



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

SENATE

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Thursday, 5 December 1991
Third Meeting

MINUTES

Senators Present: Abiko, Appleton, Benson, Briggs-Bunting, Cass, Chipman, Cowlshaw, Cramer, Dahlgren, DeCarlo, Downing, Eberwein, Eckart, Edgerton, Frankie, Gamboa, Garcia, Gerulaitis, Goslin, Griggs, Grossman, Hansen-Smith, Hormozi, Kevern, Kleckner, Mabee, McKay, Olson, Otto, Rush, Russell, Schultz, Stamps, Stano, Stevens, Urice, Witt, Wood.
Senators Absent: Bennett, Braunstein, Campbell, Eisenhower, Fish, Halsted, Hartzler, Heintz, Hough, Hovanesian, Jackson, Kheir, Kim, Mittelstaedt, Peterson, Pierson, Pine, Porter, Reddy, Shepherd, Swartz, Wisz, Workman, Zenas.

Summary of Actions: Open forum on library collection development and information access policy and proposed changes (Kleckner, Frankie, Marks).

After waiting for the delayed arrival of an overhead projector and for late-appearing senators (some subtly concealed among the faculty members seated elsewhere in the Crockery), Mr. Kleckner called the meeting to order at 3:17 p.m. He set the afternoon's events in the context of previous Senate meetings that have been opened up to provide the university community a forum to consider issues of widespread importance. This session was intended as an opportunity for faculty members to learn about a problem that affects everyone. He then indicated the order of activities planned by library representatives, which would begin with today's Senate presentation, then move into assemblies and ultimately to department meetings as individual academic units make decisions about how each wishes to respond in its own fashion to necessary transformations in the ways we use the library.

Mr. Kleckner introduced the forum by sketching an outline of the problems we face. Now that two new wings have resolved the "outside of the library problem" that confronted us for many years, we face an "inside of the library problem" as we try to fill additional shelving. Because it is a relatively new university, Oakland faces the same challenge that greets many sister institutions: how to meet information needs by backing up to collect older materials at the same time we are going forward with timely acquisitions. Library holdings have been recognized as a consistent area of weakness in all Oakland's accreditation reviews: in fact, this was the one major problem spotlighted by North Central in our latest review. Five years after that event we face a focused visit intended to measure progress in meeting library needs. Although the recent capital campaign did much good, the university needs to build the base for improved regular funding of the library. Our appeals for increased state help for enhancement of library resources have not yet succeeded, so other means must be found. Even in this period of fiscal cutbacks, we have been shifting funds from other areas to increase the library

acquisitions budget by \$600,000 in steps over a three-year period. Substantial as this increase is, it remains wholly insufficient. He pointed out that it would be irresponsible to spend even a penny of this new allocation on any new journals or other continuing purchases, given escalating costs for maintaining serials.

To illustrate the inflation problem, Mr. Kleckner showed a slide that compared the cost of library continuations with the Consumer Price Index and the index of health care costs in the United States. As expected, all of these curves move steadily upward; but library continuations, with their average 13.6% annual rise, make even escalating health care costs look comparatively weak. Until now, Oakland has been trying to keep current journal subscriptions going, but that has meant that fewer and fewer dollars remain for book purchases. Very soon journal and other serial continuations will swallow up the entire acquisitions budget, if present trends continue.

The chair pointed out that we are not the only university facing this dilemma. Although North Central evaluators were unreceptive to major changes in library collection practices at their last visit, North Central has now come to recognize that library acquisitions pose a major problem for most institutions. Resolution of the problem entails coming to terms with a new idea of the library as an information service that offers information in multiple forms rather than as a repository of bound volumes. Before turning over the floor to Dean Frankie, Mr. Kleckner commended the efforts of library faculty members and the Library Council to find ways for Oakland University to take a leadership role by finding new ways to provide information access.

