

5/1/08

MEMORANDUM

To: University Library Committee

From: Mark Watson
AUL for Collections & Access

Subject: Weeding to Storage Project

This is a comment about re-shelving books. I am wondering if more funds could be allocated to re-shelving so that books are more readily available. I find it demoralizing to have to search for books on the re-shelving carts. **Melissa Walter, Visiting Professor, English**

One of the skeletons in the Libraries' closet has been that the Knight Library is running out of space for its books. Hundreds of our books—even recently purchased materials—end up in overflow areas on the 4th floor, and our patrons cannot find them. This "weed to storage" project will free up space on the shelves for materials that our patrons are looking for by putting materials that are used rarely, if at all, in designated storage areas. **Paul Frantz, Subject Specialist.**

When you are out of space in the main facility, you must have a policy of one item in, one item out so that you can keep the most relevant materials easily available. **James Fox, Head, Special Collections & University Archives.**

In the compacted places in the library stacks we're shelving the books nobody uses, and we're hiding in overflow the ones that they do. **Shirien Chappell, Head, Access Services.**

My hope is to gain ULC endorsement of a project to remove a significant number of printed volumes from their current location in the library stacks to storage. The titles to be removed have been handpicked by the subject specialists representing the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. All the materials to be relocated fall into one or more of the following categories:

- The materials are now available via full-text online
- The materials have been superseded by more recent editions, cumulations, etc.
- The materials are infrequently used, if ever, because of the nature of the content, age, etc.

Once the materials have been removed from the shelves and boxed up, the records in the catalog will be suppressed from public view in the online catalog. Any subsequent requests for the materials will be handled through Interlibrary Loan. If the subject specialists have done a good job in selecting the materials, the need to access these materials will be extremely minimal.

The impetus for the project began in Knight Library, but materials from the Science and AAA libraries will also be included in the shift. Severe overcrowding in sections of the three

collections is the principal reason why “weeding,” to be followed by major shifts of materials to remote storage, is urgently needed. In Knight, the shelving situation is quite dire. Currently, a book is returned to the library, sent to the 2nd floor sorting area, put on a book truck and taken to its re-shelving area on the proper floor. Staff wheel the book truck to the stacks for re-shelving. If a book cannot fit into that area, staff take it back to the 2nd floor sorting area for potential overflow shelving. An experienced shifter takes the potential overflow books to the stacks to see if they can be shelved with a reasonable amount of shifting. If the books cannot be re-shelved, they are taken to the overflow area on the 4th floor. This is painfully inefficient and slows down the shelving. This situation has a very negative effect on library users. Many recent acquisitions end up in the overflow, and, to complicate matters, there is no indication in the catalog of this location.

“Weeding to storage” will enable the reintegration of all library materials into proper call number order in the stacks. It will also free up valuable library space for other uses. This is a project that really needs to go forward. The University Library Committee is encouraged to add its endorsement to this project.