 50 complaints in the last few years that involve sexism, racism, and other discriminatory behaviors based upon a person's ethnic, age, religious or physical disability status. The committee believes this to be only a small portion of the actual amount of incidents that have occurred on campus, and that because of a lack of information, it will be difficult to develop strategies to address the problem.

Dr. Robert Munzenrider, a faculty member of the "Isms" committee, addressed the January 13 meeting of Student Government.

Munzenrider asked for an expression of support from the student body's elected representatives to send to the provost. When put to the vote, it was unanimously approved. Also approved was that representatives from SGA would serve on the task force, along with faculty and administration members.

The task force will develop a consensus on what are inappropriate behaviors both in

the classroom and elsewhere at Capital College. The committee wants to "create a climate of support for people who feel they are targets of discrimination, building up ground support in favor of the victim so a feeling of uselessness is not an excuse from reporting."

"This is not to be a witch hunt!" claimed Munzenrider at the meeting. The faculty does not wish to identify offenders or victims, just identify problems and try to solve them. Whatever action is taken, said Munzenrider, "must uphold the principles of academic freedom."

Nittany Lines



I really think that this new Library Security System is a bit Much!