

**Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Committee on Libraries
Action Summary / Annual Report 2000-2001**

Traditionally the chief function of LIBR has been to serve as a channel of communication between the Senate and the Library, and between the Senate and the campus administration on library matters. During the past decade, owing to frequent turnover in senior library positions, drastic fluctuations in funding, rapid technological changes (including the emergence of the California Digital Library), major physical alterations (such as the building of the Gardner Stacks and the displacements resulting from seismic-reconstruction projects), and the activities of a Blue Ribbon Committee and several Task Forces, the priorities of LIBR have had to shift from year to year. Certain recurrent themes, however, continued to demand its attention in 2000-2001.

Planning.

A melancholy *leitmotif* in various reports by this committee and by past University Librarians has been that significant campus planning decisions tend to be taken without adequate consideration of their implications for libraries or their users, and without adequate consultation of librarians or LIBR. This year, LIBR was informed that two professional schools contemplated restructurings of their libraries that would result in substantial reduction (and in one case virtual elimination) of the space currently allocated to books and periodicals. In one instance, assurances were given that any further pursuit of the subject would take into account the University Librarian's concerns about rehousing affected materials, and the needs of users from outside as well as within the school. In the other instance, involving the Public Health Library, LIBR scheduled one of its meetings in Warren Hall, where it was given a tour of the existing library and (with two members of the Public Health faculty) discussed the "store-front" model proposed for the new library. Quite apart from the inherent drawbacks of the proposal—which LIBR regarded as greatly outweighing its potential advantages—our committee was troubled by what appeared to be the Dean's inattentiveness toward the views of his own faculty, not to speak of the larger community of users of this valuable resource. Although the ultimate fate of the Public Health Library is unresolved, LIBR strongly endorsed DIVCO's peppery letter in April to the Executive Vice Chancellor on the subject of the Warren Hall replacement, and particularly its insistence that any committee on the subject include library representation.

In response to a draft version of the *New Century Plan* presented to CAPRA early in the academic year, LIBR objected that it tended to mistake the nature and underrate the importance of libraries. For instance, "class labs" and "faculty research" spaces were assigned highest priority, as enabling the "instruction and research" activities that are fundamental to the campus's mission, whereas "libraries" were relegated to a second, ancillary category of "academic support." The distinction between "class labs" and "faculty research" spaces on the one hand, and "libraries" on the other, seemed to our committee a false and invidious one; our contention was that the role of libraries (particularly in the humanities and social sciences) is equivalent in all essential respects with that of teaching and research laboratories in the natural sciences, engineering, etc., and must therefore be accorded the same status in the planning process. (Our committee was not so utopian as to urge that they be given the same level of actual support).

Other developments hold promise for more active, timely participation of the library in campus planning decisions. University Librarian Leonard proposed that librarians become non-voting "delegate"-members of four Academic Senate committees: Student Affairs, Teaching, Research, and Computing & Communications. (LIBR already had such a library member, and its longstanding practice of inviting Associate University Librarians and other senior administrators to its meetings, depending on the agenda, continued this past year.) Besides furthering the principle of shared governance, such arrangements seem to LIBR desirable because they will help to ensure that librarians, and faculty members interested in library matters, will be alerted to—and possibly even have influence upon—campus developments affecting them before they have become *faits accomplis*. And we are confident that Leonard's own appointment as UL will facilitate and extend the library's involvement in planning processes: between him and his faculty colleagues there is no distance to be bridged, and he is ideally equipped to improve communication and understanding between the library and the campus administration. Some of his predecessors have been hurt, offended, or otherwise demoralized by being made to feel that they were "out of the loop"; it is important that this not happen again.

Specific Planning Topics.

Long before the mini-flood caused by a defective sprinkler in the Bancroft Library the night of March 5th, LIBR knew that our most valuable collection is housed in a building in dire need of seismic upgrade, not scheduled to begin before 2007. Although damage on this occasion was limited, it indicated that the Doe Annex is vulnerable to other risks besides earthquakes, and at its April meeting LIBR instructed the chair to express in the committee's annual report its grave concerns about the building's infrastructure problems. On July 9th, however, Director Faulhaber of the Bancroft was informed by the campus Capital Budget and Planning office that seismic work will begin in 2004. From one point of view this would seem excellent news, for which we should be grateful; yet the new schedule scarcely allows sufficient time to make necessary preparations, particularly if there is to be a capital campaign to fund all the non-seismic alterations and improvements that should be undertaken as part of the same total project. The accelerated timetable therefore presents a serious challenge to Bancroft, incoming Library Committees, and the campus. In the course of the year LIBR followed with sympathetic interest the vicissitudes of several other projects, such as the Music Library (on which construction is to begin in 2002) and the East Asian Library (part of a larger East Asian Center, for which funding is not yet complete). LIBR supported a further project under consideration in Doe, to reconfigure the old Subject Catalogue Hall on the second floor as a reference area linked to Graduate Services and the North Reading Room.

Information Literacy.

This subject was brought to the attention of LIBR by UCOL, and AUL Iannuzzi provided commentary on relevant documents she had co-authored for the Association of College and Research Libraries (available at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/infolit.html>). LIBR learned that the object of this movement is not only to improve students' techniques for identifying and locating sources of information, but also to increase their ability to evaluate and interpret it critically. While supportive of the library's formal and informal teaching efforts in this area, LIBR was resistant to a proposal (emanating from UCOL rather than the library) that all undergraduates be required to take a course on information literacy.

Ongoing Business.

LIBR monitored the progress of the Workgroup on Access to Collections, and the implementation of recommendations by the task forces on undergraduate and reference services. The reestablishment of a core undergraduate collection in Moffitt, as advocated by the task force, may occur eventually, but the current dedication of the second and fifth floors to other pressing library needs makes this uncertain.

Staff Support.

Early in the Spring semester staffing responsibilities for LIBR were transferred from the Academic Senate office to the Library. The committee has been able to function much more efficiently, thanks to the very capable Gail Ford. The agendas and minutes of LIBR meetings are produced promptly, accurately, and articulately by Ms. Ford, and they are available to everyone interested at its website (<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/LIBR>), which Ms. Ford established and maintains.

The chair of LIBR during 2000-2001 was George Starr, author of this report.