University Libraries Committee, 2008-2009
Report to the Faculty Senate

Members
Joe Austin
Ewa Barczyk (ex-officio)
Noelle Chesley
Adrian Dumitrescu
Elizabeth Fayram
Erika Gonzalez
Albert Krahn
Kristin Krajewski
William Lavonis
Chiu Law
Lindsay McHenry
Susan Nelson (ex-officio)
Helena Pycior (chair, semester 2, 2008-2009)
Daniel Rude
Marie Y. Savundranayagam (semester 2, 2008-2009)
Colin Scanes (ex-officio)
Winston Van Horne (chair, semester 1, 2008-2009)
Dev Venugopalan (ex-officio)

Meetings
During semester 1, 2008-2009, the University Libraries Committee (ULC) met four times (9/19, 10/31, 11/21, and 12/12); during semester 2, the committee met three times (2/17, 3/20, and 5/15).

Activities
During this academic year the committee’s activities and discussions centered on the following areas.

1. **The Libraries as integral to UWM’s dual missions of Sustained Research and Access to Success**: The committee discussed the various ways in which the Libraries affect the recruitment, retention, and success of not only faculty and staff but also students. A few points emerging from these discussions are:
   - the link between successful recruitment and strong library resources (Candidates increasingly ask about access to serials in their field.)
   - the link between research and investment in university libraries (Many researchers want 24-hour access to serials in their field to assure their ability to preserve momentum in research and to complete grants with hard deadlines. A recent study at the University of Illinois-Champaign concluded that there was “a return of $4.38 in grant income for every dollar invested in the library in 2006.”)
• the link between successful undergraduate research and the Libraries’ instructional support programs (The Libraries offer integrated information literacy sessions, which help students learn how to conduct research and, in particular, use the Libraries’ many resources.)

2. **Budgetary constraints on the Libraries:** The committee focused its concerns on two major challenges facing the Libraries: (1) maintaining and even expanding the Libraries’ collections to meet campus research and teaching needs and (2) maintaining adequate staffing levels. In late November 2008 the committee sent a letter to Provost Rita Cheng elaborating on the Libraries’ collections and staffing needs in the context of UWM’s Master Plan and long-term budgetary planning.

• The UWM Libraries have not had a base increase in its collections budget in more than a decade. Since access to research materials is a key concern of faculty and students, the committee requested that the Libraries provide data on peer and aspirational institutions. The committee concluded that comparisons with Colorado State University (a peer institution) and the University of Louisville (an aspirational institution) highlight the need for annual increases to the Libraries’ base budget. The committee views these increases as investments in the research and access missions of the university.

• Over the last decade staffing levels at the UWM Libraries have decreased. Even as staffing levels have been decreasing, the Libraries’ staff has been providing new services (to support undergraduate research, student technology needs, online courses, etc.); some staff members have been heavily invested in collaborative projects to try to increase the resources that the Libraries can offer. In terms of staffing, the UWM Libraries lag behind those at Colorado State University and the University of Louisville. Provost Cheng met with the committee on March 20 to discuss some of the points raised in the letter of late November as well as short-term budgetary issues for 2009-2011.

3. **The Libraries’ creativity in doing more with the same (or less) and success in fundraising:** Every meeting of the committee included a Director’s report on different aspects of the Libraries’ operations, new initiatives, finances, outside funding, acquisitions, services, and events. In response, the committee offered comments and advice where appropriate. The committee also commended the Libraries for creativity and flexibility in meeting an ever increasing array of research and teaching needs. Listed below are examples of accomplishments of the Libraries that the committee has discussed, offered advice on, and supported.

a. The Libraries worked on the proposal for the UW System DIN for shared electronic resources across all UW campuses. The request was for $6 million over the next biennium to support a “UW Digital Commons”—designed to broaden access to UW-Madison’s electronic
resources. The committee unanimously supported this initiative; the committee also offered advice on presenting the proposal to the Board of Regents and state legislators. Committee members stressed that a “UW Digital Commons” would help correct the inequities in access to electronic resources that limit opportunities for learning and research across much of the UW System. The requested funding was not included in the state budget for 2009-2011.

b. The Libraries’ information literacy instructional sessions have continued to grow. Viewed by the committee as critical to Access to Success, almost 1,000 sessions were offered during the last year.

c. The Libraries are engaged in a major renovation and transformation of the first floor west wing into the Daniel M. Soref Learning Commons, which was made possible by private funding in excess of $2 million. The committee was involved in discussions of planning the new Learning Commons, which is scheduled to open in fall 2009. The committee supported the decision to close the west wing main entrance for spring 2009 in order to reduce construction time and costs. The committee has discussed the potential of the Learning Commons to enhance student learning by providing space for group work, more technology and integrated help, and additional venues for information literacy instruction—all vital to student retention and success.

d. The Libraries have entered into new partnerships to improve student access to tutoring. Space within the Libraries has been assigned to a satellite station for the Writing Center and expanded tutoring help (TARC).

e. Ed Tech provided funding for laptops, video cameras, etc. for student use. In order to maximize student access to this technology, it is housed in the Libraries and checked in and out by the Libraries’ staff.

f. The Libraries have developed a variety of strategies for providing increasingly expensive research materials with a fixed base budget for collections. In some of the new areas of research there are high-cost journals to which the Libraries do not subscribe. Here the Libraries have expanded rapid access to articles through subsidized Document Delivery from commercial vendors. Interlibrary Loan activity has increased 15% in last two years. Quick and efficient daily delivery of books has resulted in a sharp increase in books borrowed from other UW Libraries. Consortial cooperation has provided many benefits including access to electronic resources.

4. **Review of current serials in anticipation of selective cancellation:** At its February meeting the committee discussed and supported the Libraries’ decision to ask the campus to engage in a review of current serials with the goal of achieving a 15% cancellation for 2010 to offset inflation, meet anticipated state budget cuts, and allow at least a small acquisition of databases and journal titles
in support of new programs, areas of research, and schools. A number of factors have led to the call for a serials review. The last new funding from the University of Wisconsin System for library resources was in the 1999/2001 biennium budget. The Libraries have been struggling with annual inflation rates of 6 to 8% for periodicals and 5% for monographs. Demands for Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery, especially relating to new areas of research, have been growing by double digits. Both programs are staff intensive. Higher enrollment has meant increases in the cost of licensed electronic resources. The Libraries have avoided doing serials cancellations since 2003 through reallocation of funds from other library services, successful fundraising, and the strategies mentioned in 3f above. During the March and May meetings the committee offered the Director of the Libraries comments and advice on implementation of the serials review.

5. The 2009-2010 Chancellor’s Golda Meir Libraries Scholar Awards: The committee elected a subcommittee to review the applications for the Chancellor’s Golda Meir Library Scholar Awards. The members of the subcommittee were: Barczyk, Buelow, Chesley, McHenry, and Pycior. The Graduate School received 42 applications for the two awards. The subcommittee reviewed all the applications, ranked the applicants, and interviewed the top seven applicants. Following the subcommittee’s recommendation, Chancellor Carlos Santiago bestowed the awards on Michael Stoneman and Carrie Wadman. The full committee invited the two awardees to its May meeting, at the beginning of which each awardee was presented with a certificate.

Respectfully submitted,

Helena Pycior
Chair
University Libraries Committee
Semester 2, 2008-2009