

September 13, 2012

Carla Hesse (Dean of Social Sciences), Co-Chair
James Midgley (Professor, School of Social Welfare), Co-Chair
David Bates (Professor, Rhetoric; Director, Center for New Media)
Paul Courant (University Librarian, University of Michigan)
Kinch Hoekstra (Professor, Political Science and Law)
Margaretta Lovell (Professor, History of Art; Chair of Senate Library Committee)
Molly van Houweling (Professor, Law)
Geoffrey Nunberg (Adjunct Professor, School of Information)
Panos Papadopoulos (Professor, Mechanical Engineering; Co-chair, Senate CAPRA Committee)
Hilary Schiraldi (Head, Thomas J. Long Business Library), Staff to the Commission
Gary Sposito (Professor, College of Natural Resources)
Philip Stark (Professor and Chair, Statistics)

Re: Commission on the Future of the UC Berkeley Library

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Commission on the Future of the UC Berkeley Library, jointly sponsored by the Administration and Academic Senate. The Commission will be co-chaired by Dean Carla Hesse and Professor Jim Midgley, with staff support being provided by Hilary Schiraldi.

UC Berkeley possesses one of the great university research libraries in the country. During the past twenty years, however, the services, acquisitions, and stature of our Library have been challenged by successive waves of budget cuts to the University and steep increases in the cost of acquisitions. At the same time, changes in technology, scholarly communication and research modalities, and student study habits, have challenged us to rethink the shape of research libraries, the ways in which they deliver content and services to faculty and students, and the trade-offs involved in sustaining the affordability of a high-stature research library. This is not only a local problem. University libraries throughout the country have faced analogous challenges and budgetary imperatives. A number of informative studies and reports have been produced by individual research universities and by national organizations, addressing the kinds of challenges that UC Berkeley faces. The leadership of our University Library has been wrestling with these issues for years. But the last time a comprehensive look at these issues was undertaken was in 1997-1998. It is time that a campus-wide task-force took another look.

Charge:

The Commission on the Future of the UC Berkeley Library is charged with assessing the current state of the Library with specific focus on: the extent of holdings and shared interlibrary resources (both print and electronic); the rate and scope of acquisitions; the efficiency of administrative operations; and, the quality, range, and types of services provided to faculty and students. The Commission is further charged with holistically envisioning the desired future mission of the Library with a tentative horizon of twenty years and with the imperative of supporting Berkeley's academic preeminence. As possible, the Commission shall identify the administrative, infrastructural and other resources necessary for the Library to fulfill the proposed

mission in a financially responsible and sustainable manner, and in light of the experiences of other university libraries nationwide.

Issues to address should include:

Services

1. How best to make scholarly materials available to campus users.
2. How best to create and staff spaces for the research and study habits of current and coming generations of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates.
3. What basic suite of Library services should every faculty member be able to count upon?

Staffing

4. How to maximize the contributions of highly-skilled curatorial staff to the shaping of our collections.
5. Can some branch libraries do as well with alternative staffing structures?
6. Have we exhausted the potential of a division of (collecting) labor with other Libraries external to Berkeley?

Technology

7. What difference has the California Digital Library made for meeting the research needs of our faculty and students?
8. Can the Google initiative, or a national initiative for an open-access digital library, meet needs of our faculty and students and reduce our collections costs accordingly?

Finances

9. Given that resources are not unlimited, where to concentrate the investment of currently available resources.
10. If the Library's expense budget were augmented by \$3 million per year, how would such funds best be spent?
11. How large a budgetary reserve should the Library sustain?

The Commission should consider the recent experiences of other major research institutions in reinventing their approach to campus libraries. It should also examine national reports on this challenge, as at:

SLASAC Library Planning Task Force report:

<http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/planning/taskforce/>

California Digital Library Review:

http://www.cdlib.org/services/project_planning/docs/CDLReviewMay2011.pdf

University of Chicago Library Reorganization:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/about/>

Education Advisory Board 2011 report – “Redefining the Academic Library:”

<http://www.educationadvisoryboard.com/pdf/23634-EAB-Redefining-the-Academic-Library.pdf>

The Commission should also examine the current "Re-Envisioning" project being undertaken by the UCB Library and the results of the survey returned by some 4,000 respondents from the Berkeley campus community (http://lib.berkeley.edu/AboutLibrary/re_envision.html).

The Commission is asked to seek input from a wide range of constituencies on campus, including, but not limited to, undergraduate and graduate student representatives, the University Librarian and other stewards of the UCB Library, the Director of the California Digital Library, and senior campus administrators responsible for budgetary and information-technology affairs.

The Commission is asked to present a realistic vision for the UCB Library by mid-March, 2013. The Commission's co-chairs will work with you to outline a plan and timeline for your work. You will be contacted shortly to schedule the first meeting for the Commission.

Sincerely,



George W. Breslauer
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost



Christina Maslach
Chair of Academic Senate

cc: Chancellor Birgeneau
Chief of Staff Phyllis Hoffman, Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
Vice Chair, Academic Senate, Elizabeth Deakin