LIBRARY ISSUES

BRIEFINGS FOR FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS

The Last Issue   **September-November 2016**

The Last Issue: Retirement

By Richard M. Dougherty, and as always, thoroughly edited by Ann P. Dougherty
with final comments from our Contributing Editors

Library Issues has had a great run: 36 years. And now it's time to retire. It is with mixed emotions that we announce that *Library Issues* is ceasing publication.

Since *Library Issues* made its first appearance in September 1980, academic libraries have undergone a massive transformation. Communication technologies have also transformed the ways in which library directors communicate with academic officers and faculty. What has not changed is the importance for library directors to continue to communicate with campus officials.

Why We Started *Library Issues*

As I reviewed the run of issues, I was reminded of the circumstances that prompted us to launch *Library Issues: Briefings for Faculty and Administrators* in the first place. It was very much tied to my own career.

I had just left my position as University Librarian at the University of California, Berkeley (1972-1978) to assume a comparable position at the University of Michigan (1978-1988). At Berkeley, I had a truly superb staff and reported to Chancellor Albert Bowker and Vice Chancellor Ira Michael Heyman who knew very little about the intricacies of library operations, but were incredible listeners and very quick learners.

However, I was trading the suffocating bureaucracy of a University System where change was frustratingly slow and challenging for a free standing University where the prospects for change were much brighter even though Michigan was feeling the impact of a depressed auto industry. Budget cuts and reassessment of programs had become the order of the day on campus.

I was very fortunate, however, that the recently appointed Vice President for Academic Affairs, Harold Shapiro believed that new models of academic libraries were badly needed. And while he viewed my predecessor with great respect, he also believed that new leadership provided an opportunity to advocate changes in how the library system served faculty and students.

At the time I was appointed UM Director of Libraries, I was already the publisher and editor of *the Journal of Academic Librarianship (JAL)*, having launched that journal in 1975. Since I wrote an editorial for each issue, I was constantly on the lookout for emerging issues and trends. This responsibility gave me a broader perspective than that of many library directors who were more focused on their immediate responsibilities.

I realized early on that establishing and maintaining trust with busy administrators was extremely important. It also became clear that I had to frame issues differently if I were going to be successful in convincing campus officials to pursue new approaches. Many academic administrators thought that their libraries were "bottomless pits," that library needs were truly endless. This caused some administrators to throw up their hands in frustration and simply neglect library needs.

While I was always fortunate to have direct access to my bosses, my challenge was to get their

Coming Soon —

Sorry, nothing more coming.

attention and support because the library was not their first, second, or even third priority. Their top priorities usually included faculty quality and faculty salaries, fund raising, political battles for budgets, campus computer systems and networks, campus physical development, and equal opportunity issues. I knew this was true for my fellow ARL library directors as well.

I recognized that it was crucial to provide reliable information and to the extent possible, to frame library requests in a broad campus context. In other words, when faced with demands from Deans for budget increases that greatly exceeded available resources, why should the Vice President respond favorably to the library's requests? There are no simple responses to that question, but I found that if it were possible to demonstrate how the Vice President himself might benefit from approving our request, he was more likely to be supportive.

For example, there was a hue and cry from faculty and library staff to preserve our crumbling collections. By funding our preservation goals, the VP also received plaudits from many members of the faculty. Oftentimes we were lucky to get one half of what we were requesting, but heck, a half a loaf was better than no loaf at all.

My own experiences, plus the feedback from ARL friends, convinced me that most academic administrators had little more that the vaguest understanding of library concerns. Most academic administrators traditionally rose from within the ranks of the faculty and they moved on after 3 or 4 years so turnover was constant. Their visits to the library were usually limited to their personal use as a researcher.

My conclusion was that the library profession needed a publication that would highlight issues that librarians knew were important, and for which an understanding of the issue would be an asset to the administrator, e.g., copyright issues, retrospective conversion of catalog records, resources sharing, etc. It also made sense that faculty who were serving on Senate-library committees would also benefit from more information. Thus was born *Library Issues: Briefings for Faculty and Administrators.* It was distributed free as an insert in *JAL* for the first year and then spun out on its own.

