Plans for renovation of library to be presented in campus open forums

BY SPENCER CUSTODIO – POSTED ON MARCH 15, 2015
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A meeting Friday revealed plans to reopen the south entrance of Pollak Library between summer and fall of 2017, and create a cultural and social hub for students.

Architect Gili Meerovitch and Interim University Librarian Scott Hewitt gave the presentation on plans for the library renovation and received input from the staff during the meeting.

The existing architectural footprint of the library will remain intact, without any expansions, Meerovitch said.

She added that damage sustained by the south side of the library was a key consideration during the planning process and the first phase of renovations will focus entirely on that damaged area.

The first phase will renovate the first, fourth and fifth floors of the south library building and open them along with the south entrance in 2017.

The cultural centers, which were also damaged in the earthquake, will be included among the renovations on the first floor of the south side along with group study rooms, Hewitt said.

“What we really want is for the library to be a social, cultural and technological hub for our students,” he said. Staff participation, Hewitt added, will be key in making the project a collaborative success.

“All the departments on campus are like their own little ivory towers and they don’t know what’s going on in the other departments,” Hewitt said. “But (the staff) knows a little bit about what’s going on in a lot of different parts of the campus. And in that regard, you could be kind of the glue that brings collaborations together across the campus.”

Staff raised concerns about where the placement of the reference desk would be placed on the first floor. One employee said the desk’s current location is so loud they have a difficult time hearing their patrons.
Another said they were concerned that if the reference desk is too close to the south entrance, they would get too many questions that would have been better suited for the welcome desk.

Meerovitch assured the crowd the plans are not set in stone and that there is plenty of room for flexibility. Employees will be working to put together a list of concerns and input to bring to project planners at their next meeting.

They held focus groups that included professors, deans, students, library staff and others to see what issues needed to be addressed during the remodel, Meerovitch said. There was a consensus that student writing was a high priority.

Intellectual programs like the writing lab was at the top of the priority list, Meerovitch said.

The estimated cost is between $30-40 million and that $6 million is expected to come from the chancellor’s office, Hewitt said. He added that a detailed cost analysis of the project will take place over the next few months.

The renovation plans will also be discussed during open forums on March 23 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

TAGS: Cal State Fullerton Pollak Library, cultural centers, Intellectual programs, library renovations, Pollak Library South

About Spencer Custodio
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