

**COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS (LASC)
ANNUAL REPORT
AY 2020-2021**

TO THE MERCED DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

In AY 2020-2021, LASC held a total of four regularly scheduled in-person meetings in order to conduct business with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced’s Senate Bylaw II.IV.4.

Areas of Focus

LASC focused on five main issues this academic year:

1) *Consultation with the Library During the Review of New Programs*

In previous academic years, LASC noted that when Schools submit proposals for the establishment of new undergraduate or graduate programs, the proposals often state that no Library resources would be required. In a number of program proposals in AY 2020-2021, LASC observed again that the Library leadership had not been consulted during proposals’ development. After new programs are approved, the Library’s budget can be negatively impacted, if the new program requests new journal subscriptions, book purchases, and / or data support.

In the 2019-2020 academic year, LASC reminded the-then Senate Chair and Divisional Council that current UGC and CCGA program proposal guidelines include Library consultation, but neither UGC nor GC has been fulfilling this requirement. UGC’s “Review and Approval of Undergraduate Degree Programs, Section II.4 requires that the Library be consulted and that evidence of the consultation be presented in the program proposal, stating “Indicate library resources needed and include a statement from University Librarian on plans for providing resources for the program.” The CCGA Handbook Appendix B: *Format for the Graduate Degree Program Proposal* (*ccga_handbook_august_2019_final.pdf*) states in Section 6. *Resource requirements*, “Estimated for the first 5 years the additional cost of the program, by year, for each of the following categories: 2) Library acquisitions.”

This academic year, LASC had a goal to support the University Library through the program review process. LASC planned to continue to work with CAPRA, UGC, and GC to ensure and/or encourage authors of proposals for new programs, schools, ORUs to consult with library leadership early in the process of writing their proposals. Towards the end of the 2020 spring semester, Chair DePrano met with the chairs of CAPRA, UGC, and GC to discuss this issue. The Library was asked to create a list of types of materials frequently requested by new programs so that proposers of new programs will

be cognizant of their own possible Library needs. The list of types of materials frequently requested was provided to the Senate Chair and the Divisional Council in a memo dated March 15, 2021. The list includes materials such as monographs, journals, electronic reference works, databases, digitized primary sources, collections of STEM “textbooks,” datasets (which may require server storage and specialized software), and organization membership that provide access to specialized content.

At the March 29 Division Council Meeting, Chair DePrano consulted with the Council about the importance of communication with the Library when proposals for new majors, minors, ORUs, graduate are being developed. The Library has asked to be included in the discussion of these proposals, and has reminded Divisional Council that a letter from the University librarian discussing necessary resources from the Library is required by UGC policy and recommended by CCGA policy. If the already existing requirements for undergraduate programs and new graduate programs, ORUs, and schools were followed, Library resource needs and the success of the new programs -- and students in those programs -- would be more adequately assessed and support.

2) *Library Budget Cut Issues*

LASC stated that the University Library should be exempt from the current 5% cut in AY 2020-2021, given that the UC Merced Library has historically been underfunded in terms of total expenditures per student, collections budget, and proportion of student enrollment to Library staff. LASC strongly opposed budget cuts to the UC Merced University Library. LASC asserted that the University Library is the beating heart of a research institution providing research, teaching, and service resources and services to support UC Merced’s mission. Thus, adequate funding is critically necessary to build a well-positioned R1 university.

However, this academic year, the Library has experienced a 5% reduction in their budget. Three scenarios were given by campus directive, which caused concern. The Library had been granted ten positions, with four of them slated for hiring this year. There were plans to fill these positions in order to cope with campus growth; however, the campus is currently going through a hiring freeze. After discussions at the Library Executive Committee meetings, a plan was decided that it may be better to give up the four allocated positions as the Library’s contribution to the 5% budget cut.

Because UC Merced is small, the Library is experiencing a large impact from the 5% reduction. It will be difficult for the Library to complete several significant projects over the next couple years. University Librarian Li explained that some projects are on hold in terms of planning. The Library does not have the funding to process archival materials or to permanently house them at this time. However, in response to the current emergencies, the Library must find temporary space until the archives can be permanently housed.

Chair DePrano shared several graphs that were included in the letter written to Divisional Counsel regarding the Gallo School of Management pre-proposal. The graphs demonstrated that the Library’s purchasing power has declined over the past fifteen

years. Also, while UC Merced's budget continues to increase, the UC Merced Library budget has not increased over the past years in proportion to the number of faculty and students on campus. LASC included this information when reviewing the Academic Planning Targets review item.