Objectives and Goals

To serve as our first group of contributing editors, we invited a group of practicing library administrators from large and small schools who were on the firing line. (See roster) Their response was enthusiastic. We encouraged them to select issues that they were grappling with personally and/or issues about which they were passionate. Our belief was that if they were grappling which an issue at home, (e.g., preservation of library collections, convincing faculty that online public access catalogs would improve service, or why library staff development was important) then other library administrators would be wrestling with the same issue. That remained our working philosophy to the end.

The challenge was to keep articles short so they would have a better chance of being read, and to keep them as jargon-free as possible so they would be better understood by academic administrators.

Professional jargon still serves as an obstacle to effective communication. Why should one expect an economist or a historian to resonate when he reads such terms as shelf list, MARC, bibliographic control, retrospective conversion, LMS, patron-driven acquisitions (PDA), open educational resources, or threshold concepts. The editors made every effort to eliminate unnecessary jargon or provide understandable definitions.

We initially thought we could reach out directly to academic administrators, but found that the Dean or Vice President typically turned *LI* over to an assistant who worked in his/her office. These assistants either didn't view the library as a priority or they didn't understand the issue being addressed.

What we needed to do was to identify a person who understood why the topic was important and who could translate the significance to the appropriate administrator or faculty committee. Of course this proved to be the library director. Astute library directors could use a *Library Issues* article to introduce a topic that was important to their campus. We also found that *LI* sometimes served as a briefing paper for the director. We always strived to present a balanced point of view, the pros and cons, of taking or not taking certain actions. It was up to each campus to decide which actions were appropriate, if any, for that particular campus.

> *Library Issues* **highlights key issues in academic librarianship. Its intended audience is faculty and academic administrators and librarians who work with them.** *LI***'s short articles present the various facets of controversial topics, not campus-specific solutions.** *LI* **strives to clarify not persuade, to present facts not opinions, to facilitate communication not advocate positions.**

We also quickly learned that some library directors didn't want another librarian communicating directly with their boss. Such directors were afraid that *LI* would inadvertently raise an issue that he/she didn't want raised. Some directors requested that issues be mailed directly to their office. Consequently if *LI* highlighted an issue that dovetailed with their campus priorities, the issue could be communicated to the campus administration and Senate library committee members; otherwise, the *LI* issue went into director's figurative waste basket. It has always been my opinion that the most effective directors were those who used *LI* selectively when it was in their best interests.

1980s: The Beginning

In preparing this swansong I reviewed all 36 years of issues. It was a fascinating process because it was possible to identify trends and developments that had surfaced over the years. At times I felt that I was reliving a piece of academic library history. Today we take networks, digital publications, mobile phones, social media, etc. for granted, but in 1980 there was no internet, no e-mail, and computer networks were relatively primitive and unreliable.

Among the prominent issues of the early eighties were preservation of collections, retrospective conversion of catalog records, copyright and fair use, nation-wide resource sharing, and storage libraries. The controversial issues of the period included whether libraries should charge for services, e.g., the free or fee debate; the protracted debate over the merits of OCLC versus RLG; and the serials pricing crisis.

The serials pricing controversy received the most intense attention in *LI* during the 1980s. The first reference to the crisis appeared in September 1985 in an article I wrote entitled "Price Discrimination of British Publishers toward U. S. Libraries." The article described how several large British publishers were charging U.S. libraries much more than they were charging libraries in Great Britain for the same titles. These differentials on occasion exceeded 100 percent.

This revelation caused several librarian researchers to begin looking more deeply at the pricing policies of publishers in Great Britain and Europe. They quickly discovered that a number of major European publishers were increasing subscription rates far in excess of what could be justified by inflation, dollar exchange rates or other costs related to publishing or distribution. It was not uncommon for rate increases to exceed 75 percent. Among the publishers identified as perpetrators were Elsevier, Springer, Pergamon, Taylor and Francis, and Academic Press.

One aftershock of the years of significant increases in serials subscription costs was the need for many libraries to organize serials cancellation projects which unfortunately ignited political blowback among faculty. Librarians were caught in the middle.

Because of the issue's importance to the academy, *LI* inaugurated two regular features: "Library Materials Price Update" and "Dollar Watch" to track the costs of materials to library and the fluctuating dollar value against foreign currencies. Thanks to Ron Leach and Mark Sandler these columns ran regularly from 1986 through 1993.

