

University Library Committee 1995-1996

Serials Cancellation

Memo from Provost Moseley 26 October 1995

The following memo was sent by Provost Moseley via email to Joe St Sauver in response to an earlier memo. in regard to the proposed serials cancellation project

Joe--I appreciate your concerns, and the analysis you have done of this problem. No doubt many of your suggestions are useful, and should be shared with and considered by the Library Committee--I assume you have done so.

There are larger issues here, which are international in nature, and of which you certainly have some awareness. This issue is the appropriation of academic intellectual property by publishers, who then sell it back to us at ever increasing prices. Frankly, I have encouraged my colleague provosts in both the AAU and NASULGC to cut back on their subscriptions to these publications, and I am led to believe that many of them are doing so. This is the only way that we will reach a more long-term sustainable situation in the serials area. I realize that this causes disruption in the short term, but I fear it is a bullet we must bite.

So for me the issue is not that we might reduce our serials subscriptions by \$500,000, but that we look at our subscription list and selectively cut those which have a high cost relative to their usage, and which have been experiencing large increases. I personally believe that there has been an unnecessary proliferation of second-rate journals, and that we need to take a stand to reduce this proliferation, and to encourage our faculty to publish in a more limited set of top rank journals. As it turns out, in general the highest quality journals are the most cost effective--cheaper per page and more heavily used. This is certainly true in the sciences. We cannot afford continuing 15% increases, nor feeling forced to subscribe to new journals. I believe the next five years will see substantial changes in this field, and I would not be at all sorry to see some of these publications disappear. But they won't disappear if we, and our fellow institutions, continue to subscribe.

With regard to the university's research productivity and teaching readiness, I'd have to see the list of serials to be dropped before I would be convinced that we would suffer any real damage. Please share your thoughts with the Committee. I'm asking George Shipman by copy of this e-mail to share mine, and to offer my willingness to meet with the committee to discuss this issue if they wish. John Moseley