

UT SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
NOTES
FEBRUARY 20, 2004

Present: Loren Crabtree, Barbara Dewey, George Kabalka, Miriam Levering, Bob Levy, Susan Martin (co-chair), Jeff Mellor, Linda Phillips (co-chair & recorder), Bruce Ralston, Keith Stanga, Alice Woody, Ron Gilmour, Molly Royse, Jane Row

Loren noted that the current scholarly communications environment is complex and changing rapidly. While a significant issue is financial [cost of library materials inflation (\$653,868) for FY 05 would fund a .5% salary increase for faculty], Loren asks the Committee to consider scholarly communications broadly and offer advice about possible actions. The academic culture where tenure and promotion is based on publication in prestigious journals contributes to an inelastic market economy. Faculty are paid by the university to do research; to publish they give away their copyrighted material; the university purchases publications at inflated costs from commercial publishers that hold a virtual monopoly on the content. Loren will appreciate ideas from the Scholarly Communications Committee for changing the scholarly publishing culture.

Barbara emphasized the importance of open access to research results in the academy. She referred to presentations given at the September 2002 UT Scholarly Publishing Symposium that touched on various alternatives to publication in commercial journals. The pressure of the marketplace will have an impact on journal prices--in the last few months several universities have not renewed contracts for commercial aggregations with inflexible terms and high prices. Technological advances present new options for scholarly publishing. The University Libraries is a founding member of the Digital Library Federation, and librarians are experimenting with projects such as digitizing scholarly journals and creating services where faculty could archive their research results online. Scholars need open access to research publications, and they want their work widely accessible.

Vigorous discussion followed the opening remarks. Linda and Susan see an important role for the Committee in bringing scholarly communications issues to the attention of the campus. Linda distributed brochures created by librarians for UT faculty and graduate students. The brochures suggest faculty actions that could lead to wider access to scholarly work. Miriam has been involved with a scholarly association journal hosted by Indiana University. Like many scholarly societies, expenses associated with peer review have been underwritten by institutions of the editor and editorial board who serve without financial compensation. General economic constraints are forcing universities to review existing support for publishing. Bruce observed that promotion and tenure requirements dictate that faculty publish in high quality journals. Keith added that this is a national issue; if the best schools would collaborate, there is opportunity for innovation. George publishes 25-30 papers per year to be competitive internationally. Citation counts are used to determine publication

value; one of his recent publications in an electronic journal didn't get cited. There are variations among scholarly publishing cultures across disciplines; some expect monographs, while others count journal articles. Making the transition from the current culture is a huge challenge. We all agree that peer review is essential.

The group brainstormed about several actions that could be taken. A campus-wide conversation about departmental p&t practices and attitudes occurred in 1998/99. The role of external evaluators is critical, so it is important to understand the national/global environment when evaluating p&t requirements. Electronic access to scholarship has the potential to make dramatic changes in the ways faculty disseminate their work and evaluate the work of others. This committee should consider where we want UT to be in a movement towards non-traditional publication. While half of UT faculty are untenured and likely to continue publishing in traditional venues, a large group of professors with tenure have established reputations. These faculty have the potential to disseminate their work in emerging open access channels. The Scholarly Communications Committee can encourage all faculty to publish in less-costly journals.

The University Libraries is experimenting with local publication. Librarians are currently testing the digitization of a scholarly association journal and developing an institutional repository where researchers can self-archive their work. Ohio State University Library Director Joe Branin will speak at UT on April 1 about OSU's development of an institutional repository called The Knowledge Bank. The UT Press and the library are collaborating on a symposium to celebrate The Year of the University Press in 2004, with preliminary plans to focus on the scholarly monograph. The Committee may wish to hear from UT Press Director Jennifer Siler about ways the current status of university presses and ways they can contribute to changes in the publishing culture. The Committee recommends resending the library brochures (Scholars Under Siege and Changing Scholarly Publishing: A Guide for Graduate Students) to faculty and graduate students with an accompanying electronic message from Loren about the formation of UT's Scholarly Communications Committee. Committee members should seek opportunities to hold discussions at departmental programs and seminar series. A discussion at Faculty Senate would be desirable. We should attempt to align faculty self-interest behind the issue.

Miriam mentioned that Japanese universities host scholarly journals in the humanities, social sciences and science/technology to which their faculty contribute publications. There is a peer-review process. The technology exists to do this in the US, but universities will have to create an infrastructure for peer review, dissemination, and access. Easy links to journal prices on library web pages will promote faculty awareness of reasonably-priced titles. The Committee will address various issues related to scholarly publishing at future meetings, and will begin to get the word out to colleagues.

ACTION ITEMS

- 1. Distribute brochures with accompanying e-mail message from Loren. (Linda/Susan)**
- 2. Before the next meeting all Committee members present (and we hope those not present will do this as well!) will make at least one contact with individual faculty members or groups to communicate about some aspect of the scholarly publishing culture. At the next meeting we'll share our experiences.**