

Restoration of Library Collections and Services Program and Budget Proposal

- Background
- Impact of Past Funding Patterns
- Vision
- Proposal
- Appendix 1: Faculty Comments, Letters
- Appendix 2: Comparison Data
- Appendix 3: OUS Salaries

August 2, 2007

Submitted by: Deborah A. Carver, Philip H. Knight Dean of Libraries

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Linda Brady, Senior Vice President and Provost
Frances Dyke, Vice President for Finance and Administration

FROM: Deborah A. Carver, Philip H. Knight Dean of Libraries

RE: Restoration of Library Collections and Services; Program and Budget Proposal

Background

Since the early 1990's, the university's investment in its libraries has fallen significantly short of what is needed to sustain the teaching and research needs of the institution. Several factors have contributed to this decline in support:

- inflation on scholarly resources has not been addressed systematically since the change in the funding model
- costs for scholarly journals increase 8-10% per year, while the library's budget has increased 0-3% per year since the mid-1990's
- the Library employs a high percentage of classified and student employees compared to other academic units, and some of the labor obligations associated with these employees have not been funded centrally
- technology has changed every aspect of library services and collections, yet only a fraction of these costs have been covered centrally, mostly through the educational technology fee

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities stated the following: *While the Libraries physical facilities and services comprise strong points, the ability of collections and information resources to support research has suffered a sharp decline over the years. Statistics compiled by the Association of Research Libraries (an organization of the 113 largest academic research libraries in North America) reveal a distressing and grim funding picture for the UO Libraries, especially for acquisition of books and journals. Total materials expenditures for UO Libraries increased by just 1% in real dollars from 1999 (\$5,264,739) to 2005 (\$5,334,251). During this period the median total materials expenditures for ARL Libraries increased by 45% from 1999 (\$5,991,177) to 2005 (\$8,662,668). Consequently, the UO ranking in total materials expenditure fell steadily from 74th in 1999 to 107th in 2005, the most recent year available. The continued long-term decline in library support has left the University of Oregon Libraries' core collection (print and online) insufficient in quality, depth, diversity and currency to support graduate curricula and research in a number of programs.*

In addition to cutting collections, the Library has eliminated 7 FTE (9 positions) since 2000, aggressively managed S&S expenditures (50% reduction in S&S expenses from general fund, income and ICC), cut travel costs, and shifted all equipment and technology expenses not covered by ed tech to foundation

accounts. Support for student wages has been cut by 20 percent, although we anticipate needing to restore some of that to improve service quality.

Impact of Past Funding Patterns

The most significant impact of these cuts in library collections and services has been on faculty research and graduate education. In two gap analysis studies (2001 and 2005), the library measured user satisfaction of collections, services and facilities. In the [LibQUAL+™](#) assessment, three of the five lowest scores related to the collections: “electronic resources I need,” “printed library materials I need for my work,” and “print or electronic journal collections I require for my work.” The last category was the only one where the Library failed to meet minimum expectations in both surveys for faculty and graduate assistants. (One could argue that these questions are also the most important for scholars).

Limitations in technology have had a significant impact on undergraduate students. The public equipment in the Library is between six and seven years old and most of the servers are the same vintage. The gap between the functionality of the Internet and our capacity to provide that access widens every year that we rely on this older equipment. Fortunately, we have been able to amass enough funds through the Annual Fund campaign to replace much of that older equipment this year. But a seven year replacement cycle is inadequate to meet the basic expectations of most students.

Staffing shortages have an impact on all users. The UO Library would need to add 24 positions to be at the mean of our peers in staffing. Some of the impact of these staffing levels on the effective use of information resources and technology can be seen through recent surveys. For example, in the LibQUAL+ gap analysis survey on library service quality, the Library scored lower on questions related to “employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions” and “dependability in handling users’ service problems.” The Library scored high on questions related to affect and service ethic, but it is clear that the lack of adequately skilled professionals has had an impact on the effective use of resources. To compensate for lower staffing levels, the Library relies more heavily on student assistants. Student staff per 1,000 student FTE is 124% of the mean of our comparators.

