Annual Report of the Library, Technology, and Learning Committee

May 2010

In 2009-2010, the Library, Technology, and Learning Committee (LTLC) once again worked closely with the administration in addressing the relationship between Library and Information Services (LIS) and the Provost’s Division. The college faced particular challenges this year because the former Vice President for Library and Information Services left Wheaton College for a new opportunity in summer 2009. Thus, the committee devoted much of its time this year to the issues raised by the need for new leadership in LIS while the college continued to address the implications of the current economic situation.

LTLC carries a charge that reflects the transitional position of LIS since the merging of the Library, Academic Computing and Information and Technology Services (ITS) in 2004. This merger withdrew the Library and Academic Computing from the Provost’s Division and created a new set of challenges around developing appropriate channels of communication that would facilitate smooth collaboration in the shared interest of the two divisions—supporting the academic mission of the college. LIS was moved back into the Provost’s Division in summer 2009. Associate Provost Elita Pastra-Landis served as the interim leader of the LIS Leadership Team during 2009-2010.

Pastra-Landis met with LTLC in October to alert the committee to the status of plans for replacing the VP for LIS. The committee advocated strongly for a search, urging that it take place as soon as possible. The committee’s chair met separately with Pastra-Landis numerous times, describing the ways in which LIS is integral to the academic mission of the college and describing the need for strong, visionary, and well-informed leadership. The committee was pleased to learn that Pastra-Landis attended EDUCAUSE, the national conference focused on administrative and instructional technologies, where she undertook information interviewing and attended sessions addressed to leaders of Library and Information Services. Other results of the chair’s conversations with Pastra-Landis included her appearance with the Associate Provost at faculty meetings to announce progress towards the search.

Also in the fall semester, LTLC assisted in planning for the NEASC reaccreditation visit. During the visit, the chair participated in meetings focused on Library and Information Services, and these meetings contributed to discussions with the administration regarding the search for a new Associate Vice President of Library and Information Services (AVPLIS). The search is discussed below.

The question of email privacy came to the committee twice during the year, in the fall and in the spring. In the fall, the committee discussed the issue, which arose out of lingering questions from AAUP. As a result, the chair brought the issue to the attention of Associate Provost Pastra-Landis, and changes were made to the section in the Faculty Handbook that addresses email. Concerns about those changes were
again brought to the committee in the spring. Unfortunately, plans to meet with Derek Price fell through due to scheduling problems and the pending departure of the staff leader for technology infrastructure. Discussion at the April LTLC meeting led to the suggestion that this committee might not be the appropriate venue for the issue, as the charge of LTLC is to facilitate LIS support for the educational mission of the college.

In view of this charge, LTLC continued its wide-ranging efforts to support the Co-Directors of Research and Instruction in their work. The committee supported the ongoing Tech N Talk series that showcases uses of library and instructional technologies across the disciplines. Members of the committee attended numerous regional and national meetings and reported back on the activities of EDUCAUSE, the NITLE Summit, the NITLE Advisory Board, and a meeting on the future of the library that was held at MIT. Members of the committee also joined the LIS leadership team in a WEBINAR on strategic planning and information technology. And members of the committee assisted the Library Web Renovation Group in addressing organization of the Library Homepage.

LTLC sent three of its members (the chair and the co-directors of Research and Instruction) to meet with the Educational Policy Committee in April, with the dual purpose of soliciting the assistance of EdPol in encouraging faculty members to participate in the campus visits of candidates in the search for the new AVPLIS and seeking advice from EdPol about the qualities and skills required for the position. We paraphrase here the EdPol minutes from that meeting:

The committee suggested qualities that are required for the position and how this person could work effectively with faculty in order to have a strong relationship with academics, particularly since disciplines are changing. Everyone agreed that a strong candidate would bring new ideas and perspectives, bring leadership in disciplinary thinking from LIS, possess good management skills, and envision technology in learning and the future of learning. It was suggested that the new Associate Vice President for Library and Information Services work next year with LTLC and Ed Pol in developing systematic departmental approaches to the place of information fluency in departments’ programs. **The committee agreed that such an approach is important and should be on Ed Pol’s agenda for next year. The committee also agreed that it was valuable to have the Co-Directors of Research and Instruction be part of Ed Pol discussions and that we should have them return next year.** The Co-Directors suggested that D-space and integration of research and technology in interdisciplinary teaching might be Ed Pol agenda topics next year.

