

## QUESTIONS TO THE PRESIDENT

Submitted by Professors Tom Palaima (Classics) and Al Martinich (Philosophy)  
March 29, 2018

Dear President Fenves,

Continuing the healthy dialogue on an important matter discussed at some length in the March faculty Council meeting, we have four brief and focused follow-up questions regarding the UT Fine Arts Library related to Vice Provost Lorraine Haricombe's letter to Provost Maurie McInnis of March 16 and Provost McInnis's statements in the FC meeting of March 19. As part of her scheduled report, we respectfully and gratefully request that Vice Provost Haricombe answer our questions directly. We address her here as 'you'.

1. What were the nature, frequency and extent of consultation with the faculties of art history, musicology, and theater and dance from 2016 to the present (and expected going forward) in determining how to manage the removal and deduplicating of books and journals in the Fine Arts Library? What is your understanding of the nature of research in these fields, particularly with respect to two important points:
  - (a) the 20,000 journal volumes that were removed in fields where the journals are essential for study and teaching; and
  - (b) the critical role that browsing and ready access to books, scores, and scripts plays in these disciplines?
2. Circulation of items from the FAL is currently 90,000 plus items. Can this be dismissed as "low" circulation, when in addition many resources are used within the library itself and not checked out?
3. The website of the Joint Library Facility at Texas A&M specifically states that ownership "rests with both institutions." In what sense then are the materials still "owned" by UT? Can they readily be restored to the libraries in Austin, should that become desirable in the future?
4. In your letter of March 16 to the Provost and in Prov. McInnis's statement in the FC meeting of March 19, Harvard and peer institutions were described as following the same principles of library management that are used at UT Austin. Please discuss how the changes made to the UT Fine Arts Library relate to practices at Harvard and at a significant peer, Cornell University.

According to Vice President for Harvard Library Sarah Thomas, transparency and faculty consultation are the cornerstone of all policy involving the reallocation of space in the branch libraries; further, she notes that stack space has not been reduced in Harvard's core libraries (Widener, Pusey, and Houghton). Harvard's Fine Arts Library, though it has been physically moved to a new venue in recent years, maintains an impressive footprint in its current venue. This is because Dr. Thomas and the chief branch librarian have been keenly aware that the fine arts remain a browsing-intensive discipline with strong commitment to maintenance of print collections on site.

One highly competitive peer, Cornell University, has just announced a massive *expansion* of physical collections in the Ho Fine Arts Library, placing its book and journal collections at the center of its mission.

How do you see these policies squaring with those at UT Austin?

Thomas Palaima, Classics  
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