

University Libraries Committee 2006/2007 Annual Report of Activities

- 1. Meetings.** The ULC has met monthly from September to April during the reporting period, with the exception of the November 2006 and January 2007 meetings.
- 2. Elections.** Dr. Ralf Remshardt took over as Chair of ULC from Blake Landor beginning in September. At the first meeting on September 13, 2006, Dr. Ruth Lowery, Associate Professor in the College of Education, was elected as the Chair-Elect.
- 3. Libraries Budget.** Dr. John Ingram, the Libraries' Deputy Director, reported in September on the library materials budget for fiscal year 2006/2007. The Libraries continue to face severe funding challenges, although a projected need to reduce journal subscriptions has been temporarily averted by the receipt of additional monies from the provost and by the use of carry-forward funds. The ULC discussed and approved the budget.
- 4. Library Fines.** In the October meeting, Carol Turner, the Libraries' Director for Public Services, proposed increases in fines for materials returned late. The ULC discussed the fines structure and agreed that the library needs the means to enforce efficient circulation. ULC members suggested a revised fines structure, in particular for reserves materials. Carol Turner also noted that there are many infractions in the Interlibrary Loan system, and that the library currently imposes no fines for ILL materials returned late. ULC members also felt that faculty members should be reminded by email before summer break to make any checked-out books accessible in case of recall.
- 5. Facilities.** The new Dean of Fine Arts, Lucinda Lavelli, requested of the Chair that the question of inadequate library facilities for Art and Architecture and Music be brought to the attention of the committee. Director of Libraries Dale Canelas gave an overview of the problems with the fine arts facilities and noted that a request for a facilities upgrade had been submitted to the provost a year ago, but so far no response has been forthcoming.
- 6. Library West dedication.** ULC Chair Ralf Remshardt was invited to participate in the official opening of the Library West addition on January 26 and to give a speech accepting the library addition on behalf of the faculty.
- 7. Dean of Libraries search.** Several ULC members, including the Chair, were able to attend some of the meetings of the Dean of Libraries candidates with the Infrastructure Council and to report back to the ULC on the progress of the search. Unfortunately, no ULC members attended the presentation by the ultimately successful candidate, Judith Russell.
- 8. ILL Books on Demand.** Michelle Foss reported in March on a new initiative that would set aside funds to buy books and other materials that have been ordered through ILL for the UF library if they are deemed worthwhile additions to UF's collections.

Students and faculty can make requests for purchases, and the aim is to provide a turnaround time of 5 days, comparable to ILL.

9. Future of the Libraries Task Force. ULC spent considerable time discussing the results of the provost's task force on the Future of the Libraries. Dean Will Harrison, the task force chair, was invited to attend the December meeting of ULC and to give an overview of the task force's findings in its newly issued report. In particular, he pointed out the quantitative analysis of the report, showing an acute underfunding of the UF libraries in comparison to UF's peer institutions. ULC Chair Ralf Remshardt requested that members review the report in preparation for an extensive discussion during the February meeting.

Although some members felt the report's conclusions were too vague, the ULC voted to endorse the report and to impress forcefully on the Faculty Senate the necessity to get the provost's direct response to its findings. ULC members put particular emphasis on the following points:

- The current state of the Libraries and the threat of future funding cuts are a liability to UF's aspirations to become a "top ten" institution, and specifically to its recruitment, hiring, and retention of the best faculty.
- ULC members strongly echoed the sentiments in the "Reflective Note" portion of the report (pp. 25f.) The administration's current policies, which are reflected in the purchasing priorities of the Library, seem to de-emphasize the humanities in favor of the sciences, engineering, and professional schools. This has led to a demoralizing effect in the College and Liberal Arts and Sciences which compounds the CLAS budget crisis.
- Given the administration's emphasis on graduate education in the pursuit of top ranking, the Library must be furnished with sufficient funds to grow and maintain collections that can sustain high-quality M.A. and Ph.D. programs.
- ULC strongly urges the administration and the new Dean of the Libraries to find a solution to the urgent space needs of the collections in Art and Architecture and Music.
- The use of compact shelving in the new Library addition, though necessary on practical grounds, is not ideal for an active library with large numbers of users. If additional library space is built, it would be prudent to use compact shelving selectively.
- As a committee, ULC is concerned with the outward appearance of Library West. Budgetary constraints apparently prevented an overhaul of the colonnade when the addition was built. The result is a hybrid, with the relatively unkempt appearance of the Plaza of the Americas and the colonnade standing in marked contrast to the new building.

Submitted by:
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