

Dear Librarian Cowell,

We are writing to you as faculty members from various science departments who are shocked to see how the print collection in the Science Library has shrunk over the summer, dwindling from a collection that occupied two floors to one that now occupies a fraction of one floor. Our understanding, which may be imperfect, is that a large number of books and journals have been either sent to NRLF or -- when copies are available in other UC libraries -- destroyed. We have problems with both the process and the outcome:

1. We are surprised that such a wholesale reduction of the print collection has happened without any effective notice to, or consultation with, the science and engineering faculty. While we understand that it is ultimately the administration's prerogative to decide how much space to provide to the print collection in the Science Library, there is far more extensive consultation even when parking fees are raised by a hundred dollars; the books in the library are much more directly related to the academic mission of the university, and their destruction is more irreversible. We question whether such a drastic reduction of the print collection was advisable, and how the priorities of faculty research collections and special collections were balanced.

Although books at the NRLF and other campuses can be retrieved quickly, their removal from our library is not cost-free: it prevents browsing, so that only people who know what they are looking for will have access to the book. This is particularly damaging for those students who do not come from an academic environment, such as first-generation students, who are enterprising enough to look through the stacks to find alternatives to a course textbook or topical monograph that they find useful (even if the instructor did not). We have heard that the library's response to this complaint is that browsing is still possible through your online catalog. Surely you understand that the meager description in the online catalog is utterly inadequate for this purpose; even Amazon.com, despite having book descriptions, ratings and reviews, increasingly uses "Look Inside" to allow people to view tables of contents and subject indices.

2. Even if it turns out that the magnitude by which the print collection was reduced was unavoidable, we are astonished that the items to be discarded were chosen by the library without any input from the faculty. It would be difficult for any of us to make such decisions on behalf of our departments, without advice from our colleagues, and we believe that the library staff have less professional expertise in our fields than we have. The list of books that were tentatively scheduled for removal should have been circulated to the science and engineering faculty, and books that were considered to be essential -- even if rarely used -- should have been retained.

3. We are dismayed to learn that books have been destroyed without any opportunity being given to faculty or students to save them. We understand that the library's response to this is that UC policy does not allow personal use of material by University employees. If it is indeed the case that this policy applies even when a book is being discarded, we think it is completely irrational. We would appreciate it if you could give us a reference to the policy, so that we can confirm that it does indeed force the library to destroy books it is discarding, and try to have this policy changed.

We have several objectives in writing to you. First, we would like the library to halt the destruction of books if it is still continuing, until and unless it is confirmed that this is unavoidable. Second, if the transfer of books to NRLF is reversible, we would like the names of books that have been transferred to be circulated to the faculty, so that any book that should have been retained can be retrieved. Third, we seek your assurance that major decisions by the library will only be taken after the relevant Senate committees and the faculty at large have been given sufficient time to comment, and their opinions have been considered; where professional expertise in academic disciplines is required, it should be recognized that this is the province of the faculty.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Anthony Aguirre, Physics
Alex Ayzner, Chemistry
Stephanie Bailey, Physics
Frank Bauerle, Mathematics
Robert Boltje, Mathematics
Rebecca Braslau, Chemistry
Frank Bridges, Physics
George Brown, Physics
Mark Carr, EE Biology
Phil Crews, Chemistry
Michael Dine, Physics
Alice Durand, Physics
Sandra Faber, Astronomy
Peter Fischer, Physics
Viktor Ginzburg, Mathematics
Howie Haber, Physics
Lindsay Hinck, MCD Biology
Tesla Jeltema, Physics
Robert Johnson, Physics
Kathleen Kay, EE Biology
Yat Li, Chemistry
Pradip Mascharak, Chemistry
Claire Max, Astronomy
Francois Monard, Mathematics
Richard Montgomery, Mathematics
Ruth Murray-Clay, Astronomy
Onuttom Narayan, Physics
Michael Nauenberg, Physics
Jason Nielsen, Physics
Harry Noller, MCD Biology
Scott Oliver, Chemistry
Ingrid Parker, EE Biology

