

COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY

Annual Report, 2003-04

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

The Committee on the Library (COL) has worked on two main issues this year: 1) A resolution on publisher Elsevier, and the issues raised by this resolution; 2) electronic dissertations.

Elsevier and the cost of online access to journals

This year the Senate Committee on Committees bestowed its prestigious 'Dragon Slayer' award for the work of the Committee on the Library in drafting a resolution about the publisher Elsevier. The resolution (approved text attached) was drafted after COL heard UC University Librarian Dan Greenstein describe the near-deadlock in negotiations with journal publisher Elsevier. The resolution called on senior faculty to stop submitting, refereeing or acting on the boards of Elsevier journals if Elsevier failed to negotiate an acceptable contract with the University of California. The resolution passed without opposition. While academics at UCSF called for boycott of specific Elsevier journals, and other Library Committees publicised the high costs of journal subscriptions, UCSC Senate was the only Senate to act promptly to warn that academics would withdraw their labor. Elsevier returned to the negotiations with an improved offer and agreement was achieved at subscription rates significantly lower than had been threatened. In response, the call for senior faculty to cut their ties with Elsevier has been deferred. The contradictions of contemporary forms of 'scholarly communication' remain. Academics write, edit and referee articles at no cost for commercial publishers. The publishers then charge high prices for academics and universities to read them. At the beginning of the 2004-05 academic year, the UC system is again locked in negotiations with another set of journal publishers. COL will be dealing with this issue again in 2004-05. UCOP has established an Office of Scholarly Communication (<http://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/>), and the UC Academic Senate has formed a Special Committee on Scholarly Communications, chaired by Lawrence Pitts.

Digital dissertation submission

In its Annual Report 2002-03, COL proposed 'that the Graduate Dean and Graduate Council take up a pilot program for online submission and archiving of doctoral dissertations in the academic year 2003-04'. The Committee is persuaded that the rapid, global dissemination of research results offered by digital archiving would benefit the whole academic community. In addition, there are benefits of greater efficiency for students and the library, and some small potential cost savings. The committee discussed this issue several times in 2003-04 and the issue was discussed by the COL Chair with Graduate Council. The culmination of these discussions was a meeting on June 6th 2004, involving Graduate Dean Miller, Chairs of the Library Committee and Graduate Council, Acting Librarian White, and library specialists. At this meeting it was agreed that a pilot

program for digital submission and archiving of Ph.D. and Masters dissertations would be undertaken by selected departments under the auspices of the Graduate Division. It was expected that this pilot program could be arranged for this Fall 2004. That did not happen. COL will take up the issue again this academic year.

Failure of University Librarian Search

The Chair of COL reported regularly to COL on the progress of the search for a new University Librarian, and members of the Committee met all short-listed candidates. Members were disappointed to learn, in the final meeting of COL, that negotiations with chosen candidates had fallen through. The uncertainties arising from the resignation of the Chancellor and the Provost, and from the California budget crisis, contributed to the withdrawal of the excellent candidates. COL members urge the administration to start a new search without delay.

Respectfully submitted,
COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY
Peter Kenez
Gary Lease
Fredric Lieberman
Graeme Smith
Robert White, Interim Librarian, *ex officio*
Ben Crow, Chair

LAUC Representatives
Greg Careaga
Ken Lyons

November 1, 2004

TO: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division
FROM: Loisa Nygaard, Secretary
DATE: October 29, 2003 (emailed)
RE: Report of Divisional Action of Academic Senate, October 24, 2003

After an addition to the penultimate paragraph was proposed from the floor and accepted as a friendly amendment, the following resolution (AS/SCP/1405) passed by voice vote without opposition.

COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY
Resolution on Ties with Elsevier Journals

Facing a challenge to scholarly communication the University of California system faces a challenge in relation to the costs of online journal subscriptions. This challenge has two elements. First, in the immediate future, there is a real possibility that negotiations with one of the largest journal publishers, Elsevier (pronounced: El-Suh-Veer), will not be successful and the University may lose access to many of the 1,100 journal titles represented in Elsevier's Science Direct Online (SDOL) database. Second, these difficult negotiations are symptomatic of an underlying issue in scholarly communications: many faculty publish their papers in journals whose publishers are selling access to these papers at prices that are increasing much faster than inflation.

The immediate crisis: Elsevier

Elsevier's Science Direct Online is one of the largest online journal packages, and the University of California is one of Elsevier's largest customers. For several years, the UC system has negotiated collectively to gain access to Science Direct Online. There have been large savings from the use of the system's collective buying power. UC Santa Cruz has been a particular beneficiary from this arrangement, gaining access to a broader range of journals than it would otherwise have been able to afford.

Online journal charges have, however, been rising much faster than comparable prices, and Elsevier prices have been in the lead. Library acquisition budgets are increasingly being driven by unsustainable increases in journal prices. Elsevier's revenues and profits have been rising fast in recent years. Their profits were up 26% in the last year. Elsevier's prices are not proportional to the use of these journals made by UC faculty. Access to Elsevier journals costs the UC system 50% of its online budget, and use of these journals is only 25% of total online journal use.

UC Faculty members are important players in Elsevier's journals. 10-15% of the content is written by UC faculty, 1000 faculty are on the boards of Elsevier journals, and about 150 faculty are senior editors for those journals.

The University of California started negotiation with Elsevier seven months ago, seeking to establish a sustainable relationship with Elsevier. Those negotiations have not yet concluded but there is a chance they will break down if Elsevier is unwilling to price its product in an affordable way that avoids punishing annual price increases that are 2 or 3 times the Consumer Price Index rate of inflation.

Loss of access to Elsevier journals will have differential disciplinary impact. Some disciplines, such as biology and health sciences, make greater use of their journals.

Tackling the longer term issue

Alternative forms of scholarly communication need to be considered. The California Digital Library (CDL) has been pioneering new forms of publication including the eScholarship Repository. Through the CDL, the University of California also provides tangible support for new scholarly publishing initiatives that promise high-quality peer-reviewed content at affordable prices, including the Public Library of Science and BioMed Central.

Faculty action to retain intellectual property rights would also contribute to meeting the challenge. Authors can negotiate to retain certain rights, including the right to post their work in an institutional repository or distribute copies to their classes.

Resolution

Online access to scholarly papers is increasingly important to scholarly research. Such access would be jeopardized by a breakdown in negotiations between the University of California and Elsevier (Science Direct Online). Successful resolution of the negotiations is threatened by Elsevier's insistence on increasing its charges at a rate far exceeding inflation and to a level not justified by its relative utility compared with other online journal services,

Therefore, the UCSC Academic Senate resolves to call upon its tenured members to give serious and careful consideration to cutting their ties with Elsevier: no longer submitting papers to Elsevier journals, refusing to referee the submissions of others, and relinquishing editorial posts should the UC/Elsevier negotiations prove unsuccessful.

The Senate also calls upon its Committee on Academic Personnel to recognize that some faculty may choose not to submit papers to Elsevier journals even when those journals are highly ranked. Faculty choosing to follow the advice of this resolution should not be penalized.

Academic Senate Office
125 Kerr Hall
UC Santa Cruz
(831) 459-2086
(831) 459-5469 (FAX)
Website: www://senate.ucsc.edu