

Minutes of the Uris Vision Committee

April 1, 2019

In attendance:

Co-Chairs: Jean Howard and Maya Tolstoy

Professors: Michael Cole, Michael Ford, Farah Griffin, Ruben Gonzalez, Oliver Hobert, John Huber, Pamela Smith, Tian Zheng

Libraries: Barbara Rockenbach

Students: Mike Ford

Ex-Officio: Jana Wright, Gene Villalobos

Staff: Carolyn Keen and Rose Razaghian, Staff

1. Maya Tolstoy summarized the feedback received from the various faculty groups before whom she and Jean Howard had made presentations. The feedback was largely very positive, though some groups wished the building to be devoted primarily to the needs of one division or another (i.e., Humanities, Social Sciences, or Sciences), a position not endorsed by the majority of faculty. There were other useful suggestions such as including junior faculty on subsequent Uris Advisory Committees, taking care that all faculty currently without offices get one in Uris, arranging ways for faculty and the larger community to be involved as the planning for the building unrolls in the next three years, and taking care for the aesthetics of the building in terms of a rethinking of the façade, rooftop gardens, and interior design so that empty glassed-in spaces do not dominate the ground floors.
2. The Committee then discussed how to complete its work before disbanding. We need to devise a plan for faculty oversight of the next stages of the development of the building, starting with a review of the RFP the Libraries have developed to determine what programming needs to be located in the renovated Watson Library. The Committee discussed whether the same consultant could be used for all of the services to be located on the first three floors, and it was decided that only Teaching and Learning services should be included in the expanded RFP. Many of these services already have connections to the library or are currently located in or near library spaces. It was agreed that the Library RFP would be reviewed at the next meeting along with suggestions for expanding its mandate to encompass cognate teaching and learning units.
3. For the rest of the building, the architectural firm selected to do building design will do the pre-design work on assessing program and client needs.
4. The Committee then discussed how to approach faculty oversight committees for the rest of the building going forward. It was decided that there will be two committees, one charged with oversight of the development of the base (the first three floors of Uris where faculty and student services will be located), and one for the tower, the floors where permanent units will be assigned as well as a research center and interdisciplinary working group spaces. The committee assigned to oversee the development of the tower floors will be charged with devising procedures by which units will apply for space in the tower. A separate selection committee that will include members from outside Columbia will oversee the final selection process. The job of the next meeting of the Uris Vision Committee is to flesh out the charges for the first two committees, that overseeing the development of the lower floors of Uris, and that overseeing the tower floors.

