

Section I

Name of Committee: Library Liaison Committee

Submitted by: Claudia Villegas-Silva, Chair LLC

Date Submitted: April 18, 2023

Membership Roster:

- Tina Sauber, Trevor Reed, Konstantinos Tsakalis,
- Lindsay Smith, and Vikas Garg.
- Jim O'Donnell (Ex officio) and Anali Perry (Ex officio).
- Claudia Villegas-Silva, Chair.

Overview Narrative:

The following summarizes committee work accomplished throughout this past year:

Beginning in August 2022, the LLC committee decided to evaluate the library and its needs with the hope of being able to make recommendations by the end of the 2022-2023 Academic year, and then tackling the items we find to be most urgent for the 2023-2024 academic year. In order to have a deep understanding of the Libraries role and needs, we had guest speakers for our meetings who gave the committee working knowledge of the library's different areas. Many of these were deeply enhanced by Anali Perry and Jim O'Donnell's insight. Some guest speakers included Alex Soto from the Labriola National American Indian Data Center, Nancy Liliana Godoy and Head of the Community-Driven Archives, as well as Presentation on State of the Library Budget and ongoing conversations Open Science and Open Access from Anali Perry and Jim O'Donnell. Based on these conversations we were able to conclude the four key areas of recommendation based on the main issues facing the University Library.

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Section II

Request for Consultations and/or topics reviewed by the committee and outcomes

(topics reviewed by the committee decided not to act/review should be listed here with, no action taken):

Topics reviewed:

- Current State of the Library
- Open Science
- Open Access
- Community Driven Archives
- Labriola National American Indian Data Center
- Inclusivity, Outlying community (non ASU)
- Law Archives

Section III

Request for Consultations and/or topics that were not started or remain unfinished and need to be carried over to the next academic year.

Based on our conclusions, the LLC will focus on Staffing and best ways to embed the Library in the University culture. We will continue to monitor the state of Open Access and Open Science.

Section IV

Recommendations to the Senate or Final Comments

The Library Liaison Committee of the University Senate has reviewed the main issues facing the University Library and has **four areas of recommendation**.

The Library is essential to the success of students and to the success of faculty in both teaching and research. As ASU has grown and flourished, the resources available to the Library have fallen far behind. That said, much has been accomplished. The reinvention of Hayden Library has been a notable success and our facilities are thronged with students taking advantage of ideal working spaces and also engaging with librarians in cutting edge areas (data science, makerspace technologies, geospatial data) and with expanded ambitions in targeted areas. We are particularly impressed with the energy, imagination, and success of leaders in the Library's program of Community-Driven Archives and in the Labriola National American Indian Data Center. Both of those programs have been outstandingly successful in fundraising particularly (pioneers in bringing support to ASU from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, among other sources). Both are led by recent hires, rising stars who themselves come from communities in Arizona not historically well represented in leadership positions in

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the University. The Library has chosen to refocus its collection of unique (archival and other) materials in ways that will make what it holds much more effective at telling the stories of all the communities of Arizona and engaging students and researchers in ways that have not always been possible.

In other core areas, we have deep concerns. As was the case in our report last year (with some overlapping members of the committee), we have been alarmed to observe that the resources available to the University Library fall significantly short of what is necessary in order for the Library to be broadly effective in supporting the University's mission and ambitions. There are four main areas of concern:

1. **Staffing levels.** Overall staffing and especially staffing of professional librarians and archivists remain astonishingly low for an institution of our size and ambition. There are two organizations of research libraries to which ASU belongs (Association of Research Libraries and Great Western Library Alliance) where it is clear that ASU Library no longer meets the minimum criteria for new membership because our staffing levels are so low. There are not enough liaison librarians to work with all of our academic units in support of student success in particular (e.g., Barrett Honors has not had a dedicated librarian for two years since a retirement), but that also means not enough expertise in what resources are available to support research and teaching. The voice raised in February's Academic Assembly meeting about staffing levels came from the head of the Library's instructional unit that works directly with students; she knows that the Library could and should be doing literally twice as much for students as is possible with current staffing levels. The Library's archives and special collections are staffed at not much more than half strength (in particular, there is no funding at present for a director of special collections), to the point where it has been difficult to maintain user services throughout the year during normal business hours. Back office functions are staffed at bare bones levels, in particular those that deal with cataloging and metadata and those that provide technology services. In every area, capacity is so limited that every departure means loss of important function until a replacement can be identified. In addition, it is important to underline that there needs to be a staffing model and standard for adding librarians, staff and resources when new programs, schools and programs are added to the institution. Those deficits rotate through the Library constantly. The Library's ability to innovate and contribute to research and scholarship is restricted when staff struggle to maintain the most basic level of service and support. We are encouraged to learn that, at least, the annual *reductions* in staff that have been imposed in recent years by the requirement from the University that the Library make annual contributions to "decentralization" and to the provision of merit raises for Library staff may now be mitigated. Once again, we must encourage the University to go beyond first aid and to review the Library's staffing needs and make provision for targeted strengthening of key areas.

