

Approved

Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Committee on the Library

2020-2021 Annual Report

In fulfilling its charge as established in the bylaws of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate, the Committee on the Library (LIBR) carried out the following activities during the 2020-2021 academic year:

Our work began last fall with the news of a major budget cut to the library due to the pandemic crisis. This has unfortunately become a familiar story during times of budget woes, and the library committee was quick to advocate on behalf of the library for a smaller cut through its voice on CAPRA. Given the relatively healthy reserves of the library, however, the full amount of the original cut was maintained, and the reserves were tapped to fill the gap. This underlined the importance of philanthropic support in maintaining the excellence of the library, and the committee agreed that it was time for the faculty to promote its own program to raise funds for the library. The meetings of the fall semester dedicated regular discussions to the Faculty Friends of the Library initiative, and after a unanimous vote in support of the idea, a letter was sent out in the spring to all faculty on behalf of the Faculty Senate and University Librarian. It recommended an annual commitment of \$1000.00 for full professors, \$500.00 for associate professors, and a first book or piece of research for assistant professors. While the first response in the spring was underwhelming, it nonetheless got the ball rolling, and the committee agreed that an annual appeal will be a part of the work of the Faculty Library Committee going forward. It will also be important that the committee work with the library to make sure that the donor portal has a specific option for donations made on behalf of the Faculty Friends.

The importance of philanthropy for the library notwithstanding, the committee also expressed hope that the better budget projections for the coming year will also result in cuts being restored and funding increased for the sake of maintain our collections and staffing levels that have already suffered considerably over the past fifteen years. Although there was hope that the new open access agreements with academic publishers would provide some financial relief for the collections budget, the early evidence is that the new model will be budget neutral. Thus, funding the collections, staff, and physical buildings of the library needs to be a core priority of the university administration going forward.

The issue of the physical spaces of the library emerged later in the academic year as a growing concern when the University librarian reported on the loss of shelf space because of renovations in Moffitt, and the loss of a number of libraries in recently, or soon to be, demolished buildings. The committee agreed that in the coming years, it hopes to contribute to the discussion over library space on a more regular and substantial basis. It feels that faculty participation in building decisions is an important role of the library committee and urges the future chair to bring that perspective to relevant meetings of CAPRA.

Finally, late in the spring semester, the committee began to discuss the large issue of the evolving nature and role of the library in university life in the 21st century. How, for example, can the spaces of the library serve as centers to build intellectual community,

while also advancing the individual research pursuits of faculty and students? How can the university encourage greater use of the library and avoid the substantial number of students who claim that they never set foot in the library in their entire college career? What kind of additional events, courses, programs, and academic or cultural activities can be planned to draw people into the great spaces of our libraries? There is a sentiment among at least some committee members that our libraries are an underutilized treasure, and that the faculty committee can play a role in helping to shape a bolder vision for the library's future.