



MEMORANDUM

To: Edward T. Foote II, President

From: Steven Green
Chair, Faculty Senate

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "S. Green", written over the name "Steven Green" in the "From:" field.

Date: 19 April 2000

Subject: Faculty Senate Legislation #99018 (D) - Library Retreat Report

The Faculty Senate, at its 29 March 2000 meeting, voted unanimously to request that you send the attached Library Retreat Report to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees and request that you ask them to place this issue on the agenda of their next meeting for Faculty Senate representatives to present and discuss.

This resolution is forwarded to you for your response.

SG/kl

cc: ✓ Luis Glaser, Provost
✓ James Nearing, Chair of the Library and Information Resources Committee
✓ Don Bosseau, University Librarian

Attachment

Faculty Senate Retreat
26 February 2000
“The University of Miami 2000: University Libraries”¹

I. Executive Summary

- **“No major university can grow and prosper without a world class library” (statement by Ambassador Cobb, quoted by John Paul Russo). For this reason, the University of Miami must develop a great library system.**

A great library system supports the work of the university's students and faculty, attracts prospective students and faculty, encourages the retention of students, especially better students, provides a meeting place for the university community (especially critical for commuter students), is an important element in the emotional bond existing between an institution and its alumni, serves the alumni living in the area, and contributes to, and becomes a source of pride for, the greater community in which the institution is situated. The health of an educational institution can be inferred from the health of its library system.

- **By many measures, the University's libraries, and especially Richter Library, have failed to keep pace with the libraries of competitor institutions.**

The number of librarians at Richter has declined, just as our need for their assistance in navigating electronic databases has increased; the number of seats in Richter has dropped by more than half since the construction of the building; shelf space at Richter has been saturated for the past ten years, forcing the library to decline gift collections; books and journals have been moved off-site, reducing the productivity of students and faculty; annual book acquisitions system-wide have declined, from 85,000 volumes in 1993 to 45,000 in 1998, while those at competing institutions have risen; our performance in inter-library loan has declined precipitously. From 1992 to 1998, the University of Miami library system has dropped from 54th to 70th place in the rankings of the American Library Association.

- **We must develop both short-term and long-term plans for improving the entire library system. The faculty must assume an active role in the planning process.**

Open communication among students, faculty, administration, and trustees is essential for ensuring progress for our libraries as well as for the university as a whole.

¹This report was prepared by June Teufel Dreyer and Howard Pospesel.

- **The long-term plans for library improvements should include the construction of a Library Center on the Coral Gables campus. At the retreat both President Foote and Provost Glaser endorsed the concept of a Library Center.**

The Library Center will include the Richter Library, but will go well beyond it in size and scope. The Center will contain individual and group study areas, work stations with the most sophisticated equipment for electronic research, classrooms, graduate and faculty carrels, faculty offices, and space for our books and journals--including those important book collections and pre-1979 journals now in offsite storage. In addition, the Center must be beautiful both inside and out, for it will become the intellectual and social center of the Coral Gables campus.

- **Improving the library system and building a Library Center must be a top priority for the next capital campaign, and a major consideration in the selection of the next president of the University.**

President Foote supported the idea that the libraries must be made a top focus of the next campaign. Strategies for fund-raising for the libraries should be chosen after consultation with successful library fund-raising teams from other universities.

- **All of the libraries and branch libraries at the University must be integrated so that they will function as one unit. The present state of affairs is largely one of segregation.**
Electronic connectivity must be achieved across all campuses of the university, including, but going well beyond, library resources.
- **Our libraries must strengthen both their print and electronic resources. Each resource will require increases in budget, staff, and physical space.**

Electronic media will supplement but not supplant print materials. The availability of electronic media will not decrease costs for library materials, but will add to them. The double-digit inflation in library materials constitutes a challenge that must be faced, as does the cost of obtaining and maintaining the electronic equipment employed in a modern library.

- **Our librarians deserve praise for their dedicated service in a difficult situation.**

II. Comprehensive Summary

Steve Green, Chair of the Faculty Senate, called the meeting to order at 9 AM in the auditorium of Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences. **John Paul Russo**, Chair of the College of Arts and Sciences Library Committee, delivered a report. Touching on the history of libraries, he noted that libraries have existed as far back as 2500 B.C. The names given to these ancient repositories of knowledge attest to the importance attached to them. For example, the library of Rameses II, in 1300 B.C., had a plaque designating it "Healing Place of

the Soul." The great library at Alexandria, founded by Ptolemy I, was called the Muscon, which can be translated "House of the Daughters of Memory." An early Renaissance humanist, Vittorio da Feltré, referred to the academy where he conducted reading and learning as Casa Giocosa, the House of Joy.

Unfortunately, Russo continued, the University of Miami's House of Joy has become a House of Pain over the past decade. Expansion has not kept pace with need. On the Coral Gables campus, Richter Library was designed with 1900 seats; it now has only 900. Whereas the American Library Association recommends that libraries have seats available for 25 percent of students, Richter has seats for only 12 percent. Richter was designed to hold one million volumes. It was saturated a decade ago. When fully saturated, libraries are dysfunctional; among other problems, it becomes difficult to rearrange shelving to add new books.