Ms. Frankie introduced her remarks by highlighting the central problem: "The library collection is not adequate to support the academic programs of the University." Beyond the difficulties Mr. Kleckner had identified, she noted other factors compounding our difficulties as we attempt to strengthen our collections. These include the sheer volume of book and journal production. At present, Oakland acquires only 21% of the book titles published annually in our own country and less than 1% of those published elsewhere. of approximately 66,000 journals, we receive only about 2,400 (less than 4%). Given the pressures entailed in keeping up with print culture, she anticipated that libraries would turn to electronic means of distributing information.

Comparing Oakland University with other academic institutions, the dean reminded the community that our problems are far from unique. In fact, we are better off than many institutions whose troubles have been publicized in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Ours is the only academic library she knows of that has not canceled journal subscriptions since the 1970's. Even the nation's largest research libraries have diminished their serial subscriptions in recent years, and most intend to make further cuts. Michigan's public universities have also been reducing library expenditures. We cannot avoid major changes ourselves.

Grappling with the question of what Oakland can do in the face of such pressures, Ms. Frankie argued that we must make some fundamental changes in our strategies for meeting information needs. "It is totally unrealistic," she declared, "to pretend that we can meet your needs and your expectations simply by buying more books and more journals for our collections." Consequently, library faculty members and staff, consulting with the Library Council and the academic administration, have developed a plan that sets forth principles and guidelines for focusing our limited library resources. She offered copies of the plan to all who

might be interested. It is based on an understanding now becoming widespread in academia that libraries must function differently in an electronic era. No longer simply repositories of printed information, libraries "are evolving into information utilities, which provide access to information wherever it is located" by way of reciprocal borrowing agreements such as OCLC and DALNET. Oakland will be increasing its use of such services and entering into improved agreements with Wayne State University for on-line access to their materials. She assured her colleagues that library faculty are "committed to decreasing delivery time for books to two to four days maximum, and for journals to several hours." She also reported that Michigan's publicly supported university libraries have recently completed a feasibility study for the development of a statewide resource sharing network. Rather than trying to build duplicate collections, libraries will serve as utilities for providing access to knowledge.

So far as information ownership by Oakland is concerned, the plan sets two priorities for decisions about collection development. First priority goes to "materials that support Oakland's curriculum, particularly undergraduate programs and high-enrollment graduate programs." The intent is to build a well focused "core collection" defined as "a collection that is adequate to impart and maintain knowledge about a subject in a systematic way but at a level of less than research intensity." The second priority goes to acquisition of "materials that are urgently needed and highly used by our faculty and by students in lower-enrollment graduate programs."

Needs not included in these two priority areas are to be met in other ways that represent major advances over familiar interlibrary loan services in point of speedy delivery and convenience of use. Our library will introduce such services this January on a limited basis, initially available only to faculty. The dean projected that, "re-allocating some of our funds now used for collection development to buying these kinds of services will greatly improve our capabilities to meet faculty needs, particularly for information published in journals." She projected that, since scholars frequently seek specific articles rather than an entire run of a journal or even a whole volume, most needs can be met by rapid provision of articles on a demand basis. In effect, electronic media are unbinding journals whose traditional printed-book format represents a convenient packaging strategy but not necessarily the best means of delivering information. Given that the average cost of journals to which Oakland's library currently subscribes is about \$200 (not allowing for costs associated with housing, binding, and shelving them), she thought information could be more economically provided by spending \$10 for the average article that someone here actually needs. Decisions about which journals we still ought to collect should be based on cost-effectiveness. In any case, she promised timely access to all needed materials.

Dean Frankie announced that she and her colleagues would work closely with faculty to ensure widespread understanding and acceptance of plans for collection development and access. She then reviewed the projected four-year budget plan for these purposes, showing that increases are projected in overall expenditures, book acquisition, and information access services so that the university can improve the adequacy of its library service without draining all resources for serial continuations. In the short run, however, Oakland must join other universities in the doleful process of reducing journal subscriptions. The collection development plan call for a reduction of \$217,000 next year and an even larger cut two years hence, if inflation rates remain this high. Overall, the plan sets target expenditures for the total materials budget at 65% for journals and other continuing commitments and 35% for one-time expenditures such as books. She stressed, however, that there is no intent to force every discipline into one Procrustean bed. She hoped our library could reach the desired general ratio in 1994/5, after

which we will evaluate its adequacy. Meanwhile, librarians will be working with each academic unit to figure out how best to meet its needs. She recognized that some departments place heavy reliance on journals while others are more concerned about books. Without serious efforts to curb escalating journal costs, however, there would soon be no money in our budget to buy a single book.

