

UC Davis
General Library Observations Related to
“The Library in Crisis”

Preface

February 2009

The General Library of the University of California, Davis, is a major educational and scholarly resource, operating as an integral part of the University while recognizing obligations to a wider public, particularly the people of California. In this context, our mission is to collect, preserve and provide access to books, journals, manuscripts, documents, and other records of knowledge held in an ever expanding range of print and digital media in support of University research, instruction, patient care, and community outreach. The unit priorities which enable this mission are:

- Maintain the strength of library collections,
- Provide effective access to scholarly resources in and through library facilities,
- Continually improve and monitor efficiency and scale of resource sharing,
- Provide state-of-the-art systems which make interaction with the library easy and convenient, and
- Maintain and enhance an effective user assistance program.

We acknowledge the important work of the 2008 UC Davis Academic Senate’s Library Task Force. In addition, we greatly appreciate the support that Task Force members have demonstrated regarding the Library as a key resource for the UC Davis community.

Our review of *“The Library in Crisis”* document has identified discrepancies in data use and interpretation. As a result, we draw some different conclusions than the Task Force members. This document highlights those major differences.

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Introduction

The Task Force used the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) annual publication: *ARL Statistics*, as a resource in presenting comparison statistics for UC Libraries. It is essential to note that the annual ARL statistics publications begin each edition with a caveat that is applicable to this discussion, **“The tables presented in this publication are not indicative of performance and outcomes and should not be used as measures of library quality. In comparing any individual library to ARL medians or to other ARL members, one must be careful to make such comparisons within the context of differing institutional and local goals and characteristics.”**

While we participate in the annual ARL surveys, we are mindful of the fact that the survey results must be viewed in the context of each library’s local environment, and that these data should not be used as sole measures of library quality.

Corrected ARL data show that not every UC library has either maintained or improved their rankings since the 1990s. Indeed, all UC libraries experienced a decrease except for UCI, UCR, and UCSB which maintained its rank at 75. Actual rankings between 1993/94 and 2005/06 are as follows:

LIBRARY	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
UCB	2	2	4	5	5	5	4	3	3	3	4	6	4
UCD	35	34	35	36	38	38	37	38	40	46	46	53	50
UCI	84	84	70	72	74	73	67	61	60	54	65	82	49
UCLA	5	3	3	2	3	6	8	7	8	7	5	8	7
UCR	107	107	101	100	107	102	104	99	96	98	94	93	90
UCSD	40	41	36	43	43	46	42	42	42	41	41	39	41
UCSB	75	63	63	60	61	69	80	75	75	68	60	81	75

If the analysis is taken out to 2006/07, only UCI and UCR show an increase.

LIBRARY	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
UCB	2	2	4	5	5	5	4	3	3	3	4	6	4	4
UCD	35	34	35	36	38	38	37	38	40	46	46	53	50	58
UCI	84	84	70	72	74	73	67	61	60	54	65	82	49	66
UCLA	5	3	3	2	3	6	8	7	8	7	5	8	7	8
UCR	107	107	101	100	107	102	104	99	96	98	94	93	90	92
UCSD	40	41	36	43	43	46	42	42	42	41	41	39	41	44
UCSB	75	63	63	60	61	69	80	75	75	68	60	81	75	87

The Library in Crisis document failed to remove law libraries from their librarian FTE count for UC Davis. A corrected table follows:

Year	FTE Librarians	FTE Staff	FTE Students	Total FTE
1991/92	66	204	64	334
2002/03	54	170	66	290
2003/04	54	157	64	275
2004/05	55	150	57	262
2005/06	58	154	54	266
2006/07	52	144	70	266

Budgetary Decline

As University Librarian Marilyn Sharrow stated in the Fall 2008 issue of the *UC Davis Library Perspective*, “As in all areas of the University, the Library has been greatly challenged by reduced budgets over the past few years. Our focus and our commitment is to meet the needs of our faculty, students, patient care professionals, and staff. We have prudently set aside unencumbered and gift funds to create a reserve which can be directed toward the acquisition of, or access to, an array of research material that supports broadly diverse and interdisciplinary academic programs.”

