During the academic year, the faculty Library Committee performed its oversight role in two major contexts:

1. **Reviewing strategies for budget cuts**

   As in the previous year, Jim Rettig, University Librarian, presented first to the chair of the committee, and then to the committee as a whole, several plans for possible library cuts connected with the FY2011 Library Materials Budget. These plans were prepared at the request of the university administration as budgets continue to be constrained by the financial crisis. Rettig described for the committee the various plans, indicating where cost-savings were possible to realize (i.e. a continuing effort to reduce redundancies in on-line databases as well as converting dual format subscriptions to on-line only) and where they were less realistic to expect (i.e. lobbying efforts to drive science journal publishers to either freeze or lower subscription rates).

   The faculty Library Committee continues to be concerned over the long-term implications of cuts (or even budget freezes in an inflationary environment), especially against the backdrop of market dynamics that increase the cost of library materials (books, journals, databases) at a rate typically several times the national inflation rate. Such circumstances mean that even budget freezes undermine the library’s mission on campus, precluding or delaying the purchase of needed materials and thus threatening the ability of the library to support key university priorities. In a context in which other Virginia libraries are also cutting back, the aggregate effect of this on the campus information and research need are very sobering.

2. **Discussions of library expansion and shelf/stacks management**

   In the fall of 2010, an internal committee of library specialists advanced efforts to head-off a coming crisis in shelving space in Boatwright Memorial Library. Some long-range solutions (new campus construction of dedicated compact storage; an off-site storage area, perhaps shared with VCU or other regional schools) seem feasible, given a major infusion of new financing. Other options (use of existing off-site commercial storage facilities) appear less practical, due to the specific needs of material retrieval for library users.

   In the near term, the internal committee has authored a thoughtful plan to reappropriate floor space in Boatwright to maximize existing resources. Shelving will be rearranged, more movable compact shelving introduced, and large numbers of serial publications (periodicals, journals, yearbooks) that duplicate stable on-line resources (e.g. JSTOR) will either be moved off-site or discarded if, as in the case of JSTOR, trusted repositories in the United States retain copies of the originals.

   Several members of the faculty committee informally polled other A&S faculty to inquire whether the discarding of physical copies of many of these publications would interfere with teaching or research. Few of those polled even hesitated over the issue and virtually all gave their informal endorsement to this space-saving initiative.

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1. New campus construction in the middle-to-long term might accommodate not only new compact storage space, but a redesign or expansion of existing library space to meet student demand for additional learning spaces of all types and to reconfigure staff work areas. Such a reconstruction project would offer numerous ways of integrating the library and its resources more deeply into the physical and intellectual center of campus life.
3. User surveys

Lucretia McCulley, chair of the library’s Assessment Committee, reported to the Library Committee on results of several surveys the library has conducted this past year. The results of a voluntary survey located on the library’s web site demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction with the library’s services. They also reveal student interest in more public computers, more group study rooms and more quiet study areas. These results are complemented by other sorts of anecdotal data on student priorities and reinforce the impression that Boatwright Memorial Library is a major hub of undergraduate research, learning and study activity on campus.

The HEDS/NITLE Research Practices Survey, a survey of students’ knowledge of research tools and techniques, shows good knowledge of some, but not all of resources available to them. It also reveals students to have a fair grasp of the range of materials available to them, but a less impressive understanding of how to discriminate between the various sorts of material (e.g. popular journals vs. scholarly journals). These results will help the librarians strengthen their instructional efforts in 2010-2011, in particular in regard to the new First Year Seminars.

A study of the library’s document delivery service to faculty and staff showed that nearly all materials are delivered one working day after requests are filed, which is a pretty remarkable turn-around time for such information retrieval.

4. Miscellaneous

Other more routine issues were attended to by members of the committee as well. In particular, at the request of Rettig, David Brandenberger convened the James W. Jackson Award committee and recruited social scientist Joseph Obi (sociology) to join committee veterans Laura Horne-Popp and Olivia Reinauer. Under the terms of the Jackson Award competition, faculty nominate outstanding student research papers to be considered by the committee for an annual prize and recognition. More specifically, this award calls attention to a paper (or papers in the case of a tie) that “demonstrate[s] a depth and breadth of effective use of research materials in the social sciences and clear evidence of a thoughtful command of these resources.” In 2009-2010, the Jackson Award committee voted unanimously to award the prize to Kelly Behrend (International Studies Self Design/Peace and Conflict Studies; Latin American and Iberian Studies) for her paper “The Refugee Ex-Factor: a Framework Toward the Understanding of Excluded People.” Ms. Behrend learned about her award just an hour before departing for the Midwest Political Science Association Conference in Chicago where she would present this paper.

Respectfully submitted,
David Brandenberger, Chair

Library Committee membership, 2009-2010:

David Brandenberger—A&S (2nd of 3 yrs., expiring 2011), chair
Elena Calvillo—A&S (3rd of 3 yrs., expiring 2010)
Tim Coggins—Law Library Director, ex officio
Monika Kukar-Kinney—Business (3rd of 3 yrs., expiring 2010)
James Rettig—University Librarian, ex officio
Bill Ross—A&S (2nd of 3 yrs., expiring 2011)
Kathy Zoghby—A&S (1st of 3 yrs., expiring 2012)
Alexandra Lescroart—undergraduate, Westhampton College
Chris Repas—undergraduate, Richmond College

2 Additional information on the library’s assessment program, plans, reports, etc. can be viewed at the library’s assessment website: http://library.richmond.edu/about/library-assessment.html