

Appendix B

Resolution Calling for a Blue Ribbon Task Force

February 2008

A Resolution of the University Library Council February 2008

Whereas, the provost has noted that the university's aspiration to be a top ten public institution will be questionable without access to the research and teaching resources of a top ten university library;

Whereas, the university community consistently identifies the collections of the university libraries as inadequate even to their minimal expectations for a library at a research institution (University Library LibQual survey);

Whereas, this response is consistent with statistics indicating that the university's library system, comparable to four of its peers in 1990, has fallen to last among its peer institutions by a wide margin (Association of Research Library statistics);

Whereas, the high levels of inflation in the cost of library materials that have eroded the university's collections show no sign of easing in the future;

Whereas, the electronic revolution is now producing significant improved products to enhance research and teaching, resources that greatly increase the demands on the libraries' budget to license such materials;

Whereas, over just the last two years the university libraries have initiated cuts that canceled nearly one-fourth of all journal subscriptions and licenses;

Whereas, the real dollars (adjusted for inflation in library materials) to support the libraries' collections have fallen by over \$1 million since 1997 despite increases in actual dollars (statistics supplied by the library and provost's office);

Whereas, estimates of future trends indicate another \$1.9 million shortfall in funds necessary to support current collection levels by FY11, necessitating another 20 percent cut in acquisitions (collection management office);

Whereas, best forecasts are that funding from state and tuition sources that traditionally support the library budget will not increase significantly in the coming years;

Whereas, our assessment is that the burden of this erosion in the quality of the libraries' collections has fallen most heavily on the research mission of the university, including the interdisciplinary and specialized literature that defines the frontier of research interest;

Whereas, the Middle States Self-Study endorsed by the university recommends an assessment of the state of the library as a central campus resource;

and whereas, the campus is currently engaged in an exercise of strategic planning, and the state of the central campus library resources certainly has strategic implications on the future success of the campus as a research and teaching institution;

Be it therefore resolved that the University Library Council calls upon the provost of the University of Maryland to convene a task force including outstanding researchers and teachers from across the campus to envision the collection for the University of Maryland libraries appropriate to the research and teaching expectations of the university. We recommend that such a task force:

1. Within the framework of the university's strategic plan, identify the goals and characteristics of a top ten public university library system charged with providing a central collection of research materials to its students and faculty;
2. Assess the current collections of the University of Maryland libraries using this standard;
3. Propose strategies that it deems appropriate to provide such a library to the students and faculty of the University of Maryland.

Approved unanimously by the University Library Council at its meeting, February 1, 2008.