University of Tennessee Health Science Center
Library Advisory Committee
Minutes
October 20, 2010

Present: Dr. Paul Gregory, Hannah Henson, Dr. Trevor McKibbin, Dr. David Nutting, Dr. Linda Pifer, Dr. Tom Singarella, Larry Tague

Absent: Dr. Jacqueline Burchum, Danielle (Dee) Helton, Wyenona (Nona) Hicks, Dr. Charles Mansbach

Dr. Nutting (chair) called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. and welcomed the group. He requested that each person introduce himself/herself and state their areas of responsibility. The role of the Library Advisory Committee (LAC) and the format for meetings were discussed, and members were encouraged to take appropriate committee information back to their constituent group.

Dr. Singarella welcomed the committee and thanked them for their willingness to serve on the LAC. He provided an overview of the Health Sciences Library, including the library budget, journal and database inflation, collection resources, and services. Over the past three years, the library lost 25% of collection subscriptions due to no funding to cover the inflationary cost of journals, databases, and e-book series. Last winter the library projected inflationary increases for 2011 journals and databases at ~8-12%.

Because the library FY 2011 budget would not have a funding increase to cover the inflationary cost of the collection, last spring the library started another campus-wide survey concerning subscription cancellations. From this, library Electronic and Collection Services developed a list for journal and database cuts totaling ~$150K. Selecting the titles for cancellation was based on cost, usage, and the input received from campus faculty, staff, and students via the cancellation survey and Web page. But fortunately, the library received a last-minute reprieve from having to make collection cuts.

The Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs, informed the library that she would make available FY 2010 year-end money to offset publisher inflation if the library could prepay some 2011 titles before the end of the last fiscal year. Therefore, the library secured pro forma invoices from vendors and publishers and, when possible, prepaid select journal titles and databases. As a result, the library did not make wholesale cuts of 2011 titles. Although money was made available to cover the inflationary cost of journals and databases via prepayment for 2011 titles, recurring money was not added to the library’s base budget; thus the library may face an interesting budgetary situation in spring 2011 when again faced with publisher-mandated inflation for 2012 titles and electronic databases.

Dr. Singarella discussed the future economic situation and the contingency planning by the library to prepare for additional budget cuts should journal and electronic database inflation increases not be covered next year, since these are projected to increase again.
The library is constantly seeking ways to obtain optimal financial deals with publishers. This past year the library entered into an arrangement with UTK for an Elsevier ScienceDirect three-year contract that allowed the library to purchase more journal titles at lower cost per title to benefit the UTHSC research community. The library has entered into several arrangements for joint purchasing of electronic resources with other UT campuses and consortia (e.g., TennShare). The Library Resources Development Committee is constantly exploring new electronic databases that may enhance the educational, clinical, and research activities of various departments and colleges. Low-usage journals are discontinued and new journals are added that support the campus mission. New biomedical databases are constantly being developed by publishers and vendors and considered by the library to meet campus needs. For example, a new EBSCO dental database recently became available, and Paul Gahn (electronic services librarian) will be bringing this to the attention of faculty in the College of Dentistry when he presents to them as part of the library outreach liaison effort. Creative means to fund new resources are being explored, as new databases are quite expensive.

The reduction in library workforce was discussed: the loss of three positions/people in August, plus two vacant faculty positions and one staff position last January. It has been challenging to keep the library open during posted hours because of losing an evening staff position, but it is important to support campus students who heavily use the library on evenings and weekends. Staff working hours were adjusted to keep the library open during posted hours; however, it will be challenging to do so in the future.

Two mission-critical positions became vacant this past year, and the library was given permission to fill them. The open position of head of Electronic and Collection Services (due to the departure of Matt Grayson) was discussed, and a national search has just been completed to fill that position by January 2011; the position of Electronic Services Librarian was filled this past summer by Paul Gahn.

Personnel, library services, communications, the campus outreach liaison program, and the facility were discussed, including library security issues and library safety.

The importance of the library as a student study place and as a repository of print materials (books and journals) not available online in digital format was discussed. The number of students using the library remains constant. Although most faculty want cutting-edge research and clinical information delivered online to their desktop, the library as a place for student learning and study remains important.

Mr. Tague asked a number of questions concerning accessing digital resources, publisher agreements, cost of databases, library IT, and related issues.

Dr. Singarella discussed the work of the Space Reallocation Committee to free up space on the 5th floor that will be used for students. He has requested time on the SGAEC agenda to discuss student input into the development of study space on the 5th floor.
The historical collections were discussed including possible plans for showcasing parts of the collection in the future. Dr. Singarella discussed the various special collections and the plan to digitize the Bruesch Physicians’ Card File that includes historical information on practicing physicians in Tennessee, an effort being coordinated by Richard Nollan.

Dr. Nutting asked the committee for questions, comments, or suggestions they would like to share about the library. Mr. Tague suggested that the library make available LAC-approved minutes via the library server. Dr. Nutting asked about the relocation of library servers to IT, and this was discussed. He stated a concern that one of the main entrance doors to the Alexander building remains locked (with no crash bar for emergency exiting), and questioned why this door could not be unlocked when the building is open; Dr. Singarella indicated that this is the purview of the Campus Police.

Dr. Nutting thanked the committee and encouraged members to attend the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 15, at 2 p.m. in the Library Conference Room (#230).

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Singarella, Ph.D.
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