University Librarian Sharrow called upon UC Davis faculty, staff, and students to contact their librarian subject specialists to discuss their specific library needs (<http://www.lib.ucdavis.edu/ul/about/directories/subjspec.php>). The library subject specialists are the primary liaisons to library constituents. Some of the specific issues depicted in this report could have quickly been resolved by the library subject specialists, e.g. *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*.

A Library for a Diverse Campus

UC Davis features a larger number and variety of disciplines when compared to other UC campuses. The campus budget to support that number and range of academic programs is challenged. UC Davis has a strong emphasis on laboratory intensive science. (Reference the November, 2006 ORMP Issue Report, “*How does the level and type of science instruction at UC Davis compare with other UC campuses? or, how “sciency” is UC Davis,*”). This report states, “In recent years, the gap between Davis and other campuses has diminished somewhat as Davis has experienced relatively less growth in laboratory intensive science while the growth in this area of other campuses has increased.” Thus, the percentage of the UC Davis campus’ expenditures devoted to the library when compared to other UC campuses must consider the findings in the 2006 ORMP Report mentioned above before concluding that the library proportion should be larger.

In addition, as a part of its study, the Task Force compared the amount of Library expenditure per full time student enrollments for several universities and concluded that the UC Davis Library is “not getting sufficient funds to serve the diverse needs.” When reviewing the table

found in “*The Library in Crisis*” Report, it is important to include the full range of data from the 2005-06 ARL Statistics, Analysis of Selected Variable of ARL University Libraries rather than selecting a few universities for comparison. The range is from a high of \$5,750.32 to \$423.37 with a mean of \$1,179.22 and a median of \$889.19. The UC Davis figure is \$630.

Examples of Disciplinary Perspectives:

The Task Force report presented several subject specific scenarios which described perceived inadequacies associated with library’s services and collections.

Enology:

Because the Shields Library is the only library in the United States that has a Viticulture and Enology (V & E) collection rated at the most comprehensive level, RLG Level 5, there is a strong commitment by the Library to process these materials in a timely fashion as they are ordered. There is no backlog of current imprints. A collection of pre-1880 wine pamphlets is being cataloged based on the processing priority assigned by Viticulture & Enology bibliographer. This project should be completed in early 2009. In addition, the V & E materials in the Special Collections Department will be cataloged based on a priority assigned by consensus between the V & E bibliographer and the Head of Special Collections.

History:

The Task Force stated that, “Lack of funding is making it difficult for scholars in book-oriented disciplines to keep pace with scholars at other research universities. Scholars in these disciplines find that they are increasingly unable to do their research in a timely manner because the Library is increasingly unable to buy books. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the Library is even ceasing to acquire standard reference works --that is, works to which one routinely refers graduate students, and are the foundation for research. For example, U.C. Davis's Library does not have *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2006).”

During the transition to a new approval plan vendor in 2006/07, titles that we would have received automatically were missed completely. While every effort was made to ensure that all subjects were adequately covered, some areas may have been missed. When librarians learned of missing titles, they were ordered immediately. Upon the Library’s receipt of this report on 10/1/08, an order was immediately placed for *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*.

The Task Force Report indicated that the Library’s ILL service took too long for a UC Davis scholar to receive several major books. The Library supplied the most recent 6 years (2002/03 – 2007/08) worth of ILL use statistics at the behest of the Task Force. In addition to the data supplied, the Library supplied the 2005/06 volume of ILL borrowing requests processed by 7 UC campus libraries, including UC Davis. These data place UC Davis Library in line with peer libraries, UC Irvine and UC San Diego.

TOTAL Items Borrowed (ILL)	Campus
22,374	UC Berkeley
29,978	UC Davis
29,287	UC Irvine
34,529	UC Los Angeles
17,511	UC Riverside
29,220	UC San Diego
32,628	UC Santa Barbara

The task force stated that they had received some clear quantitative evidence of a lack of funding based on information provided by one of the Library's subject specialists.