2. **The "Information Resources" budget** has been effectively flat in constant dollars for decades. At a time when the University has expanded its academic reach and ambition in multiple directions and when the availability particularly of digital resources to support research and teaching has grown exponentially, the ASU Library has been in the position of trimming and cutting every year mainly to keep up with inflation and to find

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room for very marginal additional acquisitions. A warning siren went off two years ago when, after years of trims and cuts and parings, it was necessary to cancel ASU's subscription to the Web of Science citation database. In part this was because of a parallel service, "Scopus", which does most of what WoS can do and comes at a price an order of magnitude lower. We literally settled for second best.

The pressures continue. Over the last several years, the Library has received in most but not all years a \$400,000 increment on its \$12M materials budget – in other words about 3.3% (and a declining percentage in that the increments in the same amount were each year a smaller percentage of the total) when best estimates in the profession suggest that 5-7% is the normal annual inflation on digital resources. We understand that a new arrangement converting the annual inflation increment to a modestly higher amount marked as a percentage and not a fixed amount will be made. We hope this will be enough to stanch the bleeding. It will probably not be enough to bring back Web of Science unless other cuts are found; and it will not support expansion of collections in areas where academic expansion (we think of the Mix Center and the College of Global Futures) race ahead. We believe the University should continue to review its ability to support institutional ambitions through the Library. A substantial one-time adjustment could make a huge difference.

3. Open Science. One area of very small growth has been in support from the Provost for a handful of positions in the curation and management of research data, as the University gradually commits to the global move towards open science. The University Librarian works with the President on the University's participation in the Higher Education Leadership Initiative for Open Scholarship (HELIOS) and brings together others in the University to discuss how as an institution we can best support open science, the principles of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) research data, and open access publishing. Adopting open science practices requires a major shift in academic and research culture, necessitating targeted outreach and education to build awareness and competency in the ASU community. ASU has as yet made only token gestures towards ambitious support of open access in particular, given the constraint on resources in the areas of licensing arrangements with publishers (where 'transformative agreements' are the instrument of choice for advancing OA publishing) and of regularizing University support for faculty payment of Article Processing Charges for open publishing where transformative agreements do not obtain. The new requirements of the federal government for deposit of federally-funded research in disciplinary repositories will also require staffing in the Library, KE, and perhaps ET to support related technology platforms, workflows and continuing education and development. We applaud the President's leadership in the HELIOS initiative and look forward to seeing how that commitment will manifest itself in the next few years.

4. Inclusiveness. We said above that the Library has been notably successful in expanding the range of its collections and services in critical areas under the rubric of Community-Driven Archives (addressing the needs and telling the story of Latinx, LGTQ, Black, and other underrepresented peoples, particularly in Arizona) and the Labriola Center (addressing indigenous communities, again mainly but not exclusively in Arizona). Both of

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those programs have leveraged growth with unprecedented (for ASU) grant funding and to its credit ASU (from the LIFT program) has supported ongoing work from those grants after soft money ran out. There are new needs opening and we strongly recommend that the University anticipate putting hard money under positions and services that succeed in this way and be open to both fundraising and providing University funds for initiatives in these critical areas. The work of the Library's leaders in these areas is truly impressive. Particularly in the area of work with indigenous communities, collections, and services, there is opportunity to take a national leadership position.

It is clear to us that the ASU Library has been constrained for decades from performing at the level that an ambitious research university needs. We encourage the Provost to engage with the Library to make a plan for elevating our ambitions. The conversations now under way to stop the bleeding should be brought to successful conclusion. Some one-time funding increases will likely be necessary, but equally important is to work out a mechanism by which the Library shares in the growth of the institution as a whole, through planned funding increases tied to growths in enrollment and in research funding. Both enrollment and funded research have essentially doubled in the last decade. For the University Library to remain so nearly flat in budget over that time disadvantages all faculty and students. Some defined share in the growth of those revenues would ensure a Library that can recruit as ambitiously as other academic units and participate actively in the achievement of the University's mission.

When looking to the future of the library it is clear that the key investments must be in (1) support for major new University initiatives and (2) support for student learning (such as AI strategies, student instruction, etc.). This means the priority is library staffing. Without the proper/sufficient staffing levels, the library cannot successfully service student learning, faculty research and scholarship, contribute their own research and scholarship innovation, nor actively sustain the University's mission when staff struggle to maintain the most basic level of service and support.

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