

Senate Library Committee

Annual Report

2000-2001

At the beginning of the academic year the members of the Senate Library Committee decided that the primary goal of the committee would be to raise funding levels for Kresge Library. The greatest concern of the members was the pattern of no increases in base budget funding since FY94. In addition, questions were raised concerning the transfer of allocated monies to the library for new programs.

During the fall semester members of the committee conferred with the Chair of the Senate Budget Committee and university staff members with direct knowledge of the budgeting process. These discussions did not yield a clear understanding of the budget priorities that would put Kresge Library in such a weak fiscal situation. For the purpose of clarification, we invited Provost Lou Esposito to discuss the status of the library at our December committee meeting.

During that meeting, Provost Esposito agreed that it was unhealthy for the university to continue funding Kresge Library at low levels. The provost also explained the anticipated schedule of decision making regarding the construction of the next university budget.

On the basis of information provided at the meeting with Provost Esposito, the committee decided to lobby aggressively during the next budget cycle. Frank Lepkowski provided a detailed comparison of Kresge Library and other peer and aspirant peer institutions. This comparative information succinctly demonstrated that Kresge Library was badly underfunded. With the assistance of the library staff, further information was gathered regarding growing utilization of the library resources. On the basis of this information, a report was compiled to be delivered to the University Senate on March 15, 2001.

The Senate's reaction to the report was quite positive. With minimal conditions, the Senate approved the Committee's three recommendations--that the base budget of the library be increased to compensate for library inflation rates, that no students be admitted into new programs before allocated library monies were delivered to the library, and that the library's budget be doubled by FY10. Provost Esposito identified Kresge Library as one of his top priorities for spending in FY01.

After the dismissal of Provost Esposito, the Senate Library Committee held an emergency meeting and decided to send an informational delegation to President Russi. That delegation consisted of the committee chair (Karen Miller), student representative (Vesna Saveski), and the president of student government (Derek Dickow). The group impressed on President Russi the necessity of expanding library funding, despite concerns over the State of Michigan's contributions to the university budget.

This final meeting culminated a year-long lobbying effort. The Dean of the Library has informed us that our efforts were successful. The base budget of the library was increased substantially and a new faculty position was allocated to the library.

[Members for 2000-2001 included: Karen Miller (History) Bruce Mann (English), Maria Bryant (Chemistry), James Dow (Sociology/Anthropology), Shawn Lombardo (Library), Ann Pogany (Library), Millie Merz (Library), Beth Kraemer (Library), Addington Coppin (SBA), Linda Pavonetti (SEHS), Judith Hovey (Nursing), Mohamed Zohdy (Engineering and Computer Science), Kristine Thompson (Health Sciences), Mike Ginger (student), Elain Didier (Dean of the Library), Ron Cigna (VPAA designee)]

Submitted by
Karen Miller