One can argue that the inflation of serial subscription rates that emerged in the 1980s signaled the beginning of the end of the system of scientific and scholarly publishing that higher education had enjoyed since World War II. The rapid inflation of journal prices has gradually led to a partial transformation in scholarly publishing. It has hastened the appearance of on-line journal publications, campus repositories, packages of serials, open access publications, and projects like SPARC which was organized by the ARL. We would like to think that our constant exposure of the issue had a hand in that process.

Near the end of the 1980s we find references to the growing interest in e-books, how technologies were beginning to impact classroom instruction, and the decision of several libraries to offer fee services to industry. Such services were launched by libraries at Purdue University, Arizona State, and the University of Michigan, among others.

On to the 1990s

The 1990s ushered in the era of campus networks. An article by Jennifer Cargill in May 1990 highlighted the National Research Education Network (NREN), the predecessor of what become known as the Internet. Not surprisingly as the Internet took root on campuses, Internet training programs began to flourish. Bibliographic instruction, a frequent issue of the 1980s gave way to computer literacy programs.

Over the decade several articles addressed the changing campus environment and its impact on library operations and library services. A number of campus officials began to advocate merging libraries with computer centers. This became a contentious issue on some campuses so we addressed the pros and cons of this.

The presence of more and more publications in digital and electronic formats raised questions about space needs of the library and what roles a library might play in the digital era. In fact some officials began to question whether the library would remain relevant. The first article addressing the impact of technology on library space, by Barbara Fister, appeared in *LI* in September 1998. Many other articles on reengineering library space would follow in the next few years.

Into the New Millennium

As *LI* entered the 21st century, the pace of change continued to accelerate. The key driver was the explosive growth of technologies and their impact on higher education and academic libraries. Technological advances also sparked new concerns about copyright and fair use, photocopying, licensing, and library reserve services. Virtual libraries, distance education, licensing issues, and what to make of Wikipedia came across our pages. Articles focusing on copyright issues continued to receive attention over the next 15 years.

Preservation of collections continued to be an important issue although technologies had reshaped the conversation. Instead of microfilming crumbling paper collections, the focus was on digitizing valuable collections, and wondering who would be responsible for preserving electronic scholarship.

The need for and benefits of a national strategy for a national shared archiving program were discussed in a 2011 article co-authored by Sam Demos and Wendy Lougee. Institutional repositories began to proliferate in the early years of the 21st century as well. HathiTrust was first highlighted in *LI* in 2012 by Jeremy York.

The computer literacy programs of the 1990s now gave way to information literacy. These articles dealt with ways to help students, how to engage faculty in information literacy programs, and how to combat plagiarism.

Questions about library space continued to be raised. Did the library need as much space as we had traditionally assumed? What could be done to create new learning spaces to meet student needs? How could older library space be remodeled to better meet student needs? How could space be remodeled to bring faculty back to the library? This was the period that saw growing popularity of information commons for students and faculty. It was also during this period that some libraries began to question traditional services such as the reference desk. Questions began to surface as to whether access to digital information would allow libraries to reduce print collections. Growth of shared storage facilities. became another important topic.

The virtual transformation of the scholarly communication system received a great deal of attention. We featured articles reporting on efforts to promote open access journals and the impact of open access publications on academic scholarship. In the last few years we observed the rise of pre-indexed collections and vendors offering packages of journals to libraries. There were also articles that reported on specific digitizing programs, e.g., ARL's SPARC, Project Gutenberg, HathiTrust and Google's digitization projects. Of course the scholarly communications system continues to evolve.

We included numerous articles that highlighted very specific issues: the Patriot Act, the TEACH Act, the Americans With Disabilities Act, Wikipedia, MOOCs, and various social media.

More recently issues addressed assessing student learning, developing ways to measure the library's value, and how to manage discovery layers, open access, and open educational resources.

In recent years we have covered topics ranging from marketing the library as a campus asset, dealing with natural disasters, patron security, noise management and patron privacy to broad issues such as how to integrate the library into new virtual learning spaces and how the library fits into the changing world of higher education.

