

The University Commons

Excitement is growing across campus as planning for the University Commons project resumes. The building has been re-visioned as a new, stand-alone structure near the MedEd and NBCC buildings, and adjacent to K.C.Irving Hall. A dramatic, signature building, the University Commons will become the academic heart of a revitalized campus.

Commons Planning Resumes

The Committee was briefed on the resumption of planning for the University Commons (UC) project. As reported to Senate November 19, 2008, the UC will be a stand-alone building at the south end of the quadrangle, perhaps adjacent to K.C.Irving Hall. With about 62,000 sq.ft., the UC will be home to the library, IT services, Student Services, the Teaching and Learning Centre, and a host of other services and resources.

The team of architects from B+H (Toronto) and Sasaki (Boston) have been working hard to produce options for the design of the new building, and the UC Steering Committee is pleased with the results to date. The UNBSJ community will be very excited when the concept and preliminary sketches are rolled out soon.

The target cost for the UC is \$25M; funding is being identified, and construction could begin in early 2010. A dedicated fundraising campaign to help reach the goal could take place over the next several months. Many UNBSJ faculty and staff have contributed to the UC fund, and their continued support for this critical project has been most gratifying.

The new building will be surrounded with attractive landscaping, and will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified at least at the silver level. Whether by tunnel or bridge, the UC will be connected to the rest of the core academic buildings, and will have a café, space for community gatherings, plus a state-of-the-art Learning Commons.

ISS Mission

We advance learning and scholarship by providing effective, efficient, and well-managed technology and information services to all of our users, whenever and wherever needed.

ISS Vision

We strive to be leaders in the innovative delivery of technology and information, and, through our expertise and collaboration with our colleagues across UNB, to enhance lifelong learning and contribute to the intellectual and cultural life of New Brunswick.

We are building a unique organization that integrates information resources with technology in new ways, and that will ultimately deliver the best information support services anywhere. These services, provided in appropriate facilities, including the new Learning Commons, by expert staff with state-of-the-art tools, will directly assist UNB by attracting new students, improving student retention, and by actively engaging our communities of users in the academic enterprise.

Reviewed May 2009

Merger of Senate Committees

After careful consideration of the terms of reference and the history of activity of the Senate Library and Senate Information Technology committees, and in the context of the Information Systems and Services unit, with its mandate to integrate operations, it was proposed that the committees be merged. The proposal was approved by Senate in the Spring of 2008, and the combined committee has met several times to consider library and campus technology issues. Major issues discussed by the committee include budgets (across ISS), IT and audio-visual services, the University Commons, and library collections.

DMEP-NB – MedEd Program

The Dalhousie Medical Education Program – New Brunswick (DMEP-NB) is well on the way to becoming a reality, with the first class of 30 students scheduled to begin in Sept. 2010. As key support units, both the library and ITS are deeply involved in many aspects of planning of the new program.

The committee learned that the library has begun to acquire the several hundred reference books that will be needed by the MedEd students, and has started planning how services such as library instruction, reserves, and so on will be delivered. Colleagues at the Dalhousie libraries have been very cooperative by sharing best practices and collections expertise, and will continue to support us and the new program through training, specialized databases, and research tools. It is anticipated that a new medical librarian will be hired early in 2010 to serve MedEd students and faculty.

Planning is also underway for meeting the information technology needs of the program. The UNBSJ ITS group will be responsible for network and desktop computing support for students, staff, and faculty on campus and in a lab at the SJRH, while Dalhousie IT will look after video-conferencing equipment, training, and maintenance at UNBSJ, SJRH, and 3 other clinical sites.

