



OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Schools and Colleges

FROM: Paul Courant
University Librarian and Dean of Libraries

DATE: April 20, 2007

SUBJECT: Library Collection Update

As you know, the State is rescinding a portion of its appropriation this year, and the Provost has asked all units to return a portion of their general fund budgets. In order to address this and other ongoing challenges, such as inflation, the loss of buying power abroad and growth in the availability and cost of new electronic content, I have asked the librarians responsible for acquisitions to reduce their expenditures this current fiscal year by 2%.

The Library's subject specialists have been dedicated in balancing the need with fiscal resources, as well as being innovative leaders in developing digital libraries and in digitization of library materials. As stewards for one of the nation's greatest print collections, they acquire, preserve, and provide access to materials in a variety of formats. Given finite fiscal and space resources, we must carefully consider our ability to maintain current collecting practices that allow for multiple copies of materials.

Over the years, different libraries have collected duplicate material because of cross-disciplinary interest and in recognition of the need to keep materials and faculty in close proximity. Easier access to our collections as the result of electronic subscriptions and our ability to move materials between libraries have enabled us to accelerate the withdrawal of duplicate print titles currently housed among our 19 libraries. We are removing duplicate journal titles across the libraries and anticipate taking a similar approach to books. By reducing the number of duplicate copies we buy and store, we free up much needed space for future collections and enhance our ability to acquire and maintain new materials.

Currently, we often acquire materials in both print and electronic format, and we rarely acquire materials in electronic form only. Where there are reliable and robust mechanisms for archiving and long term scholarly use we will increasingly collect materials in electronic format only. Here, too, we can save both space and money which

can be put to other good purposes while serving the current and future needs of our academic communities. Be assured that we will be both cautious with respect to any risk to the collections and aggressive with respect to exploiting opportunities inherent in the new technologies. We are developing standards in support of this approach, and we will work with you and your faculties as we proceed.

I invite you to share this letter with your faculty and to let them know that their subject specialist or librarian liaison (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/collections/specialists.html>) will update them on our progress and be available to assist them with any questions. I look forward to working with you as the Library continues to perform its primary mission to serve faculty and students in their work: research, teaching, and learning. Thank you for your continued support of the University Library.