3) *License negotiations: Project Transform and Elsevier*

LASC had a goal to communicate about open access and transformative agreements with the university community. LASC brainstormed how to effectively communicate this with SNS and SoE faculty. Ultimately, Chair DePrano shared key UC Open Access websites with Divisional Counsel members during both Divisional Counsel updates in Fall and Spring semesters.

Chair DePrano also shared with LASC a list of other publishers with whom the UC currently has a transformative agreements, such as the Association of Computer Machinery (ACM), Cambridge University Press, Public Library of Science (PLOS), and Journal of Medical Internet and Research (JMIR).

This academic year, the University of California signed an agreement with Elsevier, obtaining reading access to all Elsevier journals with no reading fee, with some exceptions. As a result, all the goals that UCOLASC set back in 2018 were met. The goals included 100% open access for UC authors including Cell & The Lancet as of the second or third year, reduced baseline cost with sustainable year cost controls, and all the provisions responsive to UCOLASC principles.

4) *Library Space Allocation*

This academic year, LASC worked with the University Librarian Li and UC Merced Library to address the concern about the Library space issues. Librarian Li explained that the Library does not have sufficient space for students to study and for staff offices and administrative processes. No space was allocated for the Library within any of the 13 new buildings in the 2020 project. Instead, the backfill project allocated more space in the third floor of the west wing of the current Library building to the Library to be shared with the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETL). Furthermore, as the Library has been working on the research archive project, campus leadership has decided to give more space on the second floor of the Library to house the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park Archive and the Sequoia National Forest Archive. The Library will receive a donation of Yosemite-related materials and will use the allocated space for that.

LASC membership argued that a building should be dedicated to the Library in the upcoming 2030 project. Space, budget, and staffing are the three main concerns for the Library and should be looked at closely for the 2030 project. Chair DePrano drafted a memo on the proposed academic planning targets advocating for space, budget, and staffing. LASC has also responded to the 2030 ideas memo advocating for space, budget, and staffing. LASC also advocated for a new building dedicated to the Library with added equipment and technology to better serve the students and faculty.

5) Covid-19 Pandemic & Access to Library Materials

LASC membership monitored faculty and student access to library materials, such as electronic ILL and HathiTrust Emergency Temporary Access. Initially, it seemed that there might be some access to large Library study space, such as the Lantern, but the continued transmission of Covid-19 in Merced County negated that opportunity. The Library created curb-side pickup in order to facilitate circulation of UC Merced Library materials.

Consultation with University Librarian

LASC benefited from consultation and input from University Librarian Li on an array of topics, including updates on Sierra Nevada/Central Valley Research Archive at UC Merced, Elsevier, Library strategic planning, license negotiations status and open access, Library budget, and Library space issues. University Librarian Li informed LASC members about which services are available to UC Merced, with some being in collaboration with systemwide efforts: HathiTrust, JoVE Archives, and ILL Materials.

Review Items

1) *Pre-Proposal for the Ernest & Julio Gallo School of Management*

LASC reviewed the pre-proposal to establish the Ernest and Julio Gallo School of Management. LASC was concerned in a more global way that the economic resources the university will need to devote to starting and supporting the new Gallo School will detract from other important units at UC Merced. LASC noted that the Library supports the research and teaching missions of the entire faculty and students. Despite its importance, the Library has been chronically underfunded, which is reflected in the Library budgets for space, staffing, and collections development. Furthermore, the issue of resource distribution, which has always been acute, has become much more serious in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. As faculty considered possible curtailments, LASC simultaneously worried about the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UC California Digital Library and UC Merced Library budgets. While there are many interesting ideas in the Gallo School Pre-Proposal, LASC suggested that units at UC Merced that serve the entire faculty and student body, such as the UC Merced Library, should be more appropriately resourced before UC Merced takes on additional funding challenges like the Gallo School.

2) *Request from Senate Chair - Bylaw Revisions*

LASC reviewed the Senate Chair's request to review the bylaws to identify ways to expand diversity, equity, and inclusion. LASC supported a general statement that endorsed diversity, equity, and inclusion across the entire UC Merced Academic Senate. If the Senate decided not to include a general statement, then LASC proposed to include

their own statement in the committee bylaws: “The Library and Scholarly Communication Committee is committed to upholding the UC Merced Commitment to Diversity. LASC affirms its close attention in its work to prioritize and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice at UC Merced.”