The final point Ms. Frankie addressed was the question of how cuts will be allocated among disciplines. She admitted that neither Oakland nor the profession at large has yet discovered a perfect formula to match the number or cost of journal subscriptions with faculty and student use, but her colleagues have been exploring various options. The Library Council is still deliberating on this problem. She then summoned the Council's chair, Professor Charles Marks, to report from that body's perspective.

Professor Marks indicated that the Library Council has been talking with the dean about these issues since 1990 and that it had reviewed and commented upon several versions of the collection development plan. The Council has been generally supportive and urges university-wide communication about the plan's purposes and principles. Although endorsing the plan, the Council has been unable as yet to approve any specific formula for allocating reductions among academic units. Nonetheless, it recognizes the need for such a decision and is continuing its work.

By way of offering an example of how academic units can deal with the cutbacks in journal subscriptions they will be asked to make, Mr. Marks reported on the deliberations of his colleagues in the School of Health Sciences. On their first review of a list of continuing subscriptions, they came-up with a longer list of journals no longer used or greatly needed than was necessary to effect specified savings. As a result, the library can accede to the request of one program director that money saved beyond their target be spent to acquire books her students need.

Dean Frankie then returned to explain how librarians would meet soon with faculty assemblies and then work with individual academic units to figure out ways of reducing journal expenditures. Departments will be provided with lists of journals now being ordered for their use and given information about costs and inflation rates for those publications before being asked to evaluate each in terms of criteria based on overall collection development priorities. A composite list based on first-run departmental decisions will be distributed in March for final review by the community as a whole. Actual cancellations will take effect in January 1993. Meanwhile, the library plans to initiate its articles on demand service this coming January so that people can satisfy themselves that new provisions for information access will suffice.

Ms. Frankie then raised the final issue of accreditation impact. How will our 1994 North Central visitors judge our new system? She reported that she and Mr. Appleton visited North Central staff recently and found the university's program officer "most understanding." So long as Oakland's library can demonstrate that it meets its patrons' needs, there should be no accreditation penalty for initiating new methods to ensure access to information. Her expectation is that the library will succeed in doing "a much better job" by implementing these changes in a thoughtful, carefully evaluated way. Pledging her staff's commitment to "working with all of you to ensure that our collections and our services more than adequately support Oakland's academic programs," she opened the floor to questions and discussion.

Mr. Kleckner, resuming the chair, thanked Ms. Frankie and Mr. Marks for their informative presentations. He called attention to the great amount of planning already devoted to this process and indicated that the next task is to carry the work down to school and department levels.

Mr. Stern launched the question period by acknowledging the seriousness of the problem but wondering about the efficacy of semi-bureaucratic solutions. He pointed out that his own department, whose journal collections are the university's most expensive, no longer really needs the library at all now that its members have found other means of locating information. At this point, Mr. Sevilla interrupted: "Wait a minute. I think we can discuss this within Chemistry." Mr. Kleckner pointed out that choices to be made would occur at the departmental rather than College level. Ms. Hansen-Smith understood Mr. Stern's point to some extent, recognizing that science people already pay for a great deal of information out of their own pockets. Nonetheless, she expressed concern about points of usage overlap among academic units, hoping that the general good would be considered and not simply departmental priorities. Ms. Frankie assured her that the whole faculty would be given the chance to review a composite list of projected changes before any vendors are notified. When Mr. Russell inquired how usage of non-circulating journals is recorded, the dean said that some surveys had been conducted but admitted that we do not yet have good data on this issue.

