



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
ONE SHIELDS AVENUE
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616-8502
TELEPHONE: (530) 752-2231

July 6, 2011

DANIEL L. SIMMONS, CHAIR

University of California
Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Systemwide Review: Library Task Force Report

The referenced report was forwarded to all Davis Division standing committees as well as the Faculty Executive Committee in each school and college at UC Davis. Comments were received from the Graduate Council (GC), Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) and the College of Letters and Sciences Faculty Executive Committee (L&S FEC).

The Task Force is commended for the great deal of work it has done in examining ways to reduce expenses in this environment of rising costs, decreased funds, and space shortages. (GC and L&S FEC)

Recommendations one, three and four are all relatively straightforward and are likely to cause little or no controversy. The UC library system has been working effectively together for a number of years to decrease the effects of budget shortfalls by sharing resources and implementing new technology across the entire system. Additional efforts in this area are likely to be fruitful. A system to charge business for use of our library system will add revenue and is likely to cause little controversy. One of the sub aims in recommendation 3 which suggests implementing additional student fees to cover library support requires additional discussion as this will impact fees for graduate students. With tuition and fees having increased dramatically in the past five years this may be less palatable solution to the problem of funding for our libraries. (GC)

Faculty should be asked to review collections more frequently. Those collections found to be seldom used might be relegated to regional storage, thus freeing up additional space at campus libraries. (L&S FEC)

Recommendation two requires significant further, in depth review. There is concern that the Task Force, though well intentioned, was perhaps a bit too strong in encouraging the faculty to not submit to or serve as reviewers for journals with high prices. Given that in some academic disciplines, faculty are very limited in their choices for peer-reviewed research dissemination, the suggestion as presented may be interpreted as impinging upon the intellectual freedom of the faculty. (L&S FEC, CPB) Junior faculty, for example, may have no choice but to publish in journals deemed to "persist in unacceptable pricing" in order to develop and maintain the visibility needed for tenure. (CPB, GC). Further, if a student/faculty mentor publish novel findings in a lower impact journal instead of Nature this may have a negative impact on the progress on a student's prospects for the very best postdoctoral/employment positions. (GC) Many open-access journals utilize page charges that many faculty may not have the resources to pay. Issues such as this must be addressed with input from Academic Senate membership. Uninformed decisions could result in significant unintended damage to faculty research. (CPB) In general, this needs to be explored more in depth. Not only are some journals very high priced but their price increases far outstrip inflation. This means that keeping these journals in the UC's collections implies that other journals cannot be kept, that staff reductions will be required or that acquisitions for other collections will be reduced.

There are several issues to be considered:

- There must be broad discussion about which journal publishers have the most abusive pricing policies. (GC) The publishers who are charging exorbitant prices and whose prices are increasing at inappropriate rates are well-known. This appears to mainly be a matter of disseminating the information.
- There must be multiple, acceptable alternative journals for dissemination of scholarly information obtained through student/faculty research. This is especially needed in some areas of the humanities where publication outlets tend to remain in more traditional print formats. (GC)
- There must be sources of support to assist faculty in publishing in open access journals where costs are likely to exceed those of page charges through "normal" outlets. (GC)
- There must be a change in culture of the merit and promotion process where equal weight is given to publication in high quality, peer reviewed open access journals as to traditional print/digital journals, especially from publishers who have raised their rates substantially in the past few years. (GC)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. L. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "P" and "L".

Robert L. Powell III, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate and
Professor and Chair, Department of
Chemical Engineering and Materials Science
Professor, Food Science and Technology