

University Committee on Libraries
Annual Report 2002-2003
September 22, 2003

The bulk of the Committee's work during the year concentrated on the impact of inadequate resources on the ability of the Library to provide services. The Committee considered how different colleges and departments had different needs for library resources, with some departments relying almost entirely on electronic resources, while other departments depended heavily on materials in paper format.

For the 2003-04 academic year, the budget cut was 5% on unrestricted accounts and 3.5% on restricted accounts, for a total of almost \$750,000. To absorb the cuts, the Library will freeze most hiring, leaving 10-15 positions open for the duration of the year. In addition, most capital purchases will be deferred and explore new fees for printing. With a reduced budget for library materials, the Library will continue the cancellation of serial subscriptions and reduce its commitments for books.

With the likelihood that the Library's budget will be flat for the near term, the Committee worked with the Director to develop strategies to deal with the continuing pattern under which costs of books and serials increase more rapidly than inflation. These strategies included the cancellation of paper copies where the library had already purchased the electronic version, ordering books in soft bound rather than hard bound format and canceling the less heavily used general and/or subject databases and journals.

The Committee also worked with the Director on the strategic plan for the Library, as part of the University's over-all strategic plan. The key elements of the strategic plan were these: (1) achieving excellence in meeting information needs across all disciplines; (2) building rich and unique collections to support university's scholarly aspirations; (3) participating in the global network of research libraries; and (4) creating a Catholic identity in a research library.

Two members of the Committee served on the review committee for director of libraries. The chair of the review committee also met with the entire membership of the Committee.

The Committee also discussed other matters critical to the Library's functioning. Among the most significant of those matters were these:

- (1) The recall of materials. The Committee discussed a variety of options aimed at securing speedier return of materials needed by others.
- (2) Collection development processes. The Committee discussed how the Library could ensure the quality of existing distinguished collections while maintaining collections in support of curriculum. There was also discussion about the importance of having research level collections.
- (3) Renovation of basement. The Committee received regular reports on the renovation.

(4) Electronic resources. With the increased reliance on electronic resources, the Committee discussed the need to make them a permanent part of the library's collection. That discussion touched on a number of points – licensing, library-supported digital preservation, digitization of individual collections, and working through consortia of libraries. As mentioned above, the Committee reviewed the continuing process of canceling paper subscriptions for journals received electronically.

(5) Management of printing costs by users. One consequence of the increased availability of electronic resources (including electronic reserves) has been greater use of printers within the library system, and a decreased use of photocopiers. Included in the Committee's discussion was a report from OIT on how new technology could be used to manage print orders. An immediate goal is to minimize the number of orders that are not collected. In addition, there was discussion of the possibility of charging for printing by those from outside the University as well as of using other technologies, such as CD burners to substitute for printing.

In closing, we note that the most significant problem facing the University Libraries is the declining purchasing power due to budget cuts and a continuing increase due to inflation in the costs of serials, at a rate more than double that of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Notre Dame's aspirations for providing a premier undergraduate experience and achieving an impact through research are not well served by inadequate library collections or untimely access to electronic resources. In our May 1, 2003 letter on the impact of budgetary reductions on library materials, we noted "the 5% reduction in the library's "supplies and expense" budget, incorporating as it does library materials, seems disproportionate when compared to the 3% reductions required of other academic units, and when aggregated with the information industry inflationary pressures, Draconian." We urged again that the University address the need to offset inflation in the cost of library materials. We are pleased to see that the Provost's Office has responded to this issue by providing some ad hoc annual assistance until the external situation stabilizes and by carrying the discussion to deans and department chairs at the annual retreat.

University Committee on Libraries

Jack Pratt, Law School, chair

John H. Adams, Biological Sciences

Harvey A. Bender, Biological Sciences

Wesley Calvert, Graduate Student Representative

Stephen D. Dumont, Philosophy

Felipe Hernandez, Undergraduate Student Representative

Roger Jacobs, Law School

Theresa Krier, English

Mark Pilkinton, Film, Television, and

Marsha Stevenson, University Libraries

Karen Richman, Anthropology

Stephen Silliman, Civil Engineering/Geological Sciences

David Smith, Psychology

John A. Weber, Marketing

Gordon Wishon, Office of Information Technology

Jennifer A. Younger, Director of Libraries (ex officio)