



University Space Priorities Working Group

Interview with Carol Mandel, Dean, Division of Libraries

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SPWG members present: Kurth, Blay

1. How do you work internally with your faculty and administration to ascertain your school's academic space needs?
 - How are space needs identified?
 - How are space needs assessed?
 - How are space needs prioritized?

The library is not as large and complex as the question implies. Library space planning for all intents and purposes is limited to the Bobst building, as other library facilities (such as IFA or Courant) are part of the planning for those units. The library has been involved in planning for the NYU libraries in Shanghai and AD, but that is a separate process entirely. The library is largely centralized, so there aren't significant competing internal priorities that need to be reconciled.

The primary drivers for library space are: collections and students. Library staff needs are much less of a driver. That said, smaller library units are scrambling to find staff space, including NYU Press, Classroom Media, and NYU TV.

Re collections and users, space is severely limited for both. As a result, the library moves lesser-used materials to offsite storage on a 24-hour retrieval basis in order to accommodate more users in the Bobst building.

The library studies user space needs continually. The library conducts user studies via several methodologies, including a standardized academic library survey instrument, interviews, and on-site censuses. All library renovations have been based on studies of student behavior. The library has adjusted renovation strategies over time, e.g. by addressing grad student needs subsequent to the success of an undergrad-focused renovation.

The Dean and senior library administrators have presented the library's findings on library users' space needs to the NYU Space Planning Working Group and have communicated the library's user space design principles to other NYU schools. One result of this effort has been that the library's findings on space have influenced space designs at the NYU global sites. In general terms, the library thinks in terms of delivering "space as service." [A copy of one of the library's user-space presentations is forthcoming for posting on the SPWG site.]

The library also continues to rethink how to deploy library staff and library instruction spaces as technology changes occur and as user service needs evolve. The library is currently studying special collections space.

Special collections have been growing and are more heavily used than ever. The study is designed to understand how best to accommodate special collections needs in Bobst.

2. How do you assess need, prioritize and make requests for non-academic space such as faculty and student housing?

Library faculty are low on the priority list for faculty housing. The library asks for help when it needs to address specific faculty housing needs.

3. Does your School produce an annual Space Plan?

The library's annual academic plan includes space issues, but those don't change much from year to year. One current issue is that the NYU Press is desperate for space, though this is only a few offices.

4. After internal school procedures for priorities are completed, how does the request go forward to the University Administration?

- Describe the process, specifically the discussions and negotiations with central administration and the other schools.
- Describe the planning cycle and normal time horizon.

Library space requests are driven by funds available for Bobst renovation. In turn, library renovation is largely driven by availability of donor funding, but there has also been significant university support.

5. What are your current space needs?

- What has been allocated and what is still on your critical list?
- What is the amount of space left on your "wish" list?

Current needs involve the continued renovation of Bobst, but the Dean would also like to see more library-like student space throughout the university. At the top of the library's wish list is an undergrad library commons that the library would like to co-brand if possible. The commons would ideally incorporate the ability to provide library instruction. Overall, the library would like to encourage developing more library-like study spaces outside of Bobst.

6. How do you schedule your current inventory of instructional space?

- Are all times utilized such as Fridays, early mornings or late evenings?
- Have you considered reducing contact hours to reduce demand on instructional space?
- Have you considered adding Saturday and Sunday to the instructional schedule?
- Do you have plans for online classes, and how might these reduce the need for instructional space?
- How do you solve current needs for more instructional space? (e.g. rent or leasing space/ reducing number of courses/altering class size)

This question is not applicable to the library per se, though see the answers to Questions 3 and 5 as they related to library instruction.