

Library Policies Committee Report

February 23rd, 2021

Committee Members:

David Goodman (Chair), Assistant Professor, Department of Communication & Film
Gerald Chaudron, Associate Professor, Preservation Librarian-Department Head
Frances Fabian, Associate Professor, Department of Management
Scott Sundvall, Assistant Professor, English, Head of Center for Writing and Communication

Faculty Senate Charge

Meet with the Provost and Dean/Director at least once each term to review policies, procedures, and practices associated with the libraries. Include review of support personnel, facilities, acquisitions, and related activities along with the allocation of fiscal resources.

Support Personnel/Hiring

Before the pandemic, there was an increase in salaries for all junior faculty.

Since the spring of 2020, the library has filled 5 faculty positions. 2 are for instruction.

Acquisitions & Collection Development Librarian
Interlibrary Loan/Resource Delivery Librarian
Virtual Instruction Librarian
First Year Experience Librarian
Integrated System Librarian

Currently, there are 3 faculty vacancies listed in order of need:

Catalog & Metadata Librarian
Systems Librarian for Library
Collection Development Librarian

The search to fill the position of Catalog & Metadata Librarian was interrupted by COVID-19. Approval to resume this search is expected by the end of February 2021.

Space

Due to COVID-19, 1400 chairs were moved in the library spaces. The library can now hold 400-500 people. However, only about 120-130 people visited the library in Fall Semester 2020 per day. This number increased at the very end of the semester but remained below the typical 500-700 people a day during the Fall Semester of 2019.

Foot traffic does not indicate the primary use of the library in the digital era. Most library use happens online. 11 million hits a month via proxy (remote) server. 4 million of those “hits” are from the Graduate School. Roughly 700 classes a year are involved with the library.

Books are now bought in an electronic database. As a result, less physical space is taken up in the library. In terms of clearing more space, there is a cost and process of disposing of state-owned material. According to Dr. Evans, collection development will be an important discussion over the next two decades.

In the future, the library would like to expand the space for the Center for Writing and Communication as well as the Learning Commons.

During the holiday break, access and power to the 3rd and 4th floors was cut off intentionally to reduce custodial needs and power costs. The result was 8 weeks of closed general access. Staff areas remained open.

Building and space-related projects have moved down the list of priorities for the library. Previous plans for space development involved more group study and small group rooms. Group spaces are no longer an immediate option due to COVID-19. Currently no small group work is allowed in the library. Individual study carrels remain open.

Acquisitions

New acquisitions for the monograph/book collection have been very limited this fiscal year. Because of this, departments did not receive their usual offers to add books to their collections. However, individual faculty requests were made on a case-by-case basis.

A serial review is currently underway to evaluate underused and expensive databases across the university. All departments have been asked to identify expendable resources.

Kanopy, the popular film database/streaming service was running \$60,000-90,000 a year because it was on an unregulated “pay as you play” licensing system. Each film title played four times was automatically licensed for one year and cost the library \$150. Beginning in December 2020, the library implemented a more regulated Kanopy experience to cut down on the growing cost. Faculty must now request titles not already licensed for use. The good news is that as of spring 2021 the Kanopy limitation is already paying off. The library is looking into negotiating a different pattern of use that is somewhat predictable and sustainable from year to year.

Web of Science, which cost \$198,000, has been cut and replaced with Scopus, \$80,000. This did not free up money for anything new. Rather, the savings went directly into supporting ongoing subscriptions that continue to go up in price each year.

As of August 31, 2021, the university will no longer subscribe to the citation management software RefWorks. In preparation for this, the University Libraries has created a Research Guide with instructions, links, and videos that explain how to migrate data out of RefWorks and into Mendeley, EndNote, and Zotero. These alternative reference managers have free and paid account tiers.

Budget

2020-2021 COVID cuts resulted in 4.5% cut, \$300,700, from the base budget.

50% of this went to resource cuts, \$148,000 in materials, 7 underused databases that were not “trapped” by multi-year contracts. For example, CQ resources had 25 uses last year and cost \$27,000. Two additional examples include Statistical Insight, \$32,000, and Congressional Index, \$14,000. The remaining 50% of the cuts went to leaving 4 staff positions unfilled.

According to Dr. Evans, 96% of full budget goes to digital resources such as databases, some of which have multi-year contracts that go up 5-6% each year.

The library is at the point where they cannot maintain the current resources without additional funds. At the very least, the library needs an additional 3%, about \$250,000, to the current budget in the coming fiscal year in order to maintain the current resources.

Conclusion

A primary goal in the coming budget year is a the 3%, or roughly \$250,000, increase in the library budget. This will allow for a minimal cutting of resources. Library services will be crucial in terms of R1 status. As of now, there is no clear benefit from R1 status in terms of a funding boost to the library. Moving forward, a mechanism may need to be built into the yearly funding model where increases in annual expenditures can plan to be accommodated.

Without increases in funding for the library, there may come a time in the foreseeable future when colleges and departments will be requested to participate in the funding of new and necessary resources. Nursing, Kemmons Wilson, and Fogelman are already doing this.

The experience with Kanopy can serve to demonstrate that library services come with hidden and sometimes expensive costs. Moving forward, an open, two-way communication between librarians and faculty will be vital in maintaining important resources and obtaining new ones.

As a central organizing hub of information retrieval and exchange, the library maintains a high level of engagement despite the fact that not many people visit the library in person. As a university community, it will be important to maintain this level of engagement while pushing against unfounded negative reactions towards the library goods and services. The library is a vital component in the ways we will serve today’s students and the emerging students of tomorrow.