EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Libraries Committee

Minutes 2001-2002

Meeting #2: Wed. September 19, 2001, 3:30-4:30 pm, Rawl Annex 142

Members present: David Hursh, Marianna Walker, Ann Schreier, John Stevens

Ex-Officio Members present: Paul Gemperline, Dorothy Spencer, Caroll Varner

Guests present: Deana Astle, Joyner Library Services, Jeffrey Coghil, Health Sciences Library

Members excused: Allan Rosenberg, Tom Raedeke, Alexandra Shlapentokh

Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes:

In the absence of Dr. Rosenberg, Vice-Chair Ann Schreier presided over the meeting. The minutes of August 15, 2001 were approved without amendment.

Agenda Item 2. Review of Faculty Library Survey results:

The wide-ranging results did not admit of immediate interpretation. Accordingly issues were discussed one by one.

- Dr. Varner pointed out that library hours had been extended three years ago until 2 am on weeknights; over the Christmas break, and on four holidays, which was reflected in the survey by general satisfaction with the libraries’ hours of operation.
- Results pertaining to journal access and other library holdings and services had been rendered less meaningful given recent moves from print to electronic access. The entire concept of “going to the library to look something up” is being replaced by extending the library onto the desktop of every patron. Thus perceptions of journal holdings and many other services need to be reassessed after faculty become aware of what is available.
- There was general consensus on the committee that surveys of the full faculty were of marginal utility, esp. given the unexpectedly high rate of response by those who used the library seldom and were largely unaware of its electronic and interlibrary services. It was felt that in future surveys should be conducted of individual depts. through the library representatives who would seek out faculty actively interested in the libraries’ services. This might be conducted near the end of each year in April.
- The survey results and the committee’s discussion of how to survey again in future did reveal one important conclusion: the faculty are far too unaware of important advances in information delivery by the libraries. There were discussions of liaison services and the need for the library to transform itself from a passive resource mode to an active outreach mode. There was discussion of the new electronic newsletter being used in Health Sciences Library and of the desirability of imitating this at Joyner to educate faculty about a new resource periodically by e-mail, perhaps through the subject librarians and educational liaisons. It was suggested that faculty could not be meaningfully surveyed again until there had been a considerable education process. The need for bibliographic instruction is not limited now to students, but must include faculty, through a “no loss of face” approach to technological instruction.

Agenda Item 3. Collection Development project

In the absence of a budget and given the new endowment funds coming online in spring, this discussion was necessarily limited by uncertainties about what funds would be available. Dr. Varner did announce that the bulk of the Langford money was to be used to supplement, indeed perhaps “double” Joyner’s rate of book acquisition. This would result in increases not only of dept. budgets, but also subject librarian budgets and range of Yankee titles from which to choose.

Concern was expressed over any formula for distribution of funds that relied heavily on enrollments (FTE’s), majors and graduates. Dr. Varner explained that many other factors had been involved in the past and that the formula would need re-examination in future. Stevens requested that consideration be given to the number of faculty in a dept. as well as to a baseline of discipline coverage. (Questions include whether one should distribute more assets to buy books in Psychology and Business than in other fields simply because these have the highest enrollments. Do students in high enrollment fields use the library at the same rate as students in lower enrollment fields? Is there any danger of developing an imbalance in the collection by excessive attention to enrollments? Is the real goal a collection that represents all fields equally, one that is distributed proportionally according to AMIR reports like dept. budgets, or one that maximizes actual student and faculty usage?)
**Agenda Item 4.** Discussion of Ideas to Increase the Usage of Library Technology:

New liaison and outreach activities were discussed in the committee’s reaction to the survey results.

**Agenda Item 5.** Discussion of the Journal Re-Allocation Project:

Dr. Varner announced that the libraries had acquired several new large full-text E-journal packages. These allow a significant increase in the number of journals available while simultaneously stemming the tide of unreasonable and unsustainable increased in the costs of print journals. He announced that since the state no longer funds inflationary increases in journal costs, the library has no alternative. This year cuts in excess of $200,000 in print journals might be required, of which some $130,000 have already been identified as duplicating journals now available in electronic media. However much it may displease faculty, the print versions have to be cancelled to save the budget. Moreover the additional $70,000 shortfall may have to extend to the unrealistically expensive titles in Math and the Sciences, though this is a matter of the highest political sensitivity since loss of the wrong journals can cripple the ability of scientists on campus to do basic research.

Prof. Gemperline announced that so far, the dept. of Chemistry had been allowed significant input over what was to be kept and what to be cut and that they were satisfied with the way the process had been handled to date. He did request that there be close coordination between HSL and Joyner on any journal cuts. Dr. Spencer assured him that coordination is indeed very close at present. Prof. Gemperline also expressed a concern of many faculty that e-journal archives continue to be available well into the future and even if a title is discontinued at some future point. Dr. Varner maintained that contracts assured that they would, and also that libraries like Davis at UNC-CH would have to bear and are bearing the responsibility for print redundancy, since ECU cannot sustain it.

There was also suggestion that information efforts esp. in how to use the e-journal locator might ameliorate faculty dissatisfaction with the process. There was suggestion that many faculty may be overwhelmed or fearful or unaware of how to use the computer to access these materials. The state of faculty computing education is a serious problem for the library in its outreach efforts. There was suggestion that compiling a list of e-journals available in each discipline might arouse some pleasant surprise and even enthusiasm from reluctant faculty both for the re-allocation project and for learning how to use the new library tools generally.

The time being short, members agreed to dispense with any other business and meet again at a date to be set by Dr. Rosenberg. The third Wed. of the month would fall on Oct. 17, the day classes resume after fall break.