

Library Committee Report to The Faculty Council on Serials Cancellation 1998-2000.

A. The problem.

- Ed Shreeves and Sheila Creth made the presentation to the Committee. Costs of serials has been rising annually, and the projected cost of those serials currently purchased will exceed funds available in the Library Budget by up to 15% in the next two years.
- As 75% of the journal budget goes to the sciences, those disciplines will bear the proportionate bulk of the cancellations.
- The Library has begun the process of deciding which serials are to be cancelled by consultation with faculty through their departments and DEOs. The Library will strive to cancel titles in a way that will create the least disruption in teaching and research. Usage patterns, frequency of title citation in UI professors' works, price history, indexing access, and availability from other sources will also be factors in the decision.

B. The discussion. Through our discussion with Ms. Creth and Dr. Shreeves several things became very clear.

- These cuts primarily affect the use of the library for faculty and research graduate students. The library is to be commended for seeking faculty and administrative input concerning the immediate cuts. Nevertheless these cuts raise long term issues which must continue to be of central concern to the faculty both as researchers and as teachers.
- The sciences and engineering have suffered most from the huge price tags placed on their journals.
- Since they will bear the brunt of serials cuts now and in the future, faculty and graduate students from these disciplines must be thoroughly informed of the implications and they must be involved in the long term planning for strategies for deciding on library purchases.
- We cannot reasonably expect the budget problem to be solved by future increases in the library funding.

Strategies reviewed:

- Electronically accessed journals. No cost benefit can be anticipated from any future shift to electronically accessed journals. Those private publishing concerns principally responsible for the large increases in journal prices (60% and higher since 1994 in biology and engineering) are not going to charge less for electronic access to their journals. Moreover, once we subscribe to journals through purely electronic means, cancellation of a title may become even more devastating, as for many titles it will mean the loss not only of current and future issues, but also of access to past issues since there will be no print copy of such journals on library shelves.
- Coordination of serials orders with other Regents' Universities, or with other CIC universities. Coordination with other institutions in purchasing journals may present some legal difficulties related to possible restraint of trade. In addition, the time-factor involved in the inter-Library loan process could make some printed journals virtually

useless to those who are not on the campus where the subscription is held. Again, electronic access is not the answer. Though electronic journals will of course be able to be accessed immediately by any user however remote, the subscriber to that journal will undoubtedly be required to pay for the increased number of users. It cannot be supposed that the cost will be significantly less in comparison with the cost if each of the affiliated libraries subscribed.

- Redirection of funds to serials from other sections of the library budget. This does not appear to be a responsible solution with regard to the other major sections of the budget: monograph acquisitions, branch libraries, staff, or maintenance

C. Recommendations

The effects of uncontrolled increases in serials costs, largely from a few private publishers, has gone beyond the point of vaguely affecting the university community. Our libraries as resources and as depositories of knowledge are being relentlessly degraded, and there is no end in sight. The publishers can make these cost increases without fear of losing subscribers only because the university community has become so dependent upon publications for dissemination of academic work and for evaluation of work for tenure, promotion and grant decisions. In the meantime, the academic community has established no means for controlling the excessive profits that are being made on faculty work. Academic libraries are helpless, caught in the middle. Faculty are the producers of the material published, and they are the consumers of it. It is the faculty that bears the greatest responsibility for action, but the administration and the regents must offer necessary assistance to the faculty to accomplish anything significant.

The recommendations fall into three categories.

1. Actions recommended for the faculty.
2. Actions recommended for the Administration.
3. Actions recommended for the Regents and possibly the legislature.

Faculty

- We recommend that the faculty keep itself informed through the library of the price and the publishing company for all the journals that are purchased for their disciplines.¹ We recommend strongly that faculty take subscription price into consideration when they decide:
 - which journals to keep and which to recommend for cancellation
 - where to submit their own articles
 - when and under what circumstances to accept "service" tasks, like peer reviews.
- We recommend that faculty should support those journals whose pricing practices are fair and reasonable. Senior faculty bear the greatest responsibility in this, since they have the greatest clout with publishers. Private as well as non-profit publishers depend entirely upon the credibility of the peer review to maintain their reputation for quality. Senior faculty above all are the source of peer reviews, and their decisions should be

¹ The Pew Report, forwarded to the Library Committee by Ed Shreeves, has a thorough examination of the options available to faculty in regard to this matter. For further information, see: <http://www.arl.org/scomm/pew/pewrept.html>

informed with regard to the consequences to the libraries of allowing private publishers to name any price they wish for the distribution of scholars' work.

