

LMIS Minutes, February 21, 2020

Committee Members Present: Derek Buescher, Jane Carlin, Genevieve Caskey, Andrew Gomez, Sue Hannaford, Matthew Link, Janet Marcavage, Mike Spivey, Bryan Thines

Guests: Peggy Firman (Associate Director, Resource Management Services) and Eli Gandour-Rood (Science Liaison Librarian)

Meeting called by Chair Marcavage at 3:01pm.

Meeting began with the approval of minutes from the committee's February 7th meeting.

The meeting then shifted to a presentation provided by Jane Carlin, Peggy Firman, Eli Gandour-Rood on journal use and subscription costs.

Carlin began by noting that this presentation was prepared in response to the Faculty Senate charge to LMIS to provide an update on subscription costs and related issues regarding access. Carlin then moved to framing some of the larger debates around surging subscription prices as evidenced by recent debates over Elsevier and the University of California's decision to cancel their Elsevier subscription. She noted that these types of decisions look different on our campus given the difference in scale but noted that the Collins Library has endorsed a [University of Washington statement](#) concerning sustainability and equity in regards to information services. Hannaford asked for clarification about the breadth of campus support regarding the UW statement with Carlin noting that the endorsement was on the part of the library but that she hopes to have additional allies on campus going forward.

Firman then explained the recent history over the use of big deals and bundles regarding journal access. These have become increasingly common ways for publishers to package a large number of journals for a bundled price. In particular, she highlighted how the costs of big deals have quickly outpaced a number of factors (namely library budgets and inflation). To illustrate this point, she compared the information cost on campus from 2015 to 2020, to underscore how the relative buying power of the library has decreased over time. Firman stressed that many big deals tend to be more closely associated with R1 institutions, but that we do have bundle packages and relationships with large publishers. She also noted that the Orbis Cascade Alliance is another tool that is used to negotiate costs.

Buescher asked about how the broader shift to digital has influenced interlibrary loan use and cost. Carlin noted that we continue to have many researchers use ILL because of their specialized

areas of study. Moreover, she noted that if our bundles services were decreased, an increase in ILL usage would also carry its own costs (labor, lending institution fees, etc.).

Gandour-Rood then explained how the combination of databases allows for broad access to journals on campus. Using several specific journals, he explained how different databases sometimes combine to provide comprehensive (or near comprehensive) access to a journal's archive. He did note that one drawback to this system is that specific journals can sometimes be removed from specific databases—this is not true for JSTOR.

Gandour-Rood also noted the other ways that campus users are accessing materials. Some examples included Google Scholar and Sci-Hub. In the case of the latter, he noted that the library cannot endorse Sci-Hub given it violates many of our subscription agreements and the law.

Carlin then summed up the presentation by noting that subscription costs limit other services and acquisitions that relate to Special Collections, streaming media, and other initiatives. She concluded by exploring a few possibilities that may challenge the existing subscription model and publishing structure by noting initiatives such as the Directory of Open Access Journals, Unpaywall, SPARC, and Lever Press.

Buescher noted that one possibility moving forward may be to present the aforementioned UW statement to LMIS and the Faculty Senate as a means of garnering broader support. This led to a broader discussion about other ways to potentially challenge the existing publishing ecosystem.

Meeting adjourned at 3:58pm

Minutes taken by Andrew Gomez