Library Mission Statement

The Earl K. Long Library is an essential partner in the learning, research, and service mission of the University. The Library unites knowledgeable staff, scholarly information, welcoming spaces, and leading-edge technology to inspire learning and enable information literacy and research. It enriches the campus and Greater New Orleans community by preserving and disseminating the local culture and the scholarly and creative output of the University. Its highly skilled staff encourages innovation, capitalizes on appropriate technologies, forges effective partnerships, and strives for excellence.

Collections Goal

The Library provides relevant core and in-depth collections that support the learning, teaching, and research needs of undergraduate and graduate students and faculty, especially for designated academic programs of excellence, graduate programs, and for new degree programs.

Understanding the Needs of our Faculty and Students

The Library cultivates an understanding of the teaching and research needs of the University through its multi-faceted involvement in the academic life of the campus. Subject librarians develop in-depth knowledge of the teaching and research emphases of faculty in their assigned departments through close and continued contact with teaching faculty and students—in the classroom, through email and personal interaction, and through the examination of course descriptions and syllabi. The Library’s presence on the Faculty Council Committee on Courses & Curricula ensures that it has direct knowledge of new curricular emphases and that it can voice concerns about the adequacy of current Library resources for new programs and courses.

The Library is continuously evaluating its collections to be responsive to changing needs of the campus. Surveys and focus groups are conducted periodically to assess user satisfaction with Library collections, and results are used to shape collecting practices. Serials subscriptions are reviewed annually, in close consultation with department faculty, and faculty input is actively solicited for purchases of books, CDs, DVDs, and other content.

Increasingly, the Library seeks to engage its users more directly in the selection of materials, through the implementation of patron-driven acquisition models. When the budget allows, the Library now purchases books requested by faculty through Interlibrary Loan, and we will continue to explore other ways to allow patrons to participate directly in selection, since this approach maximizes the impact of purchases, ensuring that they directly benefit our users.

Role of Consortia

Through the LOUIS consortium, the Library participates in the consortial purchase of subscription databases and other content that is critical to all academic libraries in the state. Since these purchases are heavily subsidized by state funding to LOUIS, and a substantial discount is achieved through the broad participation of many libraries, we are able to purchase many more electronic resources than we could afford as a single institution. Decisions about specific content purchased by the consortium are made through the LALINC
Electronic Resources Committee, comprised of librarians from different types of academic institutions from around the state. The UNO Library actively seeks representation on this committee, and in the absence of formal representation will continue to follow the committee’s activities closely and contribute to discussions and decision-making as much as possible.

The Library participates in other consortia as appropriate, including mini-consortia (groups of libraries purchasing together to obtain a discount, but without monies directly from the state) and broad regional/national consortia such as Lyrasis.

Changes in Scholarly and Commercial Publishing

- Access versus Ownership

With the explosion of new models of purchasing and access, facilitated largely through the development of electronic forms of publishing, the Library is increasingly providing access to resources instead of owning them outright. While we continue to purchase a significant amount of content in physical form (print books, CDs, DVDs), the Library has had to adapt to the realities of the academic publishing marketplace, in which more material is made available in electronic form, and is licensed rather than sold. At the same time, the Library seeks to effect change in scholarly publishing to ensure that academia can have more control over its research output, and allow libraries to return to their role as stewards of the scholarly and cultural record.

- Formats

There is a strong preference for web-based electronic content that can be made available through remote access for many types of information and data, particularly journals and other serial publications. However, the Library will purchase resources in the format that is appropriate for its intended use. As new forms of publication emerge, including more interactive and process-based models, the Library will support access to these new formats. The Library is not able to support all obsolete formats, but will attempt to migrate the content where allowable (ie. Public domain materials in federal documents) to accessible formats. Replacement of obsolete formats with an accessible format from commercial providers will be reviewed for purchase or license based on the continuing value of the content and the availability of funds.

- Interdisciplinarity and Aggregation

Increasingly, content is offered for purchase in interdisciplinary or publisher-based packages, which may not fit clearly in a single disciplinary category. These include publisher-based e-journal and e-book collections and aggregations of content across disciplines by third-party vendors who license content directly from publishers. In some cases content that we want to purchase is bundled with other content that we do not want to acquire. The Library will seek increased flexibility in subscribing to packaged content and will resist, as much as possible, the forced bundling of content by publishers.

- Open Access and Reform of Scholarly Communication

As alternatives to the traditional model of scholarly publishing emerge, the Library will respond by adopting and advocating for those models that best serve the interests of our students and faculty. The Library has stated its support for Open Access as an approach to scholarly publishing because it removes barriers to research and scholarship and disseminates knowledge to the widest possible audience, thereby achieving the fundamental goals of higher education --the advancement of knowledge and the preservation of the intellectual and cultural record.

The Library is committed to the following actions in support of Open Access:

- Linking to OA journals through databases and the online catalog
• Collaborating with faculty and other stakeholders to increase the visibility and impact of the University’s research and scholarship through OA repositories and publications
• Serving as a resource for the UNO community as we explore OA initiatives and other opportunities in scholarly publishing
• Developing an institutional repository to collect, preserve, and disseminate the research and scholarship produced at the University

The Library’s fundamental mission is to support the academic life of students and faculty of the University of New Orleans through the provision of essential information resources. As the University grows and expands in new directions, collecting emphases and practices will evolve accordingly. The Library commits to continually examining its own practices and priorities in order to ensure that they align with the changing needs of the University of New Orleans community.

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