There has also been growing campus attention focused on program assessment and accountability. Questions such as "what do libraries contribute to a student's education" or "are libraries being managed efficiently" were subjects of conversations. Tools such as LibQUAL, SAILS, and E-Metrics were designed to address such concerns. We have addressed them all.

Timeless Themes

Across the decades, some issues remained evergreen: how the roles of libraries and librarians were changing, how to develop a stronger staff, how to manage the changing patterns of library staffing. We discussed the best ways to educate students, preserve collections and provide attractive learning spaces. An article co-authored by Sarah Pritchard and Steve Marquardt entitled "Looking for Director Goodboss: How to Recruit a Head Librarian" is as relevant today as it was when it was first published in 2000. The article provides an excellent set of guidelines for administrators who are faced with the task of recruiting new library directors.

Wrapping it Up

The last 36 years have seen transformational change in college, community college and university libraries. No, the predictions of some administrators that libraries would become obsolete as "everything became free on the Internet" haven't materialized. But those who predicted that in order for libraries to remain relevant, significant change would be required were on target. I believe that many academic libraries have already successfully bridged the gap from a world of paper to a world of digital information. Library roles and functions have changed, but library operations are still complicated and most academic administers are still not familiar with what makes libraries tick. Therefore, I remain convinced that there continues to be a role for a *Library Issues*-type communication, but probably in a different format, delivered a different way. -- *rmdoughe@umich.edu*

Thank you subscribers, readers, writers, and contributing editors for your years of support and loyalty

---

We are happy to report that the complete run of 36 volumes will be available to all via HathiTrust. This will ensure that students and researchers who are interested in the issues and topics that have driven change in academic libraries still have access to *Library Issues*.

MOUNTAINSIDE PUBLISHING, INC.

We certainly could not have kept this going without the many contributions from Bill Miller, Barbara Fister, and Steven Bell – the longest-serving, easy-to-work-with, skilled writers. When we let our current Contributing Editors know of our decision to retire, they had mixed emotions. We thought you might like to hear from them directly.

William Miller, 1995-2016, Florida Atlantic University

Twenty-one years ago I started writing for *Library Issues*. If I had started in 1920, nothing much would have changed in the library world by 1941. But much has changed between 1995 and 2016, and this newsletter specialized in capturing this rapid change. I was not always prescient.

In 1995, I did not envision that electronic resources would be as dominant as they are now, nor did I believe, when I wrote "Academic Libraries and Information Technology" in 1998, that anyone could ride roughshod over Copyright law by digitizing millions of in-print books, and prevail; I underestimated the power of Google's deep pockets.

On the other hand, I was quite correct, in my 1995 piece "Electronic Access to Information Will Not Reduce the Cost of Library Materials." Commercial publishing is a business, and libraries are still being held captive by that business, largely because of academia's promotion and tenure process. The commercial coopting of open access is a joke. As I argued in several more recent pieces, such as "Let's Take Back Scholarly Journal Publishing and End the Wasted Spending" (2013), we will remain in captivity until we collectively create our own system of scholarly publication, and take control of our own resources. However we still await those with the vision, credibility, and deep pockets to bring this about.

Over the last 21 years, libraries have gone from being the only physical locations holding what scholars need to being underestimated and perceived by some as unnecessary, even as we became the primary vehicle for paying for proprietary electronic resources and making them available "for free" to our users. Despite the mistaken impression in some quarters that library buildings are now superfluous, I indicated in "Libraries and Student Success" (2013) that library spaces remain important as a "third space," "neither home or personal space, nor a formal classroom or office setting, but something of a hybrid, a public space where people can choose to study alone, socialize with friends, eat and drink, and seek interaction with campus professionals as needed and desired." Some things change, but others don't. Students continue to prefer to use libraries over other campus spaces for most of their academic needs, as well as many of their personal and social needs, and campus library buildings remain among the most heavily-used places on campus.

As libraries have evolved over the last 21 years, I have appreciated the chance to write about current issues, like MOOCs (2013), or changes in the library portion of IPEDS data collection (2014) as they were first occurring, and with very short deadlines that assured the currency and relevance of my thoughts. These pieces underscore the value of *Library Issues* as it captured the rapidly shifting academic and library landscape of the past few decades. I also appreciated the idea that in writing these pieces, I was writing to be relevant to and understood by senior academic administrators, not just to librarians. The challenge of discussing these issues in a way that deans and provosts would find useful was a helpful discipline, and I hope that the resulting pieces were occasionally useful to librarians faced with the task of explaining these issues to their academic colleagues.