Work loads and pay scales are also a major concern. The lack of professional librarians means that each subject specialist is serving several large disciplines, or in some cases, an entire college. For example, the University of Oregon has two professional music librarians; the University of Washington has six professionals serving approximately the same number of music majors. Many subject specialists serve up to three disciplines. Those individuals are responsible not only for building the collections and teaching classes, but for creating new digital content, helping students and faculty make effective use of information technology, and in some cases developing new courses. Recent salary increases have helped to address the compensation problems. However, the UO still ranks 92nd in the ARL rankings for beginning professional salaries (\$35,000 for 12-months, see Appendix 3 for OUS salaries). One of our librarians, with an MLS and a PhD in the sciences, has responsibility for biology, chemistry, neuroscience, and molecular biology; teaches credit classes (including a FIG in FY08); and earns \$39,000 for 12 months.

Vision

In five years, the University of Oregon Libraries will have corrected the problems resulting from previous funding patterns, and will have addressed core collection deficiencies across all disciplines. We will be free from the necessity of serials cancellation projects. While we will still rely on the efficiencies of resource sharing, we will be in a position to work with our partners in the region to engage in substantive cooperative collection development, creating a shared depth to our collections that is equivalent to the premier research libraries in North America. The increase in general fund investments, coupled with a significant increase in our endowments, will allow us to build centers of excellence within the general and special collections (print and electronic) that support the research intensities across campus. We will be in a position to create new areas of strength to help recruit and retain excellent faculty. We will have established robust scholarly communication services to help faculty create, manage, disseminate, and preserve research findings in ways that take full advantage of the global information network. We will have the capacity, through our collections, our professional staff, and our facilities, to support a significant expansion in undergraduate research. We will be able to expand our support for educational technology, in partnership with Information Services, TEP, and the schools and colleges. We will have the expertise and the time to conduct ongoing and frequent assessment of our collections and services, analyze the results, and take corrective action wherever necessary. Finally, the Library will be a central point of pride for the entire campus. It will be a symbol of the University's good standing in the Association of American Universities and proof of our commitment to research and the preservation of knowledge.

Proposal

The following proposal would put the UO Libraries at the mean of our comparators (adjusted for student FTE, see Appendix 2). The total amount of new investment is \$4.35 million (above inflationary increases).ⁱ

1. \$2 million – collections (for program improvement, in addition to \$350,000 annually for inflation)
2. \$350,000 – UO Portland Library and Information Commons
3. \$275,000 – professional salaries (in addition to current practice of covering salary and OPE increases, to increase the entry level salary and address resulting compression and create some additional parity with selected IT positions on campus)
4. \$375,000 – additional permanent positions (professional librarians, IT support, and classified)
5. \$350,000 – OPE associated with salary increases and new staff
6. \$1 million – technology

In addition to these financial investments, the Library needs to make some adjustments in its reporting, e.g., count 13 more of our twenty OA positions as “professional.”

If the UO had these resources for FY06, it would have resulted in our being ranked 79th overall in the ARL expenditure index, up from 103. ⁱⁱ This is approximately the ranking we had in the early 1990's. In terms of public AAU institutions that are also members of ARL, this would have brought us up to 30th out of 34. We are currently at the bottom of this list.

If the implementation occurred over three years, the Library's budget would need to increase accordingly (not including any new centrally funded salary increases).

FY08 \$1,800,000 (investment plus inflation)

FY09 \$1,800,000 (over FY08 base, investment plus inflation)

FY10 \$1,800,000 (over FY09 base, investment plus inflation)

FY11 \$400,000 (over FY10 base, inflation only)

If the implementation occurred over five years, the Library's budget would need to increase accordingly (not including any new centrally funded salary increases).

FY08 \$1,220,000 (investment plus inflation)

FY09 \$1,220,000 (over FY08 base, investment plus inflation)

FY10 \$1,220,000 (over FY09 base, investment plus inflation)

FY11 \$1,240,000 (over FY10 base, investment plus inflation)

FY12 \$1,240,000 (over FY11 base, investment plus inflation)

FY13 \$400,000 (over FY12, inflation only)

ⁱ Inflation on collections is estimated at \$350,000/year. Since the collection expenditures grow with additions to the base, we have increased the amount of inflation to \$400,000 in FY11.

ⁱⁱ Approximately 6% of the general fund budget supports Media Services and CET, operations that are not commonly provided by other ARL Libraries. The addition of those services inflate the UO Library's expenditures (and ranking) compared to peer institutions.