



U N I V E R S I T Y O F M I S S O U R I - R O L L A

UMR Library and Learning Resources Committee
Annual Report to Academic Council (Academic Year 2006-07)
September 14, 2007

*Submitted by Andy Stewart, Director of Library and Learning Resources
(Acting committee chair and Acting committee recorder)*

The UMR Library and Learning Resources Committee (LLRC) met twice during this academic year—in November and in March. No quorum of members was reached, with three members attending the first meeting and two the next. This low turnout occurred despite diligent efforts to choose mutually-convenient meeting times. This low level of interest is unfortunate, because the UMR Library spends \$1.3 million each year on books, journals, audio-visual materials, and related electronic materials—for the direct support of the educational, research, and recreational interests of faculty, students, and staff across the entire campus.

The LLRC members in attendance never elected a chair. Neither did they make any recommendation to the Academic Council (AC) concerning how future LLRC membership would be determined. Instead, members present chose to wait for the recommendations of the AC By-Laws Subcommittee.

The Library staff conducted an in-house user survey in November. In general, high levels of satisfaction were reported, with the lowest items referring to (1) the availability of recreational reading and (2) photocopier machines. See the attached set of slides for more results. Further information is available from the Library Director.

The Library staff went out of their way to remain open when the campus had power difficulties in November, December, and January. With the cooperation of UMR IT, temporary generator power was made available and basic public services (Circulation, Interlibrary Loan, and Reference) were continued.

The Library extended its open hours for 2-3 weeks at the end of both semesters—closing at 2:00 am (instead of midnight). Response was positive, especially during Dead Week and the first day or two of Finals Week.

UMR IT and Library staff have cooperated to re-locate the IT Walk-In Center (including office space for three full-time Tier II IT staff members) into the Library. IT funded the construction and equipment costs.

The Library Multi-Media Center (poster printing and more!) has also been moved into its own set of cubicle-wall furniture—adjacent to the Walk-In Center. To continue the changes along the west side of the Library First Floor, a coffee shop is being planned for the far northwest corner. In cooperation with Chartwells, construction is planned for completion during Fall Semester, 2007.

Library and IT staff have also cooperated on the Scholars' Mine—an “institutional repository” for UMR researchers and scholars. An incredible amount of behind-the-scenes cooperative work and planning has resulted in a fine product; improvements are continuing. A small number of new UMR theses and dissertations have been added; a large number of IEEE publications by UMR faculty members make up the bulk of the repository. Individual author's permission must be obtained before adding previously-completed theses into this repository of UMR work. Two new Library positions in support of the Scholars' Mine were approved by Provost Wray and Chancellor Carney. The hiring process for the Scholars' Mine Manager position is underway (Fall, 2007).

There is no Library presence in the ongoing UMR Capital Campaign. However, Library staff members (also in coordination with IT personnel) have begun defining an “Information Commons” project. Funding of this project is dependent upon future outside support, and the Library will rely heavily on the assistance of the UMR Development Office.

Entirely apart from the activities of the LLRC, the Library has purchased fifteen laptop computers for student use—two hours per checkout. This equipment has proven to be very popular and the Library is considering additional purchases.

Finally, a copy of an article from *EDUCAUSE Review* (January-February 2007) by Lynn Scott Cochrane is attached as Appendix 1. It cogently illustrates the tremendous value of centralized library funding and purchasing of materials.

The LLRC will be responsive to the Academic Council's wishes for its future make-up and structure. A significantly higher level of faculty interest in the work of the Library and Learning Resources Committee is desirable.

Appendix to UM-Rolla LLRC Report to Academic Council, 2006-07

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If the Academic Library Ceased to Exist, Would We Have to Invent It?

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Conventional wisdom among college and university students (and many of their parents) in early 2007 is that "everything needed for research is available free on the Web." Therefore, academic libraries are often viewed as costly dinosaurs—unnecessary expenses in today's environment. This idea is uninformed at best and foolish at worst. If college and university libraries and librarians didn't exist, we would certainly have to invent—better yet, re-invent—them. Here's why.

Let's imagine August 2010 at Excellent College (EC), a liberal arts institution of 2,000 undergraduates and 200 faculty. The college has decided to stop funding its library. Instead, it will give students a tuition rebate and give faculty a stipend representing their share of the annual amount that would previously have gone to support the library's collections, facilities, and staff—about \$2.7 million total. Each student and faculty member will get \$1,230. For now, the library building and hard-copy collections will remain in place, student assistants will keep the doors open, and custodians will clean the facility; but database subscriptions will be discontinued, and no other services will be provided. Since the college has a robust honor code, circulation of materials will be on the honor system. Students and faculty will now be on their own to secure the information resources they need to fulfill their responsibilities.