3) *Academic Planning Work Group Targets & Institutional Support*

In evaluating the Academic Planning document, LASC stressed that the UC Merced Library is a critical element of institutional research and teaching infrastructure. For instance, in 2018 with a campus population of less than 10,000 students, the UC Merced Library checked out 19,982 materials, digitized 94,685 items, and registered an annual gate count of 666,690 (UC Merced Library Highlights 2018). LASC asserted that the UC Merced Library requires significant investment in additional space, collections budget, staff budget, and operating budget for the campus to reach its Academic Planning goals, fulfill UC Merced’s teaching and research missions, and to achieve UC Merced’s ambition of R1 status at any time scale.

4) *Proposed Presidential Policy BFB-BUS-43 Purchases of Goods and Services, Supply Chain Management*

LASC observed that this proposed policy of purchasing from small businesses where practicable could have negative effects on the acquisition of library collections materials since most collection materials are produced by and acquired from large businesses, such as university presses and commercial publishers. While LASC observed that the proposed policy had a waiver process, LASC recognized that such a waiver process could place an unnecessary administrative burden on the library. Thus, LASC requested that Library collection purchases be exempt from this policy.

5) *Program Proposals and Library Resources*

LASC expressed the strong ongoing concern with the meaningful integration of Library input into the writing of proposals for new undergraduate programs, graduate programs, Organized Research Units (ORUs), or school proposals on the UC Merced Library. Recently circulated proposals for new undergraduate majors, new undergraduate minors, an ORU, and a graduate program did not consult with the library before circulation through the Academic Senate, demonstrating this ongoing problem of consultation with the Library during the drafting of the program proposal.

LASC followed up with the memo from the previous academic year, regarding the need for integration of Library input into formal assessment of resource implications of proposals for new academic programs, research units, and schools on the Library. The purpose of LASC’s request for consultation with the library is to enable the library to sustainably support new programs and contribute to their success while continuing to support existing programs within the Library’s straitened budgetary context. With prior consultation, the Library will be adequately funded to ensure the success of the new and continuing programs by supporting their teaching, learning, and research.

6) *Draft Strategic Plan (2021-2031)*

First, LASC thanked the authors for including the UC Merced Library under Goal 1, item 1.2 “Grow UC-quality research and creative activities by strengthening the infrastructure for, and levels of, extramural funding,” under the Select Strategic Initiatives, which states, “Develop library collections and resources to support the campus’s growing research portfolio.” LASC observed three issues here. The library does far more than function as infrastructure for extramural funding. Moreover, there are no targets or measures provided for judging the adequacy of the institutional support of the library. Yet, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) provides comparative data for aspirational peer institutions that UC Merced could use to learn how to grow toward R1 status. The Strategic Plan could measure many aspects of Library budget and resource support, such as total Library Expenditures per Student-FTE; Library Space per Student FTE (LS/FTE); UC Merced Library Budget vs. Total Faculty FTE, to name only a few possible benchmarks. Furthermore, the “Select Strategic Initiative” states, “Develop library collections and resources.” LASC stated that it would be helpful to specify that those “resources” include additional space, staffing, and operating budget and that these should be measured in terms of UC Merced’s aspirational peers.

Second, LASC suggested that it would be appropriate to also place the University Library in a Select Strategic Initiative under item 1.1 “Expand the public and scholarly influence of the campus’s research at the regional, national, and international levels.” To grow into an R1 Doctoral University, UC Merced needs to support the University Library in its mission to provide support for all aspects of the research life-cycle. With additional funding and staff support, the library could provide additional higher level Library research support.

Third, LASC maintains that the University Library is crucial for UC Merced’s attainment of Goal 2 “Develop Future Scholars and Leaders” and Goal 3 “Cultivate a Culture of Dignity and Respect for All” by providing research materials, a welcoming place to study and gather, Library Information Literacy classes, and jobs for student workers.

This Strategic Plan is an opportunity to witness the heroic support the Library provides for the university’s missions of research, teaching, and service and to lay the groundwork to adequately support the University Library in the future. However, to grow to be an R1 university, UC Merced must invest in the University Library, which provides the foundation to support success in almost everything the university does as an institution of high education. LASC sincerely hopes that in 2031 the UC Merced University Library will have a collections budget, operational budget, data management support, instruction library support, and staffing comparable with R1 university libraries in the US.

Systemwide Updates

LASC Chair DePrano represented the committee on the systemwide University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communications (UCOLASC) and kept LASC informed of updates

throughout the year. The main items of discussion at UCOLASC meetings included updates on California Digital Library (CDL), the Systemwide Integrated Library System, Licensing updates, Project Transform, Elsevier negotiations, and open access issues.

Respectfully submitted:

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