

Minutes

Uris Vision Committee Minutes of the Meeting of October 15, 2018

In attendance:

Co-Chairs: Jean Howard, Maya Tolstoy

Professors: Peter Bearman, Michael Cole, Farah Griffin, Ruben Gonzalez, Oliver Hobert, John Huber, Pamela Smith, Christopher Washburne

Libraries: Barbara Rockenbach

Ex-Officio: Carlos Alonso, Eugene Villalobos

Students: Mike Ford, Aja Johnson, William Veitch

Staff: Jessica Guenzel, Fredrik Palm, Rose Razaghian

1. The Committee briefly toured the Physics Theory Center in Pupin Hall as an example of a space innovatively renovated to accommodate collaborative work, including a staircase linking both floors of the Center with a workspace beneath the stairs and kitchen facilities adjacent to a space that could be used for talks.
2. The Committee went back to Low and heard from Barbara Rockenbach from the Libraries about plans to create a forward-looking digital research and learning Center in the present Watson space. This Center would consolidate forms of teaching, making, and collaborative learning now being done at other sites on campus, freeing those spaces for reassignment. At the same time, Watson would continue to be used to meet the need for student study space. The last space study, now several years out of date, estimated that we are 750 seats short of the total needed. Watson has traditionally been used not only by Business Students, but by other campus constituencies (60% of visits are by non-Business School students), especially those whose departments are located on the north side of campus. The Libraries are poised to retain a consultant to help survey stakeholders across the A and S about the needs that Watson's new research, teaching, and learning Center should address.
3. Gene Villalobos from Facilities gave a history of Uris, originally built in 1964; the usable square footage available on each floor; and some of the constraints that will affect how the building can be re-purposed. However, he noted that the building can be decluttered in major ways, including the removal of many of the small offices and administrative suites presently found on the first and second floors. Each floor in the tower can be reconfigured to allow more natural light and to combine offices, seminar rooms, and collaborative work space in more fluid ways.
4. Edward McArthur from Facilities then spoke about the infrastructural improvements that a good renovation of Uris should include. These would include not only an evaluation of current heating and cooling systems, but also bringing windows up to code, refreshing the façade, removing asbestos, adding sprinklers, and bringing the building into ADA compliance for accessibility.
5. The Committee discussed including student activity space in the building and will use the next meeting to propose concrete plans for utilization of the first three floors of Uris in a way that will meet a variety of community needs and promote innovation and collaboration.