COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE RIVERSIDE DIVISION
MAY 25, 2000

To be received and placed on file:

The Senate Library Committee met three times during fall and winter quarters 1999-2000. Of the issues addressed at these meetings, several were also raised at the meeting of the systemwide University Committee on Library (UCOL) in Berkeley on 15 February 2000.

Faculty Reading Room. The faculty reading room in the Science Library has not been heavily utilized. The library staff, with concurrence of the Senate Committee, formulated a policy by which faculty and staff can sign out a key to that reading room at the Science Library Circulation desk, which must be returned before the user leaves the library. During winter quarter the faculty reading room was used approximately forty times in this manner. The Committee and library staff intend to evaluate the pattern of usage this coming fall, in order to decide whether this privilege will be extended to postdoctoral researchers and/or graduate students.

Future of Melvyl. On 31 January 2000 California Digital Library Executive Director Richard Lucier visited this campus to discuss his proposal to replace telnet-accessible Melvyl with a web-based system (to be acquired from a commercial vendor). Following that meeting (which had been announced campus-wide and was open to all) the Committee received a number of responses from faculty voicing their opinions that UC ought not to get rid of Melvyl. This position was brought to the UCOL meeting and stated in terms of the faculty’s strong desire to maintain a text-based system for access to the University’s library catalogues, Current Contents, and other databases currently supported by Melvyl. Our position was buttressed by the assertion (by the faculty representative from UC Davis) that text-based systems are much more usable by the visually impaired than are the presently configured web-based systems, and that doing away with Melvyl might render the University vulnerable to lawsuits under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Library Budget. The Committee has not construed its charge to include scrutiny of UCR’s library budget. Nevertheless, the Committee concluded that the University Librarian (UL) would benefit from faculty input regarding the annual budget. Consequently the Committee unanimously passed a resolution recommending that the Senate Committee on Planning & Budget meet with the UL once a year to examine the library’s budget proposal before its transmittal to the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor. The UL met with the Committee on Planning & Budget this past winter.

The allocation to individual campuses from UC’s Office of the President contains a set of permanent augmentations (which serve to increase the base budget for the subsequent year), as well as some temporary increments. Each Chancellor receives a block grant, however, which may be apportioned locally as dictated by need. While UCR’s libraries cannot complain of having been shortchanged in this process, the proportion of annual increments that reflect permanent augmentations has not been clearly delineated. As a consequence UCOL voted to transmit a memorandum to Academic Council, which contains the following statement,

“UCOL vigorously and unanimously endorses the principle that annual operating budget allocations from the Office of the President be passed on to the Libraries of the 9 campuses in their entirety by the respective Chancellors, without any amount being withheld. Additionally, UCOL strongly recommends that library budgets at individual campuses specifically recognize the augmentations that come out of the category ‘Funding for Core Needs’. Our understanding is that this category represents permanent increases to the base budget, and a policy of itemizing that particular component will substantially assist University Librarians in planning for the long term.”

Space. Subsequent to approving construction of UCR’s Science Library, UC’s Office of the President has routinely declined all requests for erection of new library facilities at any existing UC campus. At some campuses this has necessitated a “1 in, 1 out” policy, whereby each new holding has to be accommodated by shipping an existing holding to a regional storage facility. The Committee viewed the failure to recognize needs for additional library space as shortsighted, at best, especially in light of the anticipated enlargement of the UC student body. This viewpoint was discussed at the UCOL meeting, and UCOL unanimously passed a resolution calling for “… the Academic Senate in all of its various offices to vigorously support physical library construction as an important necessity for the success of UC. Further that campus decisions on capital budget be honored, and the construction of library facilities not be blocked.”
UCR Law School Library. At its first meeting (September 1999) of this academic year, the Committee reviewed pertinent sections of the draft Task Force Report on the UCR School of Law, which had been posted on the web, and voted unanimously to transmit a memorandum to the Chair of the Task Force. Subsequently a substantially altered Task Force Report was distributed to faculty, and the Committee again discussed its provisions as they relate to the Law Library. After learning from UCOL about governance of the Law Libraries at other UC campuses, the Committee recommended that the Senate Committee on Library should oversee the Law Library (even though its Librarian would not report to the UL nor necessarily serve ex officio on the Senate Committee on Library), regardless of whether a member of the faculty of law happened to be on the Committee. In a second memorandum the Committee raised a pair of questions regarding the statement in the Task Force Report section Law Library Operating Budget that “Funding will consist of support from the state via allocations to support UC enrollment growth and the library along with significant fee revenue from the Miceli Law Library/Riverside County.”, viz.

1. How large a fraction of the allocations from enrollment growth would be devoted to running the Law Library, compared to the fraction of the increase in total student body represented by enrollment in the Law School?
2. How would “…allocations to support … the library” be divided between the Law Library and the campus libraries?

Charges for Usage of Electronic Resources. UCOL discussed a proposal by Berkeley to exact payment for usage of electronic library resources. At UCR, however, the Committee understands that federal grants cannot be charged for such services, as computer access is included as a university contribution in UCR's negotiations for indirect cost recovery (each campus negotiates its overhead rate separately).

Graduate Program Review & Library Resources. The Committee was asked to review two alterations of UCR’s graduate programs. Neither proposal seriously addressed the issue of how these might impact upon the library, but the Committee’s consensus was that even comparatively trivial changes (such as amending the formal name of a Ph.D. degree) constitute an unfunded mandate for the library.

Overall, members of the Committee have expressed concern that the UCR libraries' resources (especially in the humanities and social sciences) are not keeping pace with the growth of the campus. Some large departments feel that UCR's holdings are at present inadequate to support even undergraduate-level research, and it is unclear whether UC's interlibrary loan network (which now makes use of a bank courier service for intercampus deliveries) has the capacity to address our needs. Given that UCR's membership in the Association of Research Libraries has been in peril for the past several years (owing to budget, number of staff, holdings, etc. that are only marginally in compliance with the ARL's requirements), the Committee wishes to alert the Senate that the UCR's participation in the California Digital Library (CDL) does not reduce the University's library costs nor does it enhance our position vis-à-vis the ARL. The CDL confers many benefits upon this campus, but the subvention from UC's Office of the President covers only a small fraction of the expenses of CDL (most of the remainder of which the individual campuses are obligated to cover out of their operating budgets). In sum, there is reason to fear that UCR's standing as a research institution may be jeopardized by limitations of its library.

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