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To: Campus Community

From: Richard C. Pollard
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Subject: Your Library in a Time of Budget Reductions and Furloughs

I am writing to provide an update on the many changes occurring in the Pollak Library this academic year. While these changes are largely budget-driven, implementation is being done in ways to minimize severity. Your patience and understanding will be appreciated, but I also encourage you to communicate with us in the interest of possible adjustments that will ease circumstances. Obviously our flexibility to make everything “just the way it was” is limited, but nothing should remain beyond consideration.

The major topics addressed below are: Hours, Information Resources, Interlibrary Loan, Furlough Day Services, and "Good" News.

Hours

The Library's open hours have been reduced from 83.5/week to 69/week. Opening time M-F is now 8:00 am rather than 7:30 am, and closing M-Th is now 9:00 pm rather than 10:30 pm. Friday closure remains 5:00 pm. Saturday hours have been changed from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm to 10:00 am - 6:00 pm. Sundays the Library will be closed all day.

From another perspective, however, the Library has expanded rather than reduced its hours. The "Virtual Library" is open 24/7 and over the past decade the amount of resources and services (e.g., professional reference) available electronically have continued to grow. These investments in convenience and efficiency become even more valuable as the Library's physical facility hours are reduced.

Information Resources

The Library's overall budget has been reduced 15% this year, from $7m to $5.9m (the latter figure being the Library's baseline budget in 1999). The reductions were allocated as follows: $589km from personnel lines (including
$175k from student assistants), $5k from the operating budget, and $447k from the library materials budget.

Early in the campus budget reduction discussions, the phraseology used was in a context of the Library "buying no books" in 2009/10. The implementation of the resulting large reduction in the resources available for materials is a bit more sophisticated than that. The Library recognizes that different disciplines are differentially dependent upon book, serials, and electronic resources. Thus reductions will be taken across all types of information resources. We have, however, put the approval plans which automatically garner new monographs on hold, and will initially purchase only items which are specifically requested and which fit within our collecting policies. Later in the year it may be possible to reestablish less ambitious approval plans (these are a much more efficient way to acquire books from the perspective of staff resources).

We are also reviewing subscriptions to print journals, e-journals, and other electronic packages. Since renewal dates fall across the calendar, all cancellations will not be immediate.

Faculty should continue to request items critically needed for teaching and research. While I can't promise that everything requested will be purchased, the Library will give it a "college try." Our community support group--the Patrons of the Library--is providing some support for the purchase of books this year. The Library is very grateful for this contribution, but it is too early to gauge the match of these resources against requests.

**Interlibrary Loan**

Any changes in the Interlibrary Loan environment are known to be very sensitive to the campus, especially for faculty for whom this often is a life-line for their research endeavors. However, even in an operational area where there are no plans to implement actual reductions, there exists a premium on making it more efficient and cost-effective.

Thus the Library, after discussion with the Academic Senate Executive Committee over the summer, is limiting the number of outstanding interlibrary loan transactions that at any given time can be in any stage of the process (e.g., requested, in transit, checked out). Once an item is downloaded or returned, another opportunity opens. These limits are 20 for faculty, 15 for grad students and staff, and 10 for undergrads. This policy has two goals. The first is to encourage people to actually take possession of items requested via Interlibrary Loan. Statistics for 2008/09 show that 16% of items requested by all categories of borrowers were never picked up or downloaded. Since the costs to the Library are the same whether or not materials secured from another library are utilized, this policy should encourage more responsible use of
shrinking resources. The second goal of this policy is to even out the workflow in Interlibrary Loan during a period when staff resources are also stretched. It also reflects a belief that the aggregate number of Interlibrary Loan requests is likely to rise as we are able to buy less.

Please note that this policy change does NOT impose a restriction on the number of times one can go to the interlibrary loan well. Rather, each bucket should hold only what one can immediately drink. If 200 items are needed in the course of a semester, we will try and secure them; we just can't accommodate all 200 requests at the same time.

**Furlough Day Services**

The Library is one of the campus entities that will be open rather than closed on furlough days. However, it will be in a "reduced services" mode. The building and all its resources will be open and available. Circulation and Course Reserve services will be available. Other service desks--Reference, Audiovisual and Curriculum Materials Center, University Archives & Special Collections--will be closed. Library faculty are taking their furlough days on the same schedule as the Library physical facility. No requests for instruction sessions by faculty will be accepted for a furlough day; all requests for "normal" times are being accommodated. The "Virtual Library," of course, will be open on furlough days and, indeed, at any time a user has a need.

In the absence of a face-to-face instruction session, for courses that have a research assignment faculty can request creation of a customized interactive guide to relevant library resources. This is a new modular feature designed to make customized virtual instruction easier and more effective.

**"Good" News**

All is not gloom and doom in your campus library. This semester we have implemented a new electronic course reserve system. ARES is designed to interact smoothly with BlackBoard and, we fervently hope, without the repetitions of the several disasters of last year. More information and training opportunities will be forthcoming.

The more observant may have noticed some new features at the bottom of the Library's homepage. These are icons for various "social media," the use of which is rapidly expanding. There were few options for "talking" to a physical, print-based library. For the "Virtual Library" that is emerging and will continue to evolve, there are many existing and yet to be invented ways of "talking" to it remotely. The Pollak Library recognizes that its users increasingly expect "options," so we will continue to explore new and different uses of technology to
"talk" where students "listen," and "listen" where students are most apt to "talk." The Library also believes that "social media" will have a growing role in instruction and wishes to be an active participant in that development.