Other News

- ❖ The UNB Libraries (excluding Law) are developing a new web site that will improve services for users on both campuses. The integrated site will have seamless navigation to relevant resources for all users, regardless of physical location. The current 2-site model (UNBF and UNBSJ) will disappear late this summer. Given the close relationships between the UNB libraries, the new approach to web-based service makes sense for users, who will no longer have to choose a campus if using the libraries remotely. Also, since all the libraries share in the costs of electronic resources, it makes sense to provide uniform, easy access via a single interface.
- ❖ The computing lab on the 3rd floor of Hazen Hall has been upgraded with lounge seating, a new networked printer, and a less crowded layout. Feedback from students has been very positive. This summer, the Irving Hall labs will be getting a complete makeover. In addition, all classrooms equipped with computer consoles will be getting brand new, standardized, state-of-the-art systems to increase efficiency and convenience for students and faculty.

Collections Update

The committee reviewed library collections in Saint John, which continue to develop and grow. Ordering, acquisitions, and new materials processing procedures have been streamlined to ensure that declining staff resources continue to meet faculty and administrative needs and expectations. Three collections projects are underway or have been completed:

1. The Popular Reading collection has been launched, and has proven to be a great hit. Many academic libraries throughout the world are recognizing the need to encourage reading, not only by students but by staff and faculty as well. Reading encourages lifelong learning, relieves stress, and improves literacy. The Ward Chipman Library now has a collection of current best-selling fiction, both hardcover and paperbacks, which can be borrowed for 3 weeks (no term loans). The collection is available to all, and is funded in part by donations and the proceeds from sale of books withdrawn from our regular collections.
2. The '501 Collection' is being developed to bring together in one place a copy of every title in *501 Must-Read Books*, a compilation of reviews by literary scholars of the 501 best and most important English-language books in Children's Fiction, Classic Fiction, History, Memoirs, Modern Fiction, Science Fiction, Thrillers, and Travel. This project was proposed by Fred Donnelly, and library staff members have had a lot of fun bringing it all together. Most of the items for the collection that we did not already have were purchased with donated funds. A Fall 09 launch is expected.
3. Last year a major shift of collections on the main floor of the library was completed to make room for the Learning Commons. This year, library staff (with the able assistance of several student workers) will be shifting collections on the second floor. New shelving will be installed that will help relieve the tremendous pressure our space shortage has caused; the shift of materials from crowded shelves to the new ones will help out a lot while the University Commons, and the new library, are being built.

Budget 09-10 Challenges

The committee learned that over the last few years, ISS has reduced its yearly operating budget by over \$250,000; in the past year, inflation and unfavorable exchange rates on the US\$ have further eroded our non-salary funding base. With the current university-wide budget conditions and resulting hiring freeze, ISS has re-examined all potential savings, and has eliminated one vacant part-time circulation position in the library. This has affected library hours slightly—it is now open 2 fewer hours per week. Along with this reduction, the number of laptop computers available for loan from the circulation desk has been reduced from 60 to 40 (30 units that can be signed out for 2 hours, and 10 units that can be borrowed for 24 hours). The committee strongly urges and recommends that further erosion of the ISS budget be avoided, especially given the costs of required electronic resources, which constitute our largest single expenditure. This year our e-resources contribution was \$440,000; next year's is to be \$450,000—this is actually slightly less than the usual 20% agreed to several years ago by the UNBSJ and UNBF libraries.

Senate Information Services and Systems Committee 2009

Director, Information Services & Systems	Terry Nikkel (<i>Senator</i>) (<i>ex-officio</i> , non-voting)
Faculty of Arts	Murray Littlejohn (2011) (<i>Senator</i>) Chair
Faculty of Arts	June Madeley (2011)
Faculty of Business	Greg Fleet (2011) Co-Chair
Faculty of Business	Dongmin Kim (2011)
Faculty of Science, Applied Science & Engineering	Chris Gray (2011)
Faculty of Science, Applied Science & Engineering	Shaorong Xiao (2011)
ISS staff member	Mary Astorino (2011)
Librarian	Janet Fraser (2011)
Undergraduate Student Primary/Alternate	James Tibbets (2009) /Hamza Balkhi (alt)
Graduate Student	Sandy O'Neal (2009)