Prediction #1: Students and faculty will buy the necessities first. Students will spend at least \$600 of their annual "library" rebate on textbooks, and faculty will spend a comparable amount subscribing to the key journals in their disciplines and buying essential new monographs. Each student and faculty member now has \$630 for all other scholarly sources to support their coursework and scholarship, including journals, supplemental readings, databases, and media.

Prediction #2: Students and faculty will go to Google. For example, a third-year undergraduate, Sara, does a Google keyword search on her topic, "presidential libraries," and finds Web sites—the good, the bad, and the inadequate. She decides to try a Google Scholar search (on the Google home page, along with the shopping service Froogle). It returns journal articles and a few monographs in random order based on how many times they've been cited. Even with the Advanced Scholar Search option, Sara gets nothing but author, publication, and date range information. There are no controlled vocabularies or subject headings. Sara clicks on an ERIC document, which is no longer available because the U.S. Department of Education has closed its online service, but the back button will not return her to Google. She has to start the search over. There is no list of publishers included in the Google Scholar database. She gives up for the day.

Prediction #3: Students and faculty will go to the local public library. There they find collections of generic reference works: dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks (hard copy and a few online), popular fiction, popular magazines, and popular media (CDs, DVDs, videos). They find few, if any, scholarly journals, databases, or monographs.

Prediction #4: Students and faculty will go to the main library at Huge State University (HSU), twenty-five miles west. HSU has decided to stop supporting its libraries for the same reason that EC did. The book collections are good, but most of the books are already in use by HSU students and faculty under the honor system. There is no way to recall the books from the users, who are unknown. HSU's database subscriptions have been discontinued as well.

Prediction #5: Each student and faculty member will subscribe to one online database of general full-text resources, such as Academic Search Premier. Oops, that one is available only at the institutional level, so many will choose LexisNexis. An educated guess is that this database will cost between \$500 and \$700 per year, for a group of selected databases and less-than-comprehensive coverage of general sources. Then the student or faculty member will subscribe to one database in the major or discipline (such as Current Contents, where one subject subset has an estimated 2010 cost of \$2,700). Now, he or she is over the allocated budget, and the research will have to be funded out of pocket. Hmmm.

Prediction #6: Students and faculty will quickly realize they can generate lists of who's subscribing to what on campus, so they will be able to (illegally) share user IDs and passwords to gain access to more databases. They will create a database of who has which books. But by April 2011, they'll be too busy to maintain the database.

Prediction #7: The president of EC will have an urgent need for information on a 1974 alumna (and potential donor), as well as access to EC Board of Trustees minutes and to photographs of Beta Alpha Delta (BAD) fraternity. The president will be frustrated, however, because the college archivist disappeared along with all the other librarians.

Get the picture?

Here's a real-life, current illustration. The following is a testimonial written to a library director on February 21, 2006, from a faculty member in the Geosciences Department:

Just a short note to say thanks. I just downloaded an article through the library. I need the article for my research. I had previously inquired about getting a copy of the theme volume from which the article came. It costs a whopping \$1,200! So I appreciate being able to access information so easily through the library Web site. Thanks again!

This short note shows that the traditional library role of purchasing scholarly resources has not disappeared, but it has changed.

Let's assume that libraries had and will continue to have two basic roles: (1) to purchase published materials in all formats and make them easily available to users; and (2) to identify, preserve, and manage unique special collections and locally produced information resources and make them easily available to users. Let's further assume, based on the recommendation of several experts in library administration, that libraries should move to a fifty-fifty split of expenditure and time between these two roles. In other words, academic libraries should be spending approximately half their time and money on capturing, preserving, and distributing locally produced materials, such as scholarly monographs, essays and articles, research and project reports, artworks, photographs, analyses of fieldwork, documentation of campus events, alumni-produced intellectual property, correspondence, campus records, and minutes of the campus board of trustees. These materials are not and never will be available in the marketplace from vendors; they are the products of local efforts. EC currently spends little or no money on locally produced materials, other than on the college archivist's salary and a bit of binding. In the 2010 scenario, those costs would be well under \$100,000, compared with the almost \$1.2 million spent annually on acquiring readily available published materials. It may take a while to get to the fifty-fifty split that some of us think is appropriate.

Over the next decade (probably less), library leaders need to help those of us in academic libraries to reduce our focus on the publisher-driven model (role 1) and increase our attention and resources to the user-driven model (role 2). Then we can do what we've always done best: bring order out of the information chaos swirling around us. We will acquire, preserve, and direct users to quality published resources appropriate for academic purposes; but more important, we will acquire, preserve, and direct users to unique local materials not available elsewhere.

The next time a member of the EC Board of Trustees or of the community asks me why we spend so much money on a library these days when everything is on the Web for free, I'll hand him or her this little essay.

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