

University Library Committee 1995-1996

Memo #2 from Joe St Sauver re Serials Cancellation

The following is a memo from Joe St Sauver to Peter Gilkey (Chair of the University Library Committee) dated 2 November 1995. It deals with the possible serials cancellation project.

TOP TWO DOZEN DEPARTMENTS, RANKED BY SERIALS EXPENDITURES

Rank	Department	Current	% of Total	Cum %	Students	\$/Student
1	Chemistry	\$319,371	14.45%	14.45%	267	\$1,196.15
2	Biology	\$286,257	12.95%	27.40%	725	\$394.84
3	Physics	\$277,233	12.54%	39.94%	201	\$1,379.27
4	Math	\$144,358	6.53%	46.47%	189	\$763.80
5	Library-Reference	\$115,963	5.25%	51.72%	n/a	
6	Business	\$91,769	4.15%	55.87%	2,286	\$40.14
7	Geology	\$74,563	3.37%	59.24%	134	\$556.44
8	Nuero	\$73,340	3.32%	62.56%	n/a	
9	Library-Libr (?)	\$78,267	3.54%	66.10%	n/a	
10	Library-Documents	\$74,312	3.36%	69.46%	n/a	
11	Library-Science	\$68,763	3.11%	72.57%	n/a	
12	Psychology	\$54,979	2.49%	75.06%	1,316	\$41.77
13	Library-Newspapers	\$51,056	2.31%	77.31%	n/a	
14	History	\$49,456	2.24%	79.61%	337	\$146.75
15	Computer Science	\$45,754	2.07%	81.68%	343	\$133.40

16	AAA	\$38,375	1.74%	83.42%	1,746	\$21.98
17	Education	\$34,829	1.58%	85.00%	756	\$46.07
18	Economics	\$34,585	1.56%	86.56%	282	\$122.64
19	Geography	\$23,807	1.08%	87.64%	181	\$131.53
20	English	\$21,193	.96%	88.60%	1,001	\$21.17
21	Romance Languages	\$21,033	.95%	89.55%	93	\$226.16
22	Antropology	\$19,372	.88%	90.43%	301	\$64.36
23	Political Science	\$18,519	.84%	91.27%	656	\$28.23
24	Sociology	\$17,191	.78%	92.05%	660	\$26.05
TOTALS FOR *ALL* DEPTS:		\$2,209,985			20,971	\$105.38

Notes:

- 1) Breakdowns are as shown in the Library's serials expenditures spreadsheet
- 2) Student enrollment statistics are as reported in the '95-'96 Bulletin, page 320; departments shown as n/a for students did not have enrollment statistics available

The two major points I hope you'll note from my one-pager are as follows:

- 1) Serials expenditures in only four departments account for nearly half the total serials expenditures; serials expenditures in only a dozen departments account for three fourths of the total serials expenditures; and serials expenditures in only a total of two dozen areas encompasses over 92% of the total serials expenditures. This pareto-consistent result is important because it means: -- The problem is far more tractable to analysis than it has appeared previously -- The scope of the disruption to faculty research productivity may be limitable to a comparatively small number of departments -- If we focus our attention on a comparatively small number of departments (the first four as a matter of utmost priority, then

remaining top dozen, then the second dozen as time permits), we can address the brunt of the problem without getting distracted by the "crumbs" spent on serials in the remaining departments. Thus, for example, I'd urge that we seek a detailed list of expenditures for the top four serial budget lines (Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Math) and look closely at them as a committee. Serials purchases for those four departments alone account for nearly half the total serials expenditure, and those are also four departments where serials have consistently seen above normal levels of inflation. I'd also ask that you seek these the list of periodicals purchased on behalf of departments ordered by *descending cost* within each department, much as my list was ordered by descending total expenditure. I believe this will help us identify some obvious candidates for reduction fairly painlessly.

- 2) The second inference I hope you'll draw from my one-pager relates to the notion of "standard costs" and variance analysis.

I'd like to begin encouraging people to take these large multi-thousand dollar amounts and begin relating them to something concrete, in this case the primary source of University revenues (namely, students). This is akin to what most companies do when they look at usage of material, labor, capital, etc. on a per-unit output basis.

Along those lines, it is obvious that there are vast differences in allocation of serials resources relative to program output. For example, AAA expends but \$21.98/student on serials, while Physics spends \$1,379.27/student on periodicals, while a flat allocation would imply spending about \$105.38 per student.

What would serials expenditures look like if our top four programs spent only a University-average amount on journals (instead of their current expenditures)? Well...

	Current	Majors	Majors*\$105.38	Difference
Chemistry	\$319,371	267	\$28,136.46	-\$291,234.54
Biology	\$286,257	725	\$76,400.50	-\$209,856.50
Physics	\$277,233	201	\$21,181.38	-\$256,051.62
Math	\$144,358	189	\$19,916.82	-\$124,441.18

				-\$881,583.84

Bringing those four departments alone into line with average serials expenditures per revenue-generating student would result in savings totalling nearly nine hundred thousand dollars per year.

Do I believe that cuts this dramatic in nature are necessary or appropriate? No, I don't. But I *do* believe that they illustrate some vast disparities in collection development that have taken place, an important issue as we begin seeking to determine if reductions should be made on a level basis or on some other basis as we seek to renorm our serials expenditures half a million dollars below their current levels.

I hope these two observations will provide some useful starting points for discussion of budgetary models relative to the serial reallocations we're embarked upon. Feel free to let me know if you have any questions
Regards, Joe