

Library symposium



Representatives from various universities throughout the nation are in Eugene to discuss the problem of too many books for the space the University's library has. Different alternatives are being discussed, with the main point of controversy being whether or not a central storage system should be used.

CON: Central storage just 'scholastic sabotage'

The central storage issue is a question of "books versus bucks" according to Hollister.

The struggle to build a high quality institution depends on an excellent research library, according to Hollister, Schaefer and McElderry.

"The first law of library science is: the moment you put a book into storage, someone will ask for it," Schaefer said. He added that persons who have national reputations in their disciplines invariably are concerned about a library's resources.

Schaefer said the University of Arizona has recently finished building a \$13.4 million "learning center." He added that the building was intended to be "visually alive, attractive and comfortable to encourage extensive use of the building."

And usage is currently four times that of the old library. "At the University of Arizona, we refuse to accept second-class citizenship for state universities. We intend to be ranked among the best," he stated.

Schaefer said the University is rapidly losing ground among research intensive institutions, if one looks at the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) statistics. The University is currently ranked 68th among ARL members, behind "schools no where near your academic standing," Schaefer added.

McElderry emphasized the need for care in choosing local solutions to library problems. He said that too little is known about the creative processes involved in research to remove books from humanities libraries.

"It really has to do with what universities are all about," he said. "The environment which tends to foster creativity contains able people, first-rate equipment, abundant information sources and the freedom to follow one's creativity."

Evidence indicates that truly creative minds have broad and varied backgrounds and extensive exposure to a wide variety of subjects, McElderry says.

"In the domain of the humanities, each work has its own relevance and character," McElderry said.

"In humanities the frequency of use may be very low and it extends over a long period of time, but there's as much of one work being used as another."

The fact that the general faculty was not notified of the central storage alternative until five months ago was frowned upon by Hollister.

"The thought that the University has applied to this matter so far is inadequate," he said. "The lack of consultation with the faculty is not merely an affront, but it ignores the people most directly involved with the situation."

Hollister said that it is inappropriate to consider the Big Ten or University of California remote storage in comparison to the proposed site for the Oregon state system, because the University library has a no where near comparable number of works at its immediate disposal. The UC library system has over 15 million works.

He added that because the University is the only institution in this state offering PhDs in the humanities, it is essential that as much information in those areas be accessible on campus.

"The University library, as the premier research library in the state, must expand substantially and wisely," he said.

And, according to Hollister, old military bases are not necessarily bargains due to deterioration of books stored in improper conditions and the high cost of retrieving them from storage.

In regard to browsing, he quoted "Hollister's Principle" which is that a researcher will do without a piece of information if the pain of getting it exceeds the pain of going without it.

Santa Barbara waits an average of 10.4 days to receive works from the Berkeley library, he says. "If the University accepts remote storage, it must accept a deterioration in scholarship."

Adair may be the most costly bargain since Mrs. O'Leary's cow, Hollister concluded. "Off-campus storage is an act of scholastic sabotage."

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