Books have been moved out of Richter into storage without adequate consultation with, or prior knowledge of, the faculty. This has caused difficulties in conducting research. With regard to librarians, there has been a 15 percent decline in the staff of Richter; the reference desk lost a third of its staff within the past five years. From 1992 to 1998, the University of Miami's libraries dropped from 54th to 70th in the rankings of the American Library Association, while such institutions as Duke, the University of Florida, and the University of Southern California went up. Other universities' rankings fell, but none so fast as that of the University of Miami. Hence, Russo concluded, we seek support. The search committee for the new president should seek a commitment from candidates to make major improvements to the library a priority.

Provost **Luis Glaser** presented a more optimistic view, stating that the university is getting better. He opined that the American Library Association does not necessarily count books properly, and that UM libraries were constantly making acquisitions. There has also been a marked increase in data that are available electronically. Currently, seventeen million dollars are being spent on the library, with a significant portion of the amount coming from the university's budget. Additional staff is being added to the interlibrary loan desk, and software acquired for remote access to interlibrary loans. Shelves are being reorganized. When this is complete, library shelving will have increased 19 percent in Richter and 48 percent in South Campus. Library seating will increase to 1,073. The provost disputed the statement that the library has been neglected. Everyone, he stated, understands that the library is important. Plans for expansion should take into account the fact that it takes \$6 to maintain one square foot of space for one year. This translates into \$120 in the university's endowment funds.²

James Nearing, Chair of the Faculty Senate Library and Information Resources Committee, noted that students have two primary needs with regard to libraries: content and access. They expect to find the books they need for research, and to have a quiet place to work that is available at all hours. This is not what they find at the university libraries. In terms of volumes added, the University of Miami's numbers are declining. At the same time, those of the University of Florida are holding steady, while the mean of private universities is going up. Nearing pointed out that the library is an important recruiting tool for both prospective students

² On January 26, 2000, the Provost reported to the Senate that the Board of Trustees has approved a special recurring allocation of \$300,000 for the Library beginning next year. This is equivalent to an additional 10% for acquisitions.

and prospective faculty. He stated that considerable re-wiring will be necessary before electronic access can be made fully operational. In response to a question from the floor, he replied that the library committees of the different schools do not currently meet together to discuss common concerns, but agreed that they should. Nearing concluded that a summary of an external report on the library is available on the Physics Department website.

In his presentation, **Don Bosseau**, Director of University Libraries, stated that he was aware of student and faculty desires to have the library open longer hours. He noted, however, that cuts would have to be made in other areas to pay for this: more hours open would mean less money to pay for staffing the reference desk. The influence of digital resources has raised expectations. Researchers can now learn quickly and easily of dozens or even hundreds of sources germane to their work that the UM libraries might not have.

The libraries have been trying to maintain a balance of computer-accessible materials with more traditional sources of information. The remote library facility---in our case, South Campus---is unpopular, but it is increasingly the norm. One can get same-day retrieval of materials from this facility provided that library staff receives the request by 10 AM; otherwise, it will be available in 24 hours. Arrangements can be made for those who want to visit the facility to browse in the collections.

Bosseau suggested that faculty members visit their librarians to create a profile of their interests. This done, a menu will come up on the faculty members' computer with new books and articles. If the faculty member expresses interest in individual titles, they can be obtained for her or him. Bosseau also urged faculty to help the acquisition process by visiting the books-on-approval shelf to decide what the libraries should acquire.

Edward T. Foote II, President of the University, reiterated the Provost's statement that \$17 million had been raised to improve the library, adding that the upcoming fund-raising drive will include a new wing for the library, including a library center. He urged that faculty and administration recognize the need to get the library we need for the new century, not the century just past. Just as we could not envision twenty years ago the emergence of current library-related technology, we may not be able to anticipate what will be available in two decades, or the kind of facility needed to house it.

Discussion from the floor concerned a variety of issues, including

- (a) the need to distinguish between near-term and long-term problems, suggesting that there should be a plan for each
- (b) the concept of library as the Commons---an agora, where scholars can meet
- (c) the need to avoid "balkanization" of libraries (several of the librarians present commented that this was being addressed: acquisitions are made with the university as a whole in mind. Faculty members urged that more be done in this regard)

- (d) the library center must be a qualitatively different facility. It should be acknowledged that its creation will be expensive, but worthwhile
- (e) book culture and electronic culture share two commonalities: they require money and space. It is often forgotten that electronic data acquisition requires computers and printers, which involve initial acquisition costs, expensive maintenance, and considerable space. We should be making plans now for expanded facilities, and for the library center.
- (f) the question of architecture: new additions should blend with the old in an aesthetically appealing manner.
- (g) the issue of digitally-acquired sources versus books is the wrong issue: we need a great library, regardless of the mix of the two.
- (h) the need to distinguish carefully between perception and reality with regard to the condition of library facilities.

Chair **Green** summed up the retreat by thanking the President and Provost for their commitment to a major fund-raising drive to benefit the existing library and the planned library center, as well as to the creation of a university-wide listserv. He opined that the university has been improving, as the provost stated, but that at the same time it has been losing ground with regard to its peer institutions. The faculty also bears responsibility: we must make clear what we want. It is also important to prioritize among our desires to better the library facilities as well as improve student quality and the infrastructure while hiring senior scholars and nurturing junior colleagues.

The meeting adjourned at 2 PM.