

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE LIBRARY COMMITTEE, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS, ACADEMIC YEAR 2010/2011

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The Academic Senate Library Committee met only twice during the academic year owing to difficulties in scheduling. Following are synopses of the Committee's activities.

Monday, November 15, 2010, 3:30PM-5:00PM, 410 Mrak Hall

Meeting Summary.

Welcome and Introduction. The chair, B. Kolner, opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. He announced that a change of membership and duties for the Library Committee was submitted to CERJ sometime ago but the status of that is unknown. A committee member countered that it was a business item in the previous committee but was not formally discussed. The implications are that the Library Committee will get larger and some schools, such as the School of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine will need bylaw revisions as a result of the change. This item is being tabled for a future meeting.

Academic Senate Requests for Consultation (RFCs). From time to time, this committee is being asked to provide comments on various issues of interest to UC. The comments feature in the Academic Senate Information System (ASIS) is a feature that is available for use to provide comments by members. These items may also be discussed at a committee meeting. After some consensus is reached, the Library Committee Chair, with assistance from the Library Committee Analyst, may submit the committee's response on behalf of the committee to the Davis Division. A presentation by the ASIS programmer to this committee would be helpful. This will be scheduled as soon as possible.

Faculty Response to Librarians on Journal Priorities. G. Yokote provided general information about packages for renewal. She also distributed a handout showing the planning and consultative structure for UC Libraries: http://www.cdlib.org/groups/docs/UCL_Consult_Structure.pdf. The purpose of the handout was to illustrate the various streams used to gather input and feedback for initiatives which the UC Libraries and/or the California Digital Library (CDL) propose and/or implement. The consultative channels include advising UCOP officials (President, Provost Senior VP -Academic Affairs) and SLASIAC on library matters. The center area (Library Planning, Action, Consultation) represents the various committees/groups which the UC University Librarians use to coordinate library public and technical services, collections, and technology efforts. Also, represented are the committees' groups which the CDL use for their activities. The two side boxes represent consultative streams involving campus groups (Academic Senate, EVCs, etc.) and UC systemwide groups (Council of Academic Senate, LAUC, UCOLASC. The list of ejournals in UC-wide licensed packages can be found at: http://www.cdlib.org/services/collections/publisher_info/index.html. UC Davis faculty, staff and students are encouraged to review the title lists and submit comments to his/her librarian subject specialist. One does not need to wait until the ejournal package is subject to renewal. The library has a website called Inside the Library which can be accessed at:

<http://www.lib.ucdavis.edu/ul/about/inside>

It provides news, blogs and information on or about the library. Messages get sent out to the library reps and the library relies on its reps in colleges and schools. However, the library is sensitive not to inundate faculty with news and messages. The California Digital library (CDL) is under negotiation on behalf of UC. The CDL website lists all of the packages.

How can the library leverage existing space? Perhaps keep one copy instead of three; move the Institute of Governmental Affairs (IGA) out of the Library. No book comes in without one going out of the Physical Sciences Library. Hence a storage facility is needed, currently located in Richmond, CA. It is called the Northern Regional Storage Facility (NRLF).

Task Force Report on the Physical Science Engineering Library. Co-Chair of the task force, R. Siverson, updated the committee on the four charges of the task force. He indicated that the first charge was now complete. The committee has three more tasks to tackle and will do so in the weeks and months ahead. While doing its work, the task force received helpful information from Acting Co-Librarians G. Yokote and H. Henry. These two individuals are shepherding the library. It was indicated that the library's budget cut will be phased in over three years. If, however, the budget situation becomes more manageable, the scholarly service function of the library will surely will be enhanced.

Report on the Search for a University Librarian. The search has been suspended. The Chancellor is looking into possibilities for an internal solution.

Monday, May 23, 2011, 3:00 PM Shields Library, 1st Floor Conference Room

Meeting Summary.