Underlying my involvement and freedom to inquire into whatever interested me as the world changed around us was the wisdom of Dick Dougherty, and the masterful editing of Ann Dougherty. Their confidence in my ability was most heartening. My years as a contributing editor of *Library Issues* stand out as one of the more notable aspects of my career, and I will be forever grateful for the opportunity.

A Final Note

I always told our contributors: If you write too long, remember, I have 30 years of experience of turning these papers into what we need. I've had some contributors I barely touched; I've had others who give me a 20-page "brain dump" and rely me to extract the gold nuggets. Usually it's somewhere between the two. The bottom line is: it doesn't have to be perfect. Editors exist for a reason.

1. Editors want writers to succeed.
2. Editors are often brutally honest.
3. Editors want readers to think you are brilliant when your work is published...
4. And only the writer knows what work the editor has done.

So to all my writers……It's been a pleasure. Happy retirement.

Ann Dougherty

Barbara Fister, 2004-16, Gustavus Adolphus College

I got an email from Richard out of the blue in 1998 asking if I would like to write an article for *LI* about libraries and technology. I liked the idea of writing for a broader audience about a topic that was already on my mind, and found it great fun to explore the many ways technology at the time was affecting libraries, including our thinking about services, collections, and teaching. Altogether I have written a dozen pieces for *LI* about libraries and learning as well as on academic publishing, my two major passions. I think the articles that were most enjoyable for me to write were on Wikipedia and the whole idea of read/write culture (a new thing at the time) and one on big data, which gave me an excuse to delve into a topic I wanted to know more about.

We librarians tend to talk to each other a lot but too rarely write for audiences we should be trying to reach – the faculty and administrators whose decisions shape what the academic library will be and what we will be able to do for students. I was happy to have the opportunity to write for that broader audience and while it's time to say goodbye to *Library Issues,* we'll still have lots of library issues to communicate in future through as many channels as we can find. I'm delighted that this record of library history will be preserved and made public by HathiTrust. I hope librarians carry on the tradition started here of bringing library issues, in accessible form, to people who are not librarians

Steven J. Bell, 2004-16, Temple University

LI editors were academic library giants to me. They were the librarians I admired and looked to for advice and inspiration. Being asked to write for *LI* and then to join the editorial board is a highlight of my academic librarianship career. Coming up with ideas for issues was never the real challenge for me. Rather, it was having a deep understanding of the *LI* mission and how to write in a style that conformed to it. It was a challenge to put myself in the position of an academic administrator and ask "what do I need to know about this topic and what is the best way to communicate it to me on my terms." That challenge fit well with my desire to write and present in a way that is driven by the needs of the audience.

My favorite moments as an *LI* editor will always be the great editorial board meet-ups at ALA conferences. Good food. Good friends. Stimulating conversation. Challenging each other. In a world in which we increasingly do our business virtually, these face-to-face conversations are what I will miss most. My only regret is that more colleagues did not get to learn from all the *LI* editors. Over the years the readership diminished. Writers want their work to reach the widest audience possible. So I am heartened to know that the full-text of every *LI* will be digitized and accessible through HathiTrust so that the current and future generations of academic librarians will have access to what amounts to a treasure trove of academic library knowledge and history from 1980 to 2016. Thank you Ann and Richard for making it possible.

Irene M. H. Herold, 2013-16, University of Hawaii at Manoa

I have been honored to contribute to *Library Issues.* It allowed me to explore topics and delve into issues in a different way. I loved the opportunity to share my thoughts and those of others on issues of leadership, culture, development, and capacity. I was tickled every time a reader sent me their comments on what I had written. It was a bitter-sweet moment to realize that my most recent contribution was the last topical issue for the publication. I tiptoed humbly in the footsteps of the library giants who contributed before me. Thank you Larry Hardesty and Mignon Adams for recommending me to fill the place you vacated by retiring. Thank you Ann and Richard for letting me be part of your contributing author community. It was a great experience.