

My name is Michele Perry, I live in Fair Haven and I am speaking as a private citizen. I am in my 16th year in the library at Castleton University as the cataloger, archivist, and interim InterLibrary Loan supervisor. The library is a safe, welcoming space on campus for students, faculty, staff, researchers, authors, artists, and community members to spend their time.

My question about President Grewal's recently proposed plan to remove the physical books from the VSCS libraries is who and how will the proposed plan be implemented and further

Let's start with an overview of services currently provided to the students and faculty that will be changed or eliminated by this plan.

Reserves: The staff member responsible for creating reserves will no longer be employed by the VSCS. This means no more reserved books set aside to be used for specific classes in a given semester.

here. This means no more reserves. When there is no check out system in place how will the faculty's personal copies of books or other materials be tracked? If personal copies; which is the largest number of items on reserve, are not returned the library will have to replace them. (money that doesn't need to be spent)

Physical books: According to the VSCS Administration's new plan, there will be books in the libraries to be used in the building, not checked out and presumably put back on the shelves by the patron when they are done. First off how are the books going to be found on the shelves? With 16 years of experience in this library the expectation that the books will be returned to their original location alone would surprise me. Juvenile books are being included intermingled with casual books and we have faculty who put juvenile books on reserve, so they should be considered academic titles in order to be properly cataloged. These Neighborhood libraries are being handled with a "take-a-book, leave-a-book" policy, so how will the students know if the juvenile book their professor assigned will be there.

Relevant Collection: This is determined by deciding which books to keep and which books to remove. We all understand how important it is to have up to date materials and a clean collection. We currently have a deselection criteria that has been followed for many, many years. A report is produced, as defined by this well-prescribed administered deselection process, which lists any items that have not been used, either checked out or in-house in the last 10 years and items that were not acquired more than 10 years ago. The report is set up

avoid the problems that you will find in the new plan in regards to how long the item has been in the catalog (an item added in December 2022 shouldn't be considered for removal) and items that don't circulate such as; reference, archives, rare books, and at another library; such as Vermont room items. The new proposed plan states that 58% of the collection has not circulated. There are 1600 items in the catalog at Castleton that belong to 4 other departments. These items should not be included with the never circulated items. This deselection process is ongoing, but came to an almost complete halt due to staffing. Here is the process: 1. Run report 2. Gather items on the list 3. Reference librarians go through to make the final decision 4. The cataloger removes them from the catalog (KOHA), online holdings (OCLC), and finally from the building (stamp, book sale, recycle). For example, a well-known large institution, BYU presented a deselection project that was projected to take 2 years and they removed or moved fewer books than just Castleton.

Physical Space: The physical space may not be a service, per se but we listened to what the students want. Nook type space in the library (didn't want to be seen), this is created by using the stacks of books. This is from a survey conducted by a class here on campus. Other items they wanted, white boards, comfy seating sound proofing, more outlets...etc. CU was able to accommodate several of these at NO cost to the library. (Grant, reusing what we have, and cleaning up the collection)

Archives: The Archives represent a closed collection, but I get requests several times a week. I started the project of creating an Archives/Special Collections room. This project and the knowledge of what and where items are leaves with me when my job is eliminated.

The other areas that I have thoughts and concerns about:

Donors: We are so incredibly grateful for our donors. Our largest yearly supporter gives to the library with it written in his contract to be used for print books only. Without his donation to the library, the matching donation will not be given to the general fund either. There are 80 books that were purchased with donor money that are just sitting in my office.

Purchasing Physical Books: First off with President Grewal's plan, there will be no Acquisitions person. Second, according to the President's plan, the only way a student can get a book is by having a documented disability and then it will be

purchased and sent directly to the student for their use only. (Again, money that doesn't need to be spent) If they made the change that the book would be added in to collection we run in to the problem of no cataloger. The example I have been using is what about a student who gets a concussion, for example in a sports related injury, not a documented disability, but the first thing recommended for their recovery is to forego screens. How would that student gain access to the necessary reading materials in order to complete their semester's work?

Cloud Storage: I have been begging IT to give me storage space for my archives and special collections and I have been told there isn't any. I went to a recent conference in Middlebury and this cloud space issue was addressed by suggesting a consortium be created for Vermont libraries to have space to store digitized items. There are private companies out there that provide space and a faculty member offered to cover the monthly cost for the library, but I was reminded that if this company was to go away, all of my irreplaceable items do, too. This is also why they said it was recommended to keep originals.

Federal Work Study Funds: I recently learned that in order for an institution to qualify for Federal Work Study funds, 7% of the jobs on campus have to be community services based. The library has always provided those jobs, but it is now unclear if any jobs in the library will be community service based.

I want to end this with a statement from the plan "This approach is consistent with the principles driving this transformation: student first, purpose first, digital first."

Nowhere in this entire plan does it reflect the students' thoughts and requests and when we started the transformation process it was digital first meaning acquiring electronic materials first, then physical resources, if the item was not available electronically or the patron preferred a physical copy. What happened to the original proposal, digital first, patron driven??

But again, to reiterate one of my original questions, where are the supposed cost savings that are claimed by President Grewal and the VSCS Administration? Thank you for listening, on behalf of myself and the other librarians I am proud to work with, I strongly encourage this committee to ask the hard questions to responsibly allocate the state's resources in support of higher education in Vermont. Please support the libraries of the Vermont State College System.