

Library Advisory Committee at LSU

End of Year Report 2019/2020

FROM: DR. GUNDELA HACHMANN, CHAIR OF LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO: DR. MANDI LOPEZ, PRESIDENT OF LSU FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Date: May 13, 2020

The committee resumed its work in the late Fall of 2019. Elections were held on Dec 2, 2019. Dr. Gundela Hachmann was elected Chair, Dr. Tracy Quirk Vice-Chair. The committee met monthly throughout the spring semester.

The activities of the committee fall into three major areas of concern

- Research support
- Funding of the library
- Open Access Publishing

1. Research Support

- a. The recent changes to the subscription to electronic journals administered by Elsevier were at the center of the committee's work. The final legal arrangements to the substantially slimmed down subscription package occurred during the Spring semester and the Dean of Libraries, Stanley Wilder, as well as his assistant, Lois Kuyper-Rushing, provided regular updates on the progress. The committee monitored the developments, particularly with respect to the new expedited Inter-Library-Loan service covering the research material from journals that are no longer included in the subscription. In April, Dr. Wilder was able to report that the demand for articles from these no-longer subscribed to journals declined by less than 1% compared to the previous year. Committee members utilizing the expedited ILL report waiting times of 20 minutes. These first pieces of data suggest that the decision to cut costs by limiting the Elsevier subscription to 197 critical journals was successfully implemented and has only a slight negative effect on the overall availability of research materials. The library will continue to assess its data and adapt to the needs on an annual basis.
- b. The discussions about the availability and waiting times for research materials also unearthed the rather sobering fact that there are wide discrepancies at LSU for researchers in the Sciences, Social Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and those who work in the Arts and Humanities. Due to the slimmed-down Elsevier subscription about \$650,000 are available to meet more needs in these (mostly monograph-focused) disciplines, but the Dean of the Library concedes that decades of budget cuts have reduced LSU's spending on Arts and Humanities publications to a level substantially below that of peer institutions. The effect are extensive waiting times of up to 2 weeks and lack of access to critical databases in these fields. The library spends only about

\$300,000 annually on monographs, while SEC peer institutions spend well over \$1,000,000. Dean Wilder encourages the committee to bring this discrepancy to the attention of administrators. The Committee Chair has been working on a statement to this effect, but the recent disruption to campus life due to the stay-at-home order has hampered progress.

- c. Copyright specialist Darcee Olson presented to the committee her service offerings for consultations on copyrights and author contracts. Her services are underutilized by the LSU community. The committee recommended several outreach strategies for Dr. Olson to make her offerings more broadly known on campus. The committee specifically recommended that she present to the entire Faculty Senate (which she since did), and that she contacts the various graduate student organizations on campus. An emphasis on outreach to and support of graduate students was deemed important.
- d. More general, the committee reviewed the report *LSU Research Success @ LSU Libraries* by the consulting company Athenaem21 from November 2019. The report highlights both the need to develop the libraries collections and to make existing services more broadly known in the research community at LSU. Among other things the library is planning to overhaul its online presence. The committee will serve as sounding board for new designs. Again, the need to communicate with and reach out to graduate students who can greatly benefit from these services was highlighted.

2. Funding of the Library

- a. The changes in the Elsevier subscription free up about \$650,000 for this year's budget which the library will use to develop its collections by subscribing to new newspapers (such as the Chronicle of Higher Ed), journals, and monographs.
- b. Dean Wilder was not able to discuss the expected changes to the budget for the FY 2020/21 yet, although budget cuts are likely to occur.

3. Open Access Publishing

- a. Copyright Specialist Darcee Olson gave a presentation on best practices and models for Open Access Publishing. Numerous institutions of higher education in the US have a policy in place that encourages researchers to make research findings openly available whenever possible within the legal limits of their author contracts. The committee is considering such a policy for LSU. The item has been placed on the agenda for the first meeting of the Fall 2020. The committee will collect ideas and recommendations and plans to present them to the Faculty Senate (possibly, but not necessarily, in the form of a resolution).

Questions/Request to Executive Committee

- Dr. Jeffrey Perry accepted the position of Associate Dean at the College of Music and Dramatic Arts and resigned from his service to the Library Advisory Committee. Please fill the open position.
- Committee welcomes recommendations from FSEC on how to proceed with report items 1b. and 3a.