

University Library Committee 1995-1996

Memo

December 8, 1995

TO: All Faculty

FROM: George W. Shipman University Librarian

SUBJECT: Serials Cancellation Project

On November 15, I sent you a letter which described the effects of inflation on the Library's budget and the need to cancel approximately \$500,000 worth of serial subscriptions. Double-digit inflation rates for serials coupled with average yearly budget increases of approximately 3 percent have eroded the University's ability to purchase new books and other library materials. Reductions in serial subscriptions are necessary to preserve some discretionary buying power for the academic departments.

Library faculty and the University Library Committee have worked diligently over these past few weeks to find an equitable formula for determining how these reductions will be made. Target amounts for cancellation have been based on inflation rates over the past five years. This method helps to restore a distribution of funds which reflects the scholarly needs of this university. In contrast, a flat percentage cut would provide high-inflation funds with an expanding proportion of the budget, while low-inflation funds received a diminishing piece of the pie. By isolating inflation from total expenditures, we can protect deliberate decisions made in the past to increase a department's allocation because of scholarly changes.

Inflation rates have been averaged across broad disciplinary categories of library materials which support the three divisions of CAS as well as the professional schools. Broad categories were used to prevent any single fund from being severely penalized. These broad averages also reflect the fact that many journals are cross-disciplinary in nature. The average inflation rates were then used to determine the levels of reductions. The sciences, which have a higher inflation factor, will reduce their serials commitments by 22.8 percent. Social sciences will be reduced by 21.7%, and the humanities will be reduced by 16.9 percent. These percentages are necessary to restore \$500,000 for the purchase of books and other library materials.

The process we intend to follow will be similar to the previous cancellation project, and faculty will have ample opportunity to determine which titles should be canceled. The library subject specialists will meet with departmental representatives to work out a strategy for faculty input. Each department will be asked to rank their lists according to need. When this step is completed, the Library will publicize the full list of possible cuts. Any title on the cancellation list can be picked up (or "purchased") by another department as long as the target amount to cut is reached.

The final list should be completed by March and cancellations will begin in April. Cancellations will be phased in over a three year period. Once again, this is a regrettable situation, but we hope the collaborative process will preserve those journals that are most important to the University.