

Statement on the Importance of Supporting Librarian Appointments

Given the possibility that reductions in the number of Librarian positions may result from the current fiscal crisis, the LAUC-B Executive Committee has approved a statement concerning the layoff of Librarians. It contains some suggestions for alternative actions.

The statement was forwarded to Tom Leonard, the University Librarian, and was discussed with him. A report of that discussion will appear in the minutes of the May 12, 2004 LAUC-B ExComm meeting.

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Statement on the Importance of Supporting Librarian Appointments at the UC Berkeley Libraries

State universities throughout the nation are facing severe budget deficits and have been forced to make deep cuts to programs and services. In some states the worst is yet to come, and decisions impacting the lives of many must be made in the near future. During this time of crisis, it is crucial that reductions in university spending do not disproportionately reduce the funding of university library programs.

As the fiscal situation at UC Berkeley becomes increasingly desperate, it may be tempting to target Librarian appointments in planning ways to meet budget reduction requests. However, LAUC-B strongly encourages Library Administration to voice its opposition to library budget reductions and support the retention of Librarian appointments. The steady loss of Librarian positions has continued since 1990 and the current census of Librarians has already reached critically low levels (see [Appendix A](#)). [32K Word document]

The effect of budget reductions on library programs is exacerbated because these program funds are dominated by personnel costs. Budget cuts have an immediate impact on the level of services being provided by the Library and makes library collections less accessible to the University community. Library collections require constant attention and cannot simply be warehoused and unavailable until better times return. The resulting backlog of work may never be overcome; this was certainly the legacy of the budget reductions of the 1990s.

Disproportionate cuts in the budget will seriously undermine the mission and prestige of our Library and the University. LAUC-B thus encourages great caution in reducing the funding for Librarian positions. Librarians provide a vital service that should be supported even in times of financial hardship.

LAUC-B also wishes to state that its position on retaining Librarians does in no way suggest that cuts in staffing in other job classifications within the Library is an acceptable alternative. Instead we would like to offer a variety of measures for consideration.

- Expand Library development efforts to include endowments that will fund personnel.
- Consider a small, temporary across-the-board salary reduction.
- Extend the START program beyond its initial two years.
- Consider incentive programs to create voluntary attrition.

Approved by LAUC-B ExComm, April 2004