

NCSU Libraries faces budget cuts, difficult choices

Brittany Bynum, Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, October 31, 2013 12:42 am

Though students frequently discuss which library they prefer—D.H. Hill or Hunt—they may soon be asked the same question by administrators, however, their answers will carry a far greater weight than usual if this happens.

Due to the General Assembly's \$66 million budget cut to the UNC-System, passed in July, NCSU Libraries might have to cut back hours of operation for one of the two main libraries. Both D.H. Hill and the James B. Hunt libraries are currently open 24 hours during the week, but Vice Provost of Libraries Susan Nutter said that depending on how the cuts affect NCSU Libraries, students may be asked to choose which library's hours will be reduced.

“We will get feedback from students to help make the best decision in the worst situation,” Nutter said.

NCSU Libraries will bring the issue before Student Government if that choice has to be made, and it will organize a student-body vote, deciding which library's hours get cut.

Nutter said that, although students will be able to decide if the library that will remain open for 24 hours, there could be a split vote because of the location of the libraries and the location in which different students live.

In addition to the possible reduction of hours for one of the two main libraries, Nutter said that some libraries might be closed altogether.

Branch libraries for the College of Natural Resources, the College of Design and the College of Veterinary Medicine will be affected before D.H. Hill and Hunt and could experience reduced hours or might shut down completely if they can no longer afford to stay open.

Once these cuts go into effect, the number of services offered and the size of collections and materials, such as journals, library collections and book subscriptions, will be in jeopardy as well, according to Nutter.

All services are currently free at the library with the exception of printing, but a fee may also have to be implemented for some other services.

Nutter said she hopes that the libraries will never have to charge patrons more to use the library because it would add on to the stress of tuition.

Nutter said that during the cuts, D.H. Hill would become more like Hunt Library in terms of technology, as the University will replace some human labor with it.

Additionally, any job positions in the library that are vacant will be removed.

Security may also be affected because D.H. Hill pays for security using its state-issued budget.

N.C. State's budget plan has been submitted to the UNC-System office, but it hasn't been approved yet. Nutter said she is trying carry out the plan in a way that will affect students and faculty the least.

Nutter said she tried to maintain overnight hours for security guards in order provide a safe environment for faculty and students.

The cuts will affect the whole University, according to Susan Nutter, a vice provost and director of libraries at N.C. State.

"This is really tough for us," Nutter said. "I'm very worried for students and faculty."

Administration affairs pertaining to finance, business, transportation and other areas will take the biggest budget cuts. Academic affairs affecting faculty, teaching and research programs and distance learning education will receive a smaller cut, Nutter said.

The University library system is considered to be part of administrative affairs.

Nutter said she was confused as to why D.H. Hill Library was classified in this category because she said the library was a critical resource for students, which should make it an academic affair.

The Creamery and Hill of Beans will be unaffected by the library budget cuts because they are affiliated with dining, not the library.

Students are also concerned about cuts to D.H. Hill and other libraries on campus.

The Student Advisory Board at N.C. State libraries is a volunteer group that hosts meetings once a month about problems or issues related to the library.

Anisa Traish, a sophomore in zoology, frequently attends board meetings.

"It's really sad that budget cuts have to come to this," Traish said.

She said she was shocked to hear about the budget cut plans and how they affected the libraries.

In 2001, which was the last time NCSU Libraries proposed cutting hours, 500 students participated in a sit-in at the D.H. Hill Library and then marched at midnight to the chancellor's residence to demand that the library stay open all night. That same spring, more than 5,000 students marched to the state capitol to protest a \$125 million cut to the UNC-System.

As a result of student protests and public outcry, NCSU Libraries did not cut any hours, and the state legislature declined to pass what would have been a significant cut to the UNC System.

The cuts for this year are expected to be in effect by Jan. 1.