The Division has received a system-wide review request of the report of the System-wide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee’s Library Planning Task Force Report. The report recommends system-wide strategies and investments to mitigate the impact of budgetary pressures.
Response continued on next page.
Dear Professor Powell,

The L&S Executive Committee has reviewed the UC “Library Planning Task Force Report.” The Committee commends the Task Force 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. We were impressed with the depth and breadth of the report and wish to make just two suggestions for further consideration:

- 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.

- Some members of the Committee were concerned 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.

Sincerely,

Patricia C. Boeshaar, Chair
Executive Committee
College of Letters and Science
Elections, Rules & Jurisdiction

May 31, 2011 2:40 PM

No response at this time.
The Library Task Force was charged by Provost Pitts to make recommendations for meeting the budget targets for the University of California library system and for recommending ways to reduce the need for additional space on some campuses. Their recommendations fell into four categories:

1) Expand and collectively manage shared library services using new technologies that significantly decrease financial impact and space needs while maintaining accessibility of critical scholarly information.

2) support faculty efforts to change the system of scholarly communication

3) explore new sources of revenue

4) improve the existing framework for system-wide planning, consultation, and decision-making.

Recommendations 1, 3 and 4 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.

The suggestion that is likely to generate the greatest amount of discussion is number two: support faculty efforts to change the system of scholarly communication. There are a number of publishers including Elsevier and the Nature Publishing Group whose prices have risen far faster than the rate of inflation for periodical subscriptions that now put a major burden on the financial resources of the libraries. The argument is as follows: University researchers and students generate a substantial amount of the data published in these journals and as part of the agreement with the publishers assign copyright to them. University faculty provide peer review of submitted articles and time for the editorial board to manage manuscript submission, review and finally publication. The journal publishers pay little or nothing for these services and then deplete the library resources of the institutions which support these faculty and students. The task force recommends that faculty be encouraged to publish in open access journals such as PLoS with partial assistance from a central source to defray part of the costs of that publication. For those publishers whose subscription rates are causing major disruptions to the UC library system, the task force recommends the faculty refuse to publish in or act as editors or reviewers for those journals whose pricing is most abusive. These journals will tend to have very high impact factors and there will be some downside consequences for faculty and students alike. For example, 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 of the faculty member through the merit and promotion system and on a student’s prospects for the very best postdoctoral/employment positions. Clearly, this suggestion will work only if there is a major buy in from the faculty in the UC system.

There are several issues which must be considered
• There must be broad discussion about which journal publishers have the most abusive pricing policies

• 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.

• 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.

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.
CPB has reviewed the report of the Library Planning task force. It is clear that the UC libraries face significant challenges to survive the budget cuts they are facing. However, CPB notes that the issues surrounding open access, discussed in Section 5.2, are extremely complicated and greatly impact the academic mission of UC. Faculty input in this area is critical. Comments such as those in section 5.2.1, "UC faculty must be prepared to" cross the line into issues of academic freedom. Junior faculty, for example, may have to publish in journals deemed to ‘persist in unacceptable pricing’ in order to develop and maintain the visibility needed for tenure. Many open-access journal charge page charges that many faculty may not have the resources to pay. Issues such as this must be addressed with input from the Academic Senate. Uninformed decisions could result in significant unintended damage to faculty research. Ill-advised attempts to shift the costs of library maintenance onto direct costs to faculty research grants seem to be part of a glib, thoughtless, and increasingly popular administrative approach to budgetary reductions that ignores the potential impact of solving a local problem on the global mission of the University, the generation and dissemination of new knowledge.
Research - Grants

May 31, 2011 2:40 PM

No response at this time.
Research - Policy

May 31, 2011 2:40 PM

No response at this time.