- We recommend that faculty, *especially in the sciences and engineering*, should be encouraged to press their scholarly associations to produce quality journals at a reasonable price. The University of Iowa Libraries are currently exploring an effort by the Association of Research Libraries to support publications by scholarly societies (SPARC). This should be used and encouraged. Competition is a most effective means of influencing the market. It is also the best protection for junior faculty, for if they have acceptable venues that have distinction within their discipline they too are able to resist publishing in excessively priced journals.
- We recommend that faculty begin to act to retain the copyright of their articles and that departments, schools and colleges support the faculty in this effort. The administration needs to offer them the support of legal advice and information (see below). All faculty must be informed on their rights, the alternatives available to agreeing to give up copyright to a journal in their field, and to every degree possible protected against publishers who will reject an article on no other basis than refusal to grant copyright. The university has experience with helping faculty retain control in the patenting and development process. Though the university budget benefits less directly from the protection of copyright, nevertheless, a reduction or even a leveling in serials costs will provide much to keep this university competitive, and allow it to turn any increase in resources to new investment rather than to keeping up with impossible increases in the library budget. Problems and solutions to those problems need to be publicized within the university community and between university communities.
- We *strongly* recommend that the Faculty Council set up a meeting similar to that held at Purdue between Elsevier Publishers, the FC and representative faculty from the disciplines that Elsevier serves. Elsevier alone receives about 10% of the library serials budget. Such a meeting may have positive results in Elsevier's practices, but most importantly it puts on record the support the faculty have for the University of Iowa Libraries in the great difficulties that are presented by the extraordinary and impossible demands the cost increases make on the library budget. *For guidance on how such a meeting has been successfully structured, we have attached a copy of a report on the meeting held at Purdue.*

Administration

- We recommend that the Administration support the faculty efforts to confront this issue. In particular, we strongly recommend that:
 - the Administration begin exploring with university lawyers the issue of "restraint of trade" with the view to establishing the right of the libraries of the Regents Universities, the CIC, and any other university libraries to coordinate their purchasing of serials, monographs or any other materials.
 - the Administration make legal advice on copyright available to faculty.
 - the Administration facilitate the dissemination throughout the university of successful solutions and alternatives to giving up copyright.

The Regents and the Legislature.

- We recommend that the Regents be informed of the actions the faculty and administration are taking, as a continuing process in our mutual efforts to maintain and even improve the excellence of the University of Iowa libraries.
- We recommend that the Regents should develop strategies for resource sharing among the Regents' Universities. Without their leadership, coordination will be more difficult.

Above all, we recommend an on-going and vigorous discussion of the issues by the all bodies representing these groups.

Respectfully submitted,

Carin Green (Classics), Chair
Bob Boynton (Political Science)
Jennifer Carr (UISA)
Mario Duarte (Undergraduate Academic Advising)
Mike Flanigan (Internal Medicine)
Judith Harris (UISA)
Laura Holt (UISA)
Rebecca Johnson (UISA)
Palle Jorgensen (Mathematics)
Jay Semel (Obermann Center for Advanced Studies)
Katherine Tachau (History)



COMMITTEE ON
INSTITUTIONAL
COOPERATION

January 6, 1998

To: CIC Members

From: Roger G. Clark, Director *RC*

Subj: Negotiating with Elsevier

University of Chicago

University of Illinois

Indiana University

University of Iowa

University of Michigan

Michigan State University

University of Minnesota

Northwestern University

Ohio State University

Pennsylvania State University

Purdue University

University of Wisconsin—
Madison

Bob Ringel has suggested that I share with you all the enclosed report from Emily Mobley to the library directors in the Association of Research Libraries and Bob's cover letter to me, concerning recent conversations between representatives of Purdue University and Elsevier Science. I am also enclosing a follow-up story from the December 29 *New York Times*. To place these items in context, a typical CIC library spends \$500,000 to \$800,000 annually on Elsevier's journals and monographs in the biological, physical, and social sciences and has been absorbing price increases averaging approximately 16% per year during the 1990's. Although all the individual CIC libraries and the CIC Center for Library Initiatives continue to speak with Elsevier, Purdue is in the lead among us in conversations with them and may be able to break ground that is useful to all. The meetings described herein seem to have been very constructive, and there are hopeful signs that they may prove to have been productive as well. (There are also signs in their corporate positioning that aren't so hopeful. As Emily says, we'll see.) If you have any questions you might want to contact Bob, Emily, or Barbara Allen.

RGC:skw
enclosures

cc: Library Directors
Barbara Allen *[Signature]*

PURDUE UNIVERSITY



ROBERT L. RINGEL
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

December 22, 1997

Dr. Roger Clark, Director
Committee on Institutional Cooperation
302 East John Street, Suite 1705
Champaign, IL 61820-5698

Dear Roger:

Recently, Emily Mobley invited Russell White, President of Elsevier, to the Purdue campus to discuss with Steve Beering and me the problems of the steeply increasing costs of subscribing to scientific periodicals. Our discussion was quite cordial, but the Purdue administration was emphatic in its expression of concern that we could not keep up with the escalating costs without making severe cuts in other parts of our total fiscal operation. Even our faculty are now urging us to pay more attention to other aspects of the infrastructure of the University with full recognition that the library must take its turn as a "victim" of inflationary costs which outrun our various sources in income.

