

University Committee on Libraries  
February 12, 2004

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. in Café DeGrasta by Chairman David Smith. Also in attendance were John Adams, Gail Bederman, Harvey Bender, Wesley Calvert, Ryan Finlen, Charles Rosenberg, Mihir Sen, Marsha Stevenson, John Weber, Gordon Wishon, Jennifer Younger, observers Nigel Butterwick and Gay Dannelly, and secretary Melodie Eiteljorge.

The minutes of the meeting of December 11, 2003 were approved with an addendum.

Director's report:

- Younger announced that *Computer World* has named Gordon Wishon as one of the 2004 premiere 100 IT leaders.
- Foik Award: An announcement has gone out to the Factotal list and to *Notre Dame Report*, calling for nominations. Any committee members interested in serving on this year's Foik Award Committee or willing to serve as chair should contact Younger
- The University Libraries responded seriously to the concerns expressed in the last accreditation review. They conducted a LibQUAL+ survey and have redesigned both the internal and external web sites. As the next accreditation review approaches, the University's aspirations to be a great Catholic teaching and research university will again significantly increase the demands on the library to support teaching, learning and research.
- User printing in the library will be on the March agenda.

Update on communication survey in the University Libraries:

Stevenson reported that the Libraries have contracted with a highly regarded library consultant, Lou Wetherbee, to conduct a survey of internal library communication. Wetherbee is working closely with Organizational Development Librarian Joanne Bessler. She has already conducted interviews with Younger and the associate directors. Stevenson will bring updates to the committee as this project unfolds.

Meeting information needs through journal subscriptions or on-request borrowing/purchasing of single articles:

Background from Younger, distributed prior to the meeting: We are grappling right now with the cost of licensing high priced commercially published e-journal packages. There are competing reasons to subscribe and not to subscribe. On the subscribe side, we see efficiency, timeliness and low unit cost per downloaded article. On the not to subscribe side, we see the inclusion of

journals not highly valued by Notre Dame faculty and the inability to subscribe to journals more highly valued. Many agree that the high use of journal titles in the large packages is use of convenience only and that such use would decline with no negative consequences. However, some articles would still be required. Would the resulting level of use be a level of demand the library could successfully meet? If not, are there practical or useful ways to moderate demand?

#### Discussion:

Younger noted some options for moderating demand for articles from journals to which the library does not subscribe: limit citation retrieval to what we own; share costs of interlibrary loan (ILL) with faculty/departments; redirect undergraduate requests to sources the library owns.

Bederman addressed Younger's observation: "Many see that a high proportion of the use of journal titles in the large packages is use of convenience only and that such use would decline with no negative consequences." She noted that scholarship is often serendipitous. One of the purposes of having library resources databases is to allow students and scholars to locate relevant articles in journals that they might not know about otherwise. This is not a matter of convenience--it's how productive scholarship works. Also, she noted that "articles are not fungible," that normally a particular article is what is needed. Calvert added that in the case that we own the requested item, ILL requests are redirected already, and in the case that we don't, the name "redirect" is dishonest and should be replaced by "deny".

Bender noted that we have already cut journals to the quick. It is the large commercially-published journal packages, e.g. Elsevier's *Science Direct* that are taking most of the library materials budget. He asked about consortia to deal with this. Younger responded that we are part of the NorthEast Research Libraries Consortium (NERL, and our journal licensing costs have gone down since we joined. However, NERL is not one administrative unit, and individual library members are not bound by the decisions of others. This causes some loss of leverage, in contrast to the 10 University of California libraries which negotiate as one single entity.

Bender also noted that cancelling packages and re-subscribing to what we need might not result in savings, because what we need is the more expensive journals. There is also the matter of inconvenience. Undergraduates in particular do not budget time for turn-around.

Younger noted that the University of Illinois Chemistry Library and California Institute of Technology have adopted an approximate 80/20 model, under which they figure 80% of use comes

from 20% of the journals. Thus, they retained the most frequently used journals and analyze regularly whether it is more cost-effective to subscribe to a journal title or to purchase articles on request. Adams agreed that this sounds reasonable, but there is a degradation in convenience, to which Younger agreed.

Bender asked about the possibility of getting more money from the University. Younger responded that the Provost Office is trying to find add-on funds, and she anticipates some additional money, but it will not likely be sufficient to cover annual inflation costs for all journals. Bederman suggested that implementing cost sharing for document delivery of journal articles--one of the three options Younger had proposed for regulating demand for articles from journals to which the library does not subscribe -- would upset faculty but also make them more aware of the problem.

Weber suggested that we engage faculty at large in this conversation, articulating the facts, trends and outlooks. Faculty must feel the frustration and share their concerns with colleagues at other institutions. He stated further that this is a national issue and that the government should be involved. We must find ways to displace the leverage of the Big 5 journal publishers.

Bender suggested that we should write a white paper. Weber agreed but thought we should also hold meetings within the colleges. Rosenberg stated that in the College of Arts and Letters only departmental faculty meetings are well attended. He suggested that library representatives attend department meetings in each department. Others agreed that this is true of the other colleges as well.

Younger stated that she, David Smith, Gail Bederman and John Weber will be meeting with Cynthia Maciejczyk, the University's Director of Communications, Projects & Planning, to discuss communication between the committee and the faculty.

The next meeting was scheduled for March 18, 2004. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melodie Eiteljorge  
Secretary  
February 26, 2004