Mr. Hansen-Smith wondered if any thought had been given to establishing departmental libraries housing a nucleus of important journals (assuming space could be discovered), something Mr. Kleckner said the Eye Research Institute already does very well. In such cases, faculty members make their own subscriptions available to the rest of the department. He regretted, however, that no funds exist for building and maintaining such departmental libraries. He projected that electronic exchanges of information would eventually reduce such needs. When Mr. Stano asked whether there is any ethical way to capitalize on the discrepancy between what it costs for an individual to subscribe to a journal and what it costs the library, Mr. Kleckner replied that sometimes arrangements can't be made (comparable to site-licensing of software). The dean, however, stressed the university's commitment to behave ethically rather than capitalize on loopholes.

Ms. Eckart, speaking as a teacher in the School of Education, saw real advantages in preserving her students' opportunity to browse through journals. For faculty members also, she considered it an advantage to be able to leaf through bound volumes. Mr. Kleckner and Ms. Frankie pointed out that the plan provides for collecting journals likely to be widely used by students.

Trying to look at the global picture, Mr. McKay wondered whether journals would not be required to raise their prices drastically in response to widespread cessation of subscription by academic libraries. Ms. Frankie shared his concern but suspected that the future of the scholarly journal as we have known it is likely to be limited. Technology increasingly allows scholars to communicate in alternative ways. When Mr. McKay asked about copyright fees for electronically reproduced articles, Ms. Frankie said copyright charges would be incorporated within new services and fees specified on printout. This discussion prompted another participant to inquire who would pay for the new services such as articles by request. Ms. Frankie reported that faculty use would be subsidized by the library up to a point. When asked what would happen if thirty students were sent on pursuit of an article on request, she admitted that no plans exist for assisting students in this way. They would probably continue to

use interlibrary loan, although she hoped departments would make sure the library continues to collect journals students most often need. Students will also benefit from improved usage privileges at other academic

Accreditation concerns led to another question: Did the visiting team cite specific areas of library weakness that must be corrected? Mr. Kleckner said that it had not. The main concern is whether we can meet faculty and student needs. One reason why Oakland University has consistently encountered this problem with North Central reviews is that our faculty members are accustomed to first-rate libraries and know how to use them. Our own high expectations drive this process.

Mr. Goslin inquired about the startling discrepancy between journal inflation rates and the Consumer Price Index, wondering whether the problem would not simply recur with new systems. Ms. Frankie, admitting incomplete command of economics, hoped pressure could be exerted by professors who contribute to journals and use them. Mr. Kleckner mentioned that the small audience for specialized publications leads to high costs. Mr. Tracy added to this the paradox that many journals that moved their production activity to Europe in order to save expense now incur stupendous increases in mailing costs in addition to currency changes that make purchases from Europe more expensive.

Ms. Muir reported that her unit went through such an exercise about three years ago. They offered many journals for cuts and requested that a few new ones be acquired. She wondered whether these changes had yet been made and expressed dismay at the possibility that faculty members would be unable to request any new journals. The dean assured her that departments could still do so if the additions fit their budgets.

With respect to governance protocol, Mr. Russell asked whether the collection development plan had yet been formally approved. He detected a discrepancy between the dean's report and that of the Library Council, which seemed still to be holding back its blessing. Ms. Frankie responded that the collection development guidelines and policy had already won approval; although the Council continues to search for an equitable formula for allocating cuts to academic units on the basis of some fair mix of enrollment, usage, and cost.

Mr. Sevilla then inquired what would happen if a unit chose to cut journals dramatically. could it then trade these for greater electronic assistance? Ms. Frankie said that it could. Mr. Kleckner indicated that the goal is to wind up with more money in everybody's pot. Ms. Benson then asked how the system would provide for wide cost discrepancies between journals in various fields. Mr. Kleckner assured her that those discrepancies are being examined by persons trying to see what balance makes sense for Oakland University. This is the problem now engaging the Library Council. When no additional questions arose, Ms. Garcia drew the discussion to a close by requesting copies of materials that had been discussed. These, being readily available, were then distributed. With the forum thus productively concluded and no formal Senate business to transact, Mr. Kleckner adjourned the session at 4:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane D. Eberwein
Secretary to the University Senate

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