Subsequent to our meeting, Emily Mobley reported to the ARL directors about Mr. White's visit to our campus. As you will quickly see, White suggested an arrangement between Purdue and Elsevier that would guarantee a cap on costs while at the same time providing access to all of Elsevier's publications. Unfortunately, the increases for the Elsevier plan would obligate Purdue to increase costs of approximately 16-1/2% per year over the next years. Such a program of cost increases even while controlled in growth is quite honestly beyond the reach of Purdue University. With Emily's permission, I suggest that you share the attached document with the other CIC provosts and heads of libraries. I believe they will be interested in knowing the thoughts of Elsevier as it organizes its response to complaints about escalating subscription costs. Also, if you think it helpful, you may include a copy of my letter to you for distribution.

Best wishes for a pleasant holiday season,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Bob".

Robert L. Ringel

Attachment

RECEIVED

DEC 29 1997

COMMITTEE ON
INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

Report sent to ARL Directors, 12/15/97

I thought you might be interested in a report on a meeting which was held at Purdue University with Russell White, President of Elsevier, at our invitation. Mr. White met separately with our President and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs, and with 14 members of the faculty as a group. The genesis of this meeting was a report by a faculty committee which recommended that university administrators at the highest levels should meet with like representatives from the publishing industry to express the University's concern about continually escalating serials pricing and the effect such actions were having on scholarly communications. This recommendation was one of several, including one to immediately cancel \$600,000 in serials. We chose to concentrate on Elsevier because in the last academic year 27% of Purdue's total serials dollars went to this one publisher and in the last six years, our Elsevier expenditures increased by 151%.

Mr. White presented the same proposal to all parties including me. This was the "standard" proposal – access to the electronic versions of all of their titles for 7.5% over print costs in the first year; 9% increase in each of the next two years with a no cancellation clause; and 10% discount for electronic version in lieu of a print subscription. He stressed the value of this proposal because we would have access to titles we didn't currently have (more information for the same price, in his terms) and we would avoid the high increases caused by dollar devaluation. He stressed that Elsevier was taking "a risk" on currency exchange. He talked a lot about the Ohiolink contract and by virtue of his conversation seemed to suggest that this was the model of choice for all.

I was not, by choice, in the meeting with the President and Executive Vice President, but I understand the message he was given was not much different from that which he received from the faculty, a meeting that I facilitated. The faculty gave him the following points to consider:

1. The symbiotic relationship which faculty have had with commercial publishers is breaking down due to the pricing policies of publishers.
2. Commercial publishers seem to have forgotten that they do not produce the content which is sold and the content producers can choose to go elsewhere.
3. Having access to more information (more titles) is not that important because if those titles were important to us in the first place we would be subscribing to the print version (note: our interlibrary loan records bear this out).
4. It is critical that electronic serials be linked at the article level to indexing sources, particularly Current Contents or Web of Science, INSPEC, COMPENDEX, MEDLINE, and Biological Abstracts; an index which Elsevier is developing is not important and a waste of resources.
5. The issue of currency exchange, particularly in the case of the dollar and the gilder is a "crock." (One faculty member read him the value of the gilder over a seven year period and noted the years when there should

have been a negative increase. It came out during this discussion that in essence the dollar was being used to stabilize the prices for all currencies meaning U.S. subscribers were paying for all currency devaluations.)

6. Prices of titles are unnecessarily high. (One faculty member who is an editor of a society journal which is priced at \$230 without page charges questioned why a similar journal covering the same discipline with a similar number of annual pages would cost four times more.)
7. Elsevier's experience with Ohiolink is but one model and each state has a different culture or tradition in university support, so what worked in Ohio will not work in Indiana.
8. To guarantee a 9% annual price increase means that cuts must take place elsewhere because this amount exceeds general inflation, the amount that the University would likely receive from the state. The faculty as a group stated that they would neither ask nor support a request that such an increase be given priority over other needs in the University. However, a proposal which had a 3% guarantee would be given serious consideration. (The faculty had heard rumors that some Ohio libraries were having to cancel other publications in order to meet the mandated Elsevier increase.)
9. The next time serials were cut, it would be Elsevier titles because publications from scholarly/scientific society publishers would be protected.

After this meeting, my Associate Dean who is responsible for collections, and I met with him. I came away from this last meeting wondering if he had heard anything which was said during the six hours of meetings. I reiterated the points, which I'm pleased to say, were consistent at all levels of responsibility in the University. I did receive a letter from him in which he stated that Elsevier would be working with ISI to provide article level linking and that he was preparing a proposal for me which takes into account the information he learned here. We'll see! One other interesting point was made – that there's no reason why additional print subscriptions for the same title needed to be priced at the same rate as the first copy and he would look into better pricing. Purdue, even after a \$600,000 serials cancellation, still subscribes to over 30 duplicate Elsevier titles.

I'm sorry this was so lengthy, but I hope it was of interest.

Emily R. Mobley
Purdue University