

MEMORANDUM

TO: IUPUI Faculty Council
Librarians/Staff of the IUPUI University Library

FROM: Charles R. Bantz, Chancellor

DATE: August 27, 2008

RE: Administrative Review of the Dean, IUPUI University Library, David W. Lewis

This memo summarizes the report of the Administrative Review Committee (ARC) on the Office of the Dean of the IUPUI University Library, David W. Lewis.

Dean Robert W. White of the IU School of Liberal Arts chaired the committee. Its members from the University Library were Glenda Armstrong, Acquisitions; Polly D. Boruff-Jones Associate Dean, Teaching, Learning, and Research; Brenda L. Burk, Archivist, Special Collections; Robin A. Crumrin, Associate Dean, Collections & Information Access; Todd J. Daniels-Howell, Director, Special Collections; Frances A. Huehls, Special Collections; Gregory Mobley, Special Collections; William A. Orme, Liberal Arts and Music Team Leader; Mary J. Stanley, Associate Dean; Sonja S. Staum-Kuniej, Team Leader, Director, Herron Library Team; and Alice Warner Jackson, Operations and Client Support Teams. Peter D. Terew, a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science, served on the committee, as did faculty member David G. Bivin (Associate Professor, Department of Economics, School of Liberal Arts) and community representative Lewis Miller (Dean, Libraries, Butler University).

Members of the committee conducted interviews with 16 people representing a cross-section of persons associated with or familiar with Dean Lewis and the University Library, including librarians and library staff members at IUPUI and other institutions; campus administrators; and members of the metropolitan Indianapolis community. In March 2008, the Survey Research Center at IUPUI was engaged by the review committee to examine the attitudes of IUPUI University Library personnel, IUPUI faculty and students, and relevant others toward Dean Lewis's management style.

The ARC's report describes Dean Lewis as "innovative, hard-working, visionary, articulate, a good communicator, and a collaborator." Considered "a big picture thinker," Dean Lewis is commended for his efforts to maintain a highly skilled energetic staff, use resources wisely on behalf of his constituencies, and promote diversity. While there is not unvarying agreement that Dean Lewis has been successful in managing library resources, those who raise concerns are aware that Dean Lewis must make difficult decisions that not everyone will accept. In survey responses, Dean Lewis scored highest on the extent to which he can build and maintain the financial health of the University Library and in the provision of resources that ensure the quality of graduate education and research in the University Library.

A consistent theme in the comments is that Dean Lewis is viewed as a “visionary innovator and leader,” who articulates an advanced understanding of current issues regarding academic libraries and the future of the profession in his presentations and publications. It brings national and international attention to the library; therefore, the ARC encourages him to remain engaged as a scholar.

He also represents the library in a professional manner. Respondents external to the library offer consistent praise for Dean Lewis. He is an articulate spokesperson for the library to the community at large and is credited with the library’s good reputation across the state and among other institutions. The ARC recommends that Dean Lewis continue to work closely with members of the community and representatives from other libraries as he leads the library into the future.

A primary concern, raised by several respondents, is that the library does not have a five-year plan—specifically that the library’s mission and vision are not in line with the mission of the campus. The general perception is that while Dean Lewis is supportive of campus initiatives, the library would be best served if it did have a five-year plan developed with a broad consensus. The ARC recommends that Dean Lewis undertake a strategic planning process in 2008-09 to develop a five-year plan, drawing on as wide a variety of perspectives within the library as possible. In its fifth year (2013-14), the process should be re-engaged and the plan updated. As the leader of a large unit with increasingly limited resources, Dean Lewis is faced with difficult decisions and would be well-served by a strategic plan that is, to the highest degree possible, widely supported by librarians, staff, and the constituencies served by the University Library.

The ARC further recommends that Dean Lewis explore ways to have systematic and regular feedback from students, an important group of library users, and seek data that will inform decisions, such as the decline in student satisfaction with library hours. As the IUPUI campus attracts more residential students, the University Library should routinely solicit information that will allow it to stay current in addressing the resource and space needs of students. Relative to the perception of faculty members, some may be unaware of the full range of resources in the University Library. For others, there may be unmet needs. Alternatives should be systematically examined as the library seeks to best serve the faculty.

In its summary, the ARC writes: “The University Library is a large and complex unit of the IUPUI Campus. . . . Through Dean Lewis’ leadership, the library has made great strides in many areas. All parties agree that his leadership, including his scholarship, has placed the University Library on the cutting edge of issues related to technology, including open-access and digitization. We agree with respondents who describe him as a ‘visionary’ leader. Overall, his leadership is to be commended.”