

January 10, 2019

UCSC Emeriti Association

Re: COLASC on Science and Engineering Library Collection Policy

Dear UCSC Emeriti Association,

In response to some recent questions about library policies posed by an article in a recent [emeriti faculty newsletter](#), the Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (COLASC) would like to clarify three major aspects of the 2016 Science & Engineering Collection project that were highlighted in Professor Emeritus Todd Wipke's brief article, "UCSC Science and Engineering Library Collection Demolition."

During Summer 2016, the Library created more space for a growing student population by removing duplicate and low use print materials from the Science & Engineering Library.

Wipke reports that "To keep this operation secret from the faculty even the library staff were not informed until the removal operation began." The description of Professor Emeritus Michael Nauenberg's records request in the same newsletter also states that the 2016 S&E Collection operation was kept secret from faculty and library staff. These statements are not accurate as the plan was not kept a secret. University Librarian Elizabeth Cowell and Associate University Librarian Kerry Scott met with several faculty groups including COLASC, the Physical and Biological Sciences (PBSci) Department Chairs, the Deans, and the Administrative Leadership Team during the Spring quarter before the collections were culled. In the approved COLASC minutes of [May 26, 2016](#), the plan was described as part of a goal to give students study space in which "materials on the ground floor will be consolidated and the second floor will have an open space. The Library is focusing their long-term efforts on student success due to the high attrition rate out of the sciences." The plan was furthermore described for the Library to "keep the titles that have been checked out within the last five years; they will also keep everything published in the last 5 years." The COLASC minutes continue with information that "for the 20% of titles that are unique to our library, [the library staff] are looking to see if the items are truly unique. If fewer than 10 libraries hold the item, they will keep it. They will check every de-duplicated title -- if it's not already in the regional storage facility, they will send it there....they plan to cull through the collection before the Fall quarter and the books will be recycled."

At this same meeting, COLASC members raised several questions about "whether books that are going to be recycled could be set out for interested faculty or students to take, for their own collections" and whether there was a way to "know which items were used in the library, without being checked out" as "some library patrons reshelve their own items and in that case, it would never be known that they had been used in the last five years." While the plan was not kept a secret, it could and should have involved more faculty, graduate student, and undergraduate input on determining what volumes to retain.

We believe that the library used a reasonable approach to assess which print materials to keep onsite, including utilizing in-house and online usage statistics and determining whether the title was either already available in storage or accessible through Interlibrary Loan. Rare and unique materials were moved to Special Collections. On numerous occasions, the librarians have expressed regret to COLASC about how the Science and Engineering Library collections operation was communicated to stakeholders. They have made great strides in improving communication and engaging faculty and graduate students in subsequent collection decisions. For example, the library is currently deciding on which electronic resources to prioritize as licensing costs have skyrocketed; they have created a robust survey that has been sent to all faculty with ample time for input. The survey was vetted with COLASC prior to being released to the faculty and graduate students. COLASC views these new approaches as important steps toward ensuring faculty input.

Secondly, the article maintains that “the volumes removed were sent to a shredder in direct violation of UC regulations about the disposal of excess library material.”

As far as COLASC knows, there are no specific regulations about the disposal of library materials in particular. Instead, there is a UC-wide policy on disposal of excess property in general: "BFB-BUS-38: Disposition of Excess Property and Transfer of University-Owned Property." In the case of the Science and Engineering Library, all materials that could be placed in shared print collections at UC storage facilities were sent there. However, in some cases, these facilities already had the materials and did not want additional copies. Although it may seem shocking, it is common for libraries to recycle excess material. Recycling the paper materials includes a shredding process. The UCSC library decided that this approach was the most cost effective, as it did not require staff time to sort out the books or oversee a giveaway. Moving forward, COLASC believes that it might be desirable to establish campus disposition procedures making it clear that recycling should be considered a last resort, and that materials should first be offered to relevant departments, for example.

Finally, the article brings up the specifications of the “secret plan of the S&E library”: “Originally the S&E library contained 55 stacks on this floor, today there are 34 stacks remaining, but the plan calls for only 9 stacks. Faculty do not know this! On the upper floor there were 60 stacks, now there are none and none on the main floor. The plan calls for none on those floors.”

The “secret plan” referred to is the Business Case Analysis of the S&E Library Renovation Plan. It is not a secret plan but a concept draft that is a common step in the initial planning of building renovations. It is also not an architectural plan. Moreover, the “nine stacks” shown in this document were never intended to represent any actual number of stacks: this is only a symbol showing an area where stacks may be placed.

The Business Case Analysis originated in 2014, when then-CPEVC Alison Galloway formed the Science and Engineering Library Renovation Committee. Service was requested from a variety of library and campus staff and student representatives, including a request to the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) for a member, but none was provided. So unfortunately, there was not faculty input into the BCA simply because the relevant committee did not provide a member, and not because of any secretive nature. The Business Case Analysis submitted to the chancellor was approved in February 2017, and reviewed by COLASC shortly after that; COLASC released a public response to the Business Case Analysis. Additionally, CPEVC Tromp commissioned an S&E Library Task force, which commented on space utilization in the S&E Library in a report: [S&E Library Space Task Force](#).

Going forward, the S&E library will solicit feedback about plans for the S&E library upper floor in Spring 2019 from faculty and other stakeholders. The plans to elicit feedback will be broadcast on the library web page. Currently, interested readers can go to the UCSC Library Web page, which has information about the S&E Library plans and the 2016 collection project:

[Science and Engineering Library Renovation](#)

[S&E Building FAQ](#)

In closing, we hope that we have clarified some of the issues surrounding the S&E Library. We feel it’s important to learn from the past, make appropriate changes and improve our communications and systems. We welcome input from all faculty.

Sincerely,

COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

Don Brenneis, Anthropology

Chris Chen, Literature

Brent Haddad, Environmental Studies

Justin Marion, Economics

Abe Stone, Philosophy

Karen Ottemann, Chair, Microbiology and Environmental Toxicology

cc: Robert May, Chair, Academic Senate
Council of University Librarians
Richard Schneider, Chair, UCOLASC
Caroline Kane, Chair, CUCEA
George Blumenthal, Chancellor
Marlene Tromp, Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
Kim Lau, Chair, UC Santa Cruz Academic Senate
Matthew Mednick, Director, UC Santa Cruz Academic Senate
Barry Bowman, Chair, UC Santa Cruz Committee on Emeriti Relations