Review of the Library's expenditures does not support this claim. The following table shows an overall trend of increasing use of discretionary funds in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Fiscal Year	~ Total Humanities and Social Sciences' (H/SS) Expenditures	~ Total (H/SS) Expenditure of Discretionary funds (firm orders)	Discretionary Fund Expenditures as a % of Total Expenditures
2002-2003	\$2,130,000	\$389,000	18.3%
2003-2004	\$2,061,000	\$279,000	13.5%
2004-2005	\$2,010,000	\$311,000	15.5%
2005-2006	\$2,076,000	\$475,000	22.9%
2006-2007	\$2,102,000	* \$601,000	28.6%
2007-2008	\$2,164,000	\$477,000	22%

* One-time increase due to change in approval plan vendors creating an unexpected need to do firm orders.

Government Information and Maps

The Task Force felt that they would be underserved because of the Library's recent reorganization of government information and maps. The primary Government Information/Maps librarians are still accessible for reference assistance. They are available for one-on-one appointments in a number of locations within the Shields Library (reference desk, lower level public services desks, individual offices). It is not unusual for government information service to be located on several different floors within the Shields Library and in our sciences library buildings. The movement of government information staff's work space does not

take away from access to their specialized knowledge. When necessary or desired; government information collections will be moved in support of relevant reference services.

Currently we have microfiche/microfilm collections representing a variety of subjects placed on the Shields Library lower level. These are placed there because, structurally, the weight of the heavy housing cabinets must be on the ground level. The federal documents librarian is expected to assist a patron on the lower level just as the political sciences librarian would. Also, it is important to note that the majority of print-based government information in the physical and health sciences are housed in the Physical Sciences & Engineering Library and the Carlson Health Sciences Library buildings and served by the librarians at those locations. Service standards are expected to remain the same regardless of the location of government information and its formats.

We believe it is important to remember that the role of government information within academic libraries has evolved over the years. This is not a question of value; all involved believe that government information is an absolutely necessary resource and is found in all disciplines.

In 2005, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) held a symposium for library practitioners and administrators to respond to the U.S. Government Printing Office's (GPO) strategic vision on digital content management as it affects government information. The UC Davis General Library sent representatives to this symposium as did other UC libraries.

The historical model at UC Davis, and elsewhere, was to have a separate desk and a staff dedicated to government information. This belied the reality that this information is located in every collection and in every library on campus. Government information and the supporting reference services are found within the Blaisdell Medical, Carlson Health Sciences, and the Physical Sciences & Engineering Libraries, as well as in the Humanities/Social Sciences and Biological/Agricultural Sciences departments. As government information has become increasingly available digitally (98% of current government documents are distributed in electronic format), there is no longer as great a need to house and to process materials in a separate government information only department. Other major libraries have made changes to how they house and service government information. A recent poll of UC libraries showed the following:

1. A majority of UCs has integrated the work into the regular reference and technical services operations (UCB, UCLA, UCSD, UCI, UCM, UCSF).
2. UC Santa Cruz does not have a separate service desk, but there are staff who are devoted exclusively to handling the acquisitions and cataloging functions for government information.
3. UC Riverside (merger under consideration) and UC Santa Barbara still maintain separate reference service desks and separate processing units.
4. All UCs have librarians designated as subject specialists for government information in combination with other subjects. This is in line with the ARL "Future of Government Documents in ARL Libraries" symposium in 2005.

Summary

The General Library holds millions of print volumes and journals on our shelves and provides efficient access to an extraordinary amount of research, teaching, and patient care-related materials online. Strong bonds have been forged over the years with faculty and our highly skilled librarians and staff. We look forward to continuing that tradition as our librarians partner with new and continuing faculty to assist them in their scholarship and research.

As the UC Davis General Library celebrates 100 years of service to faculty, staff, and students through our services, collections, technology, and facilities, we look forward to working with the Task Force and discussing their concerns.