Jarmila Pittermann, EE Biology
Donald Potts, EE Biology
Stefano Profumo, Physics
Jie Qing, Mathematics
Pete Raimondi, EE Biology
Art Ramirez, Physics
Jevgenij Raskatov, Chemistry
Hartmut Sadrozinski, Physics
Peter Scott, Physics
William Scott, Chemistry
Bakthan Singaram, Chemistry
B. Sriram Shastry, Physics
Alexander Sher, Physics
Andy Skemer, Astronomy
David Smith, Physics
Susan Strome, MCD Biology
Junecue Suh, Mathematics
William Sullivan, MCD Biology
Anthony Tromba, Mathematics
Martin Weissman, Mathematics
David Williams, Physics
Quentin Williams, Earth & Planetary Sciences
Stan Woosley, Astronomy

(Names added after the letter was sent)

Susan Carpenter, MCD Biology
Josh Deutsch, Physics
Bill Mathews, Astronomy
Torsten Ehrhardt, Mathematics
Longzhi Lin, Mathematics
John Faulkner, Astronomy
Laurel Fox, EE Biology
Suresh Lodha, Computer Science

Cc:

Chancellor George Blumenthal
CPEVC Alison Galloway
VPAA Herbie Lee
COLASC Chair Eileen Zurbriggen
COLASC Analyst Kim Van Le
Senate Chair Ólöf Einarsdóttir
Senate Director Matthew Mednick

Dear Professor Nielsen, Professor Narayan, and all those concerned:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your concerns. At this point, the consolidation of the Science & Engineering Library is complete. No more volumes are being removed as part of the project. 100% of the collection was duplicated across the UC libraries and beyond and is available either via interlibrary loan (ILL) or online. No titles were sent to NRLF as a result of this project. As part of the consolidation, we shared journal volumes with print archives around the country including the JSTOR, UC Shared Print, Journal Archives of California (JACS) and the WEST archives, from which they can be requested via ILL.

We collect extensive data about the use of the collection, both in house use, meaning books that we reshelfed that were not checked out, and circulation statistics. After an intensive analysis of the data, we did not see evidence of much in house use or circulation of the collection. For example, only 5% of the titles were checked out when the project started. We acquire less and less print in the STEM fields. The journal and increasingly monographic content most heavily used is online. System and user data tell us that a majority of students, faculty, and staff have discovered the most effective way to browse is through our online catalog or other online portals because they provide access to more content.

With regard to unique items, at the outset of the project, we moved all items from the Lick Library to Special Collections in McHenry Library. We felt the material was too valuable to remain in open stacks. We did not find any other unique material.

In terms of consultation, the renovation study from the architect was completed in December 2014. It included the concept of the consolidation of the collection, which I discussed with the Committee on the Library and Scholarly Communication in broad strokes because we did not yet have a sense of the details of the plan. Objections were not raised. I consulted with the Committee on May 26, 2016 and discussed the details and timeline of the project. I was not asked to hold off on the project. The Committee understood the acceleration of the project was driven by the dire lack of study space, loss of lounges in the Colleges and the increase in enrollment.

I met with the Physical and Biological Sciences Department Chairs on April 20, 2016, asked for feedback at the meeting and welcomed email comments. I did not receive any feedback at the meeting or email afterwards. I consulted with the Academic Deans, the Administrative Leadership Team, the EVC/Provost and Chancellor. When the timeline for the consolidation project accelerated at the end of spring quarter, Dean Koch sent an email to all department chairs and managers in the division (June 22, 2016) reminding them of the plan and timeline, and we received only one response from a faculty member in the division.

At the beginning of the project we created this webpage to inform people of the progress and completion of the project: <http://guides.library.ucsc.edu/generalcollections/sci-collections->

[project](#). We kept a news item up on the library homepage alerting constituents about all phases of the project. I understand that this process was different than the journal cancellation exercise we went through when our budget was significantly cut beginning in 2008. At that time we were actually losing access to online journals that were being used. In this case, the use data, pressing student need for space, continued access to content online and via ILL for materials that had not been used led to a different consultation process and accelerated timeline.

Had I heard significant concern, I would have addressed it. Having received none, I moved forward as planned.

I will always consult and respond to feedback.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "McCowell".

M. Elizabeth Cowell
University Librarian

Cc: John Bono, Associate University Librarian, Planning and Resource
Management Kerry Scott, Associate University Librarian, Collections and
Services