Bio-Ag Journals Update. Karen Andrews, Head Librarian, PSE Library gave a detailed account of why and how certain journals in the Bio-Ag sector are being dropped. This was in response to criticism from some faculty that this process was not done in an open and transparent way. Karen gave a compelling argument as to the openness and necessity of these actions.

Issues Confronting the Future of the UC Davis Libraries. Randy Siverson, University Librarian, UC Davis. Professor Siverson gave a talk about the future issues confronting the UCD libraries which rest on the current financial crisis facing the entire UC system. He presented some options for dealing with the large budget reductions planned for the libraries and also some ideas about how to better utilize space in the current library buildings.

Academic Senate Requests for Consultation. Chair Kolner highlighted several current AS Requests for Consultations as well as the impending SLASIAC Library Planning Task Force Interim Report.

Comments on the SLASIAC Library Planning Task Force Interim Report. In May Executive Vice Chancellor and Chair of the Library Planning Task Force released the Interim Report of the Task Force, convened by the Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASIAC), for review and comment. The report may be viewed or downloaded at

<http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/planning/taskforce>

Chair of the AS Library Committee Kolner read the report and sent the following comments to SLASIAC:

"In general, the report is comprehensive (if not lengthy and a bit redundant), but the main recommendations make sense. The goals of the recommendations:

1. Improve efficiency by leveraging the size and scope of the UC System.

2. Manage collection growth and reduce duplication.
3. Scrutinize library building space and use for future scholarly.
4. Continue a strong position with expensive journal publishers and encourage faculty to move toward open-access journals modalities.
5. Spread the efforts out over a 3-year, 3-phase approach.

seem justified and well-reasoned. My only criticisms so far revolve around two points:

1. The report is long on global goals but short on specific ideas and mechanisms. Perhaps it is intended to be left to the functional organizations such as CoUL, COVC, SLASIAC, CDL and LAUC.
2. There is only scant mention of UCOLASC which is really the main point of entry for faculty input into the process from the Academic Senate. Since the primary users of the library resources are faculty and students, it would seem that UCOLASC and some student representation should be integrated into the detailed plans for cost savings in the future.

In addition, a specific issue that is changing rapidly with technology and has a direct impact on the cost of libraries to universities is the structure, operation, cost and importance of peer-reviewed journals. I think the SLASIAC report could have included more ideas on this point.

The big picture as I see it: The high cost of maintaining access to scholarly materials is due to the historical model that pertains today. Namely:

1. The legitimacy of the scholarly materials rests on peer review which is, in many cases, organized and run by businesses that therefore carefully guard the process.
2. Said businesses are often the publishers of the scholarly information and therefore have a vested interest in maintaining control over and pricing of access to these materials.

With electronic communications and near-instant access of materials in digital form from virtually anywhere in the world, the historic model will eventually crumble as the principal users of the scholarly work can no longer pay the rapidly increasing costs required by the purveyors of the traditional print media. In fact, because of the speed and availability provided by the internet, the "information-guarded-by-business" model is no longer necessary to achieve timely dissemination. The only hurdle is that of legitimacy the materials engendered by peer review. In many non-profit environments, peer review is managed by volunteers who are themselves scholars interested in the welfare of the dissemination process. Therefore, this model is successful and, coupled with the internet and "server farms" supported at a base cost by article, journal or society fees (or combinations thereof), there is no necessity for a "for-profit" middleman and they will eventually fall by the wayside.

These ideas of course do not preclude the necessity of infrastructure to manage the operations of the scholarly materials and dissemination. It is likely that as time goes by, the infrastructure can and will be replaced by "software" (quotes implying a complete lack of vision as to what form this might take). Could the CDL (UC) take a leading role in this? I think there is a fair chance that could. However, the cost of initiation would likely be high and the return on the investment, sought by user fees and canceled subscriptions to outdated paper journals, might take a very long time. Also, there would be a sizable time lag as acceptance and adoption by other institutions could take years."