



December 13, 2010

TO: Online Instruction Advisory Committee
Council of University Librarians

FR: Librarians Association of the University of California (LAUC) Executive Board

RE: UC Online Instruction Pilot Project: Impact on Libraries

In its role as advisory body to the University of California¹, the Librarians Association of University of California (LAUC) submits the following letter to alert the University to the library-related financial, staff, and resource impacts of the planned UC Online Instruction Pilot Project courses. LAUC is eager to open a conversation with the Online Instruction Advisory Committee on what the Pilot Project will mean for UC libraries.

Upon review of the October 29, 2010 letter, *Request for Letters of Intent from UC Academic Senate faculty*, from the UC Office of the President to Executive Vice Chancellors and Provosts, we identified a number of library research and instruction support issues that need to be considered during the initial planning and implementation phases of the Pilot. Fortunately, the current Council of University Librarians' Systemwide Operations and Planning Advisory Group (SOPAG) advisory structure is more than capable of investigating and creating solutions for any potential issues. Examples include:

- ◆ Licensing of electronic resources (e.g., contractual agreements, simultaneous users)
- ◆ Acquisition of new electronic resources
- ◆ Availability of "course reserve" materials online
- ◆ Access to print resources not in electronic form
- ◆ Copyright permission fees
- ◆ Staffing to handle each of the above

In many ways, the services libraries provide now for traditional in-person courses would be very similar for online courses. However, the Pilot Project opens potential doors for expanding the role of the UC Libraries and librarians in support of the mission of the University.

Indeed, several librarians across the System see this Pilot Project as a golden opportunity to energize collaboration between faculty and librarians in more course-embedded instruction as well as focus on assessment, information literacy and critical thinking skills. As one librarian noted, "Without librarians' collaboration and help in this area, faculty may find themselves spending a lot of time one-on-one helping their online students with basic information researching and plagiarism avoidance." A recent report published by the University of Washington Information School's Project Information Literacy (PIL), *Truth be Told: How College Students Evaluate and Use Information in the Digital Age* found

that “[f]or over three-fourths (84%) of the students surveyed, the most difficult step of the course-related research process was getting started. Defining a topic (66%), narrowing it down (62%), and filtering through irrelevant results (61%) frequently hampered students in the sample, too. Follow-up interviews suggest students lacked the research acumen for framing an inquiry in the digital age where information abounds and intellectual discovery was paradoxically overwhelming for them.”ⁱⁱ Librarians excel in meeting these types of student needs and spend a significant amount of time addressing them.

The impacts include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Student and faculty access to librarians for online research consultations in addition to existing services such as the current 24/7 Digital Reference service
- ◆ Librarian time for developing online tutorials and research guides
- ◆ Librarian and staff time to expand online information researching and critical thinking help
- ◆ Librarian time to assess achievement of expected student learning outcomes for online information researching and critical thinking help

In order to assure the successful outcome of this Online Instruction Pilot Project, LAUC advocates the following:

1. Appointment of a LAUC representative(s) (ex-officio/consultant) to advise the UC-wide group on the library-related impact of proposed courses. The representative(s) would also act as the liaison between the group and the already existing UC library advisory groups.
2. Support (financial and otherwise) for faculty/librarian collaboration in online course design and assessment to incorporate information researching and critical thinking into curricula, assignments, and assessment.

Please let LAUC know how it can help support the initiatives and activities of the UC Libraries with respect to this UC Online Instruction Pilot Project.

CC: Lawrence H. Pitts, Provost and Executive Vice-President
Daniel Simmons, Chair, Universitywide Academic Senate & Academic Council
David G. Kay, Chair, University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP)
Richard Schneider, Chair, University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communications (UCOLASC)

ⁱ LAUC Bylaws, Article II. Section 1., approved by the UC Office of the President, March 23, 2009

ⁱⁱ Project Information Literacy is a national study about early adults and their information-seeking behaviors, competencies, and the challenges they face when conducting research in the digital age. During spring 2010, The University of Washington, iSchool conducted PIL's large-scale student survey at 25 U.S. community colleges and universities. Findings were based on a sample of 8,353 students, making the research one of the largest information literacy surveys ever conducted. The 2010 report was released on November 1, 2010.

http://projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL_Fall2010_Survey_FullReport1.pdf.