

April 10, 2015

Dear Library Staff,

As we near the end of another school year, I felt it was important to update you on the progress of the consolidation working group. The charge of the group is to make recommendations to reduce the physical footprint of the libraries through consolidation. [View the full charter here.](#)

It's important to note that "consolidation" does not necessarily mean that a facility is closing. There are other states of consolidation that can be implemented, including the consolidation of a collection, a service, or a position without closing the location.

In March, the group entered its Data Collection phase, which involved members pairing up to meet with library managers for two-hour interview sessions. Libraries were identified and interviewed with the teams gathering information about each library in following areas (full list of libraries interviewed can be viewed at the end of this note):

- Services
- Collections
- Staffing
- Costs
- Spaces

It's important to mention that among the spaces some libraries were not analyzed (process explained below), as the expectation is that they will be needed to take on services, staff or spaces from other locations.

With the completion of interviews, the group now enters the Data Analysis phase, expected to last through April. The first step in the process includes creating a set of criteria related to five areas of consolidation feasibility. The following criteria are intended to provide a uniform way to begin the consolidation assessment:

1. **Collections** (Feasibility of moving all/most of the library's collection to long-term storage and/or integrating the collection into another library)
2. **Proximity to Collection/Materials** (Anticipated ability to support instruction and research if collection/materials were moved to a different location)
3. **Proximity to Library Staff Expertise** (Anticipated ability to support instruction and research if the library staff were moved to a different location)
4. **Cost Savings** (Estimated potential cost savings that could be realized through consolidating services, collections, staff, space)
5. **Repurpose Space** (Capability/desire to repurpose any/all of the library space)

During its last meeting the group collectively analyzed each library as low, medium, or high for feasibility in the specified areas. These ratings looked only at the feasibility for consolidation and do NOT determine whether consolidation will indeed happen. It's only ONE step in this assessment process. The team's next steps, on April 23, will be to conduct a readiness assessment based on the initial analysis.

The last phase will include a final report consisting of formal recommendations to the Provost and Vice Provost for Libraries for consolidation. This report will include a prioritization on the areas of feasibility and readiness, coupled with recommendations for how consolidation will be done through a phased approach. The expected timeline for these recommendations is mid to late May.

With these updates, I understand that there are questions about when and what information will become available for you. When the group was formed, it was decided that the discussions would not be made public, but that we would be as open as possible about the process we are using. It's in this spirit that we want share this information. Decisions, recommendations, and the related documents and analysis will be available, after everything has been delivered to the Provost.

As always, if you have questions, concerns, or thoughts at any point, I encourage you to contact your AULs, or me, as we are always willing and ready to answer questions or help any way we can.

We want to thank each of you for your hard work this semester, and especially thank the managers and directors who met with our team on short notice. Everyone was accommodating and exceptionally helpful in gathering the information critical to our tasks.

Sincerely,

Ed

The libraries interviewed included: Art, Astronomy, Chemistry, Geography, Geology/Geophysics, Mathematics, Music, Physics, Social Sciences, Social Work, American Indian Studies, Center for Demography and Ecology, Chicano and Latino Studies, Journalism Reading Room, LGBT Campus Center, Learning Support Services, Library & Information Studies, Limnology, Schwerdtfeger Atmospheric Oceanic and Space Science, Wisconsin Water, Ruth Kerrerer Harris (SOHE), the Arboretum, the Veterinary Medicine Reading Room, Business, College, Memorial, Steenbock, Zoological Museum Research, Law, MERIT (Education), and Wendt Commons (Engineering).