To: The Academic Council  
From: The University Committee on Libraries (UCL)  
Harvey Bender, Professor, Biological Sciences, and Chair, UCL  
Re: Annual Report for 2001/02  
Date: September 19, 2002

We are pleased to present the annual report for 2001/02 of the University Committee on Libraries (UCL) required by its charge. The report reviews the work of the UCL and recommends specific actions on issues important to the continuing well-being of teaching, learning and research at Notre Dame.

The Immediate Concern

The inflation rate for serials outstripped the consumer price index by 6-10% for the past fifteen years. Between FY1994/95 and FY2000/01, the library collections budget increased by 77% as a result of additional funding from the post-Colloquy Ad Hoc Report on Libraries (1994) and new collection endowments, and thus absorbed the price increases. However, as of FY01/02, the library collection budget will increase more slowly. Therefore, in April 2002, the library initiated a budget commitment decrease program so that FY 02/03 commitments would stay within the library collection budget. Librarians consulted the academic departments on how to decrease commitments in subject areas by (at least) 6% of the FY 2001/02 serial expenditures. While the library is still in the process of completing the cancellations of serial subscriptions that will take effect in January 2003, approximately 520 subscriptions have been cancelled, realizing nearly $400,000, a figure close to 10% of the FY01/02 serial expenditures of $4,330,940. Of the 520 cancelled titles, the library estimates that about 40% are duplicates where a paper copy was cancelled but the electronic version was retained, while the remaining 60% were unique serial titles. Without additional funds for next year (FY2003/04), the library will again face a cancellation project that will cut more deeply into primary serial titles with a correspondingly larger impact on teaching, learning and research at Notre Dame than did the past year’s program.

The need to cut the library collections budget commitment also focused attention on the fact that many serial titles are currently acquired as part of a “publisher’s package.” Such packages include both titles considered very important at Notre Dame as well as some titles not as highly rated, but the package must be purchased as a whole. Thus, when purchasing power declines due to inflation, acquiring serial packages will limit the number of other important serials that can be obtained. This is particularly evident in the sciences.

Year's Work

The UCL focused on the need for strong continued library funding and access to material in or through the library. A major library self study and a significant report by library staff on library funding for books and journals served as the framework for most of the committee’s advice and commentary.
In its self study, the University Libraries described strengths and weaknesses in library programs supporting teaching, learning and research, significant issues, major challenges, and plans for the future. The self study (Section I.D.) also responded directly to the fourteen recommendations made in 1994 by the Ad Hoc Committee on Libraries, noting where progress was and was not made in regard to improvements in staffing, collections and space. Although we recognize great strides in university investment, which are reflected in ND’s rise in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) rankings, we expressed our continuing concerns about 1) inadequate funding for retrospective purchases and inflation in the costs of books and journals, 2) inadequate capitalization of new faculty hires for collections and information resources, 3) the low number of librarians in comparison with peer libraries, 4) the importance of effective interlibrary loan, and 5) the need for library space appropriate to user and collection needs.

In February 2002, the Provost requested a report that was made to the Academic Council on library funding and which will appear in the Notre Dame Report with the minutes of the Academic Council meeting on March 27, 2000. This report described the university investment in the last decade, the funding trajectory for library collections, and the serious challenges facing research libraries in maintaining purchasing power for books and journals. At the Academic Council meeting, members spoke to the critical importance of "electronic literacy," face-to-face interaction and collaborative study. We commend the University Coordinating Committee on Curriculum Review for including as one of the issues “Provide students with opportunities for and instruction in locating and retrieving information resources and making informed value judgments about information sources.” The library has furnished the Coordinating Committee with examples of best practices in courses that include instruction in finding, evaluating and using information resources as part of the course.

In addition, Committee agendas included library reports on new developments that expand access to information resources and library services, including the e-journal locator and web site redesign. We met with the new president of the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) on its collections and services. The University Libraries is investigating possibilities for simultaneous searching of multiple library catalogs, including those of the Kresge Law Library and the CRL. A Task Force investigating the feasibility of an integrated catalog for those libraries (Notre Dame, St. Mary's College, Holy Cross College, and Bethel College) using the Aleph 500 system will report in Fall 2002.

The University Committee on Libraries welcomes input from other groups, such as the newly-established College of Arts & Letters Library Committee, on their concerns about library acquisitions and services. UCL minutes are published in the Notre Dame Report.

Looking ahead to next year, we expect our attention will focus on the library strategic plan and particularly the shifting strategic landscape resulting from an acquisition budget growth rate that is less than the inflation in the costs of books and serials.

**Recommendations**

Our recommendations build on current educational interactions and initiatives and are directed to multiple parties.

1) We encourage academic units to identify in their strategic plans those library services, collections and information resources needed in support of their aspirations and goals and that the University Libraries initiate this process as appropriate.
2) We commend and support the Graduate School's inclusion of library collections and information resources as a critical element in the research infrastructure needed at Notre Dame, as important as are the physical resources. More research at Notre Dame has also resulted in an increased level of external funding. Further, we encourage the University consider ways of using some portion of the overhead funding from research grants to address the critical needs of researchers for access to information resources.

3) We urge colleges to review the needs of new faculty hires for library collections and information resources. New programs and new faculty who bring new areas of research also require new and/or strengthened library collections and information resources. We commend the College of Arts & Letters current initiatives for faculty capitalization for library materials and strongly urge this practice be extended to faculty in all colleges.

4) We request that the University make the library acquisitions portion of the University Libraries and Kresge Law Library non-salary budgets into discrete non-salary budgets. This will enable the University to assess and respond to inflationary costs of book and journals in print and/or electronic format, which are significantly higher than are inflationary increases for other non-salary expenses.

5) We recommend the University Libraries take steps to enhance communication with faculty regarding library collections, information resources and services.

Respectfully submitted by the University Committee on Libraries

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