With regard to the search, members of EdPol suggested the importance of having faculty members discuss the curricular goals of the college with candidates and to consider ways in which the faculty can systematically work with the new AVPLIS to make programmatic improvements to ensure attention to information and technological fluencies. Thus, we agreed on a desire for a new AVPLIS who will bring leadership that will facilitate the creation of coherent departmental plans to confront these issues.
In sum, LTLC met eight times in 2009-2010, and the chair had many additional meetings throughout the year to discuss plans to search for a new AVPLIS with Associate Provost Elita Pastra-Landis. We are pleased to note that the search for a new Associate Vice President for Library and Information Services is underway. Two faculty members who sit on LTLC also serve on the search committee. The ad for the position was posted in early April, and we have received over fifty applications to date. The search committee has created a short list for Skype interviews, which are scheduled for the week of May 17. Tentative plans have been made to bring candidates to campus during the first week in June. The search will remain open until the position is filled.

Wheaton College has a national reputation for excellence and innovation in Library and Information Services. Co-Director of Research and Instruction Scott Hamlin served on the program committee for the NITLE Summit that was held in New Orleans at the end of March, and LTLC Chair Kathryn Tomasek is a member of the NITLE Advisory Board. NITLE, the National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education, supports faculty and staff at small liberal arts colleges as we explore the impact and potential of technology on teaching and learning in the distinctive context of the liberal arts college. It is a testament to the reputation of Wheaton College in this area that the search for a new AVPLIS has attracted top practitioners in the field, and LTLC encourages our colleagues to join us in the on-campus interviews that will be announced soon.

Other evidence of the strength of Wheaton College programs in LIS will be on display during workshop week, and we encourage our colleagues to attend two workshops organized by the Co-Directors of Research and Instruction that will be held on Wednesday, May 26:

Morning (9-12) Woolley Electronic Classroom  
Tech N Talk’s Greatest Hits: Digging Deeper (Scott Hamlin and Margaret Gardner)

Afternoon (1:00-4:00) May Room  
Reading in 2010 (Mary Lee Griffin, Paula Krebs, Jason Reiss and Margaret Gardner).

The committee gratefully supports the work of Margaret Gardner and Scott Hamlin and looks forward to these workshops.

Finally, the committee will have many tasks before it in 2010-2011, when it will be ably chaired by Domingo Ledezma. The following is a preliminary list:

- Assisting the new AVPLIS in the search for a new staff member to be in charge of technology infrastructure on campus.
- Assisting the Library's Web Renovation Group.
- Facilitating discussions with EdPol and the faculty regarding archiving of Honors Theses in the digital repository D-Space.
- Facilitating the new AVPLIS in taking advantage of opportunities to interact with the faculty.
Facilitating discussions about the role of information fluencies in the Wheaton Curriculum and how to sequence their teaching appropriately through the four years of a Wheaton student's education.

Working with the Writing Director and the Educational Policy Committee to assist departments in developing communication plans and thus to facilitate institutional assessment goals.

Seeking new ways to foster collaborations among faculty members and members of the LIS staff to promote teaching and learning.

Working with the Educational Policy Committee and the Provost in seeking new models of funding in support of a systematic approach to course transformations using information and instructional technologies.

Helping to create communities of practice around such tools as blogs and wikis to promote teaching and learning.

Assisting the Co-Directors of Research and Instruction in making adjustments that will result from upcoming staffing changes.

Keeping the Library building visible in discussions of the effects of the new Center for Scientific Inquiry and Innovation, which includes:

- Implications for the Education Curriculum Collections
- Considering the establishment of multiple entrances and exits for the library building
- The relationship between the SCII courtyard and the second stack room.

Finally, LTLC encourages members of the faculty to look for changes resulting from the work of LIS on your return to campus in the fall. Three seminar classrooms on the third floor of Meneely will have new flat screens that can be attached to laptops for display, and a third will have a full computer/flat screen set-up. And the music classroom on the stack level of the Library building will be renovated to include technological enhancements.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Tomasek, chair
Domingo Ledezma
Xueshen Chen
Margaret Gardner
Scott Hamlin