

# Library Resources at UCSB: A Faculty Survey

## UCSB Council on Research and Instructional Resources Survey

### Executive Summary

As part of its charge to promote an optimal research and educational environment on campus, the Council on Research and Instructional Resources (CRIR) conducted an online survey designed to elicit faculty views concerning the services and collections the UCSB Library provides to assist us in our research and teaching activities. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information that we could use to help formulate Academic Senate positions and policies on the library and the services it provides to the campus community. An email request to all ladder faculty resulted in a 21.7% survey response rate (<http://www.senate.ucsb.edu/crir/xxx.htm>).

The UCSB Libraries have had to face many challenges in recent years. The rising costs of scholarly books and journals, the demand for important new digital services, the need to sustain nationally-important research and archival collections in an array of subjects, and the costs – in money and operational efficiencies – of a decaying physical infrastructure.

At the same time, there are new roles that research libraries are being asked to play. These include crafting the web-based delivery of complex information through an integrated set of digital resources; assisting faculty with their own digital information projects; long-term archiving of digital academic resources produced on campus; new approaches to student instruction in the critical evaluation of print and electronic research sources; and serving as a clearinghouse for faculty support and advocacy surrounding issues of scholarly publishing, journal editing and copyright in the digital environment.

During the last four years our library's budget has remained more or less stable. Given the inflation of journal and monograph costs during the same period, the result has been a precipitous decrease in the ability of the library to provide us with the resources we need to do our teaching and research. Library financial analysts we have consulted estimate that inflation generated budget deficiencies since 2002/03 have created a shortfall that amounts to over \$1,750,000. Our librarians have valiantly attempted to mitigate the effects of this decrease in their buying power by diverting funds that in the past would have been used to hire library staff to the purchase of journals and books. The degradation of services associated with these extreme measures they have adopted to "keep the ship afloat" have, as many of our survey respondents remarked, resulted in a degradation of the services (shortened library hours, reduced ability to consult with librarians, and so on) that faculty members need to fulfill their research and teaching responsibilities. There is a clear perception, especially among the fine arts and humanities faculty, that the situation has reached a crisis point that demands immediate remedial action by campus administrators. In the absence of this, our librarians tell us that significant cancellations in our journal subscriptions will soon be necessary.

In the survey, we solicited faculty views on the adequacy of the services our library provides and advice on how the library should prioritize its expenditures on print and electronic collections, as well as other services. We found that the maintenance of journal access and interlibrary loan (ILL) services was highly valued by respondents in all disciplines. ILL services are becoming increasingly important owing to our library's

rapidly declining ability to purchase monographs and journals. The deficiencies of the UCSB monograph collection is decried especially by our fine arts and humanities faculty, and additional cuts in this area would exacerbate an already acute problem.

Given these current problems with the services our library is able to provide, it is not surprising that the faculty expressed overwhelming support for the creation of an administrative policy that provides ongoing funding for the additional library costs associated with the establishment of new academic programs and research initiatives. Nearly all of the respondents believe that the university should take a stronger leadership role in finding ways to control the escalating costs of scholarly information. One way this could be done is through the promotion of cost-effective, open-access, electronic publication venues that are not subject to the exploitative pricing practices of large multinational corporations. We found that our faculty members are ambivalent about this issue. Most people in the general sciences believe that if the quality and peer review are the same for electronic and print journals, then the distinction would not matter. However, some faculty members worry about the unresolved questions of archiving and future access to electronic journals and a substantial number of people view electronic-only journals as inherently inferior to print journals. There is no simple solution to this complex socioeconomic problem related to the value scholars place on publication in electronic versus print venues. Never the less, the university can contribute to a solution to this scholarly communication crisis by developing changes in academic policy at both the campus and systemwide levels that reinforce publication in high-quality, low-cost, venues that maximize the access people have to our scholarly work.

Based on views expressed by the respondents to our survey, it is clear that many faculty members believe that the declining status of our library is a matter of great concern that requires immediate administrative attention. The deficiencies of our library are making it increasingly difficult to recruit new faculty and graduate students and without some form of intervention, these problems are only going to get worse. Given the financial constraints our campus has been forced to work under in recent years, finding an equitable solution to this problem will not be easy. Other areas such as the deterioration of our classroom infrastructure on campus are also in need of immediate attention (see: <http://senate.ucsb.edu/current/CRIR.IR.Survey.Recommendations.pdf>). However, the journals, books and other information resources our library provides are central to UCSB's core function as a research university. The Academic Senate looks forward to working with the campus administration in finding creative solutions to these difficult problems that threaten our standing as a world-class university.

## **Recommendations**

### **Funding of New Programs**

Faculty expressed overwhelming support for the creation of an administrative policy that provides the library with additional, ongoing funding to meet costs associated with the establishment of new academic programs. We urge campus and library administrators to work together to establish such a policy that guarantees ongoing additional support for new programs, such as research initiatives and endowed chairs.

### **Library Funding as a UCSB Priority**

The resources provided by the UCSB library are central to the core research and teaching functions of our campus. In recent years, inflation in serials costs has averaged 8.5% annually. In the absence of increased funding to offset these dramatically rising costs, funds have been reallocated that previously were used for monograph purchases and staffing the library positions. Our librarians warn us that this degradation in the resources that our library provides has reached a crisis point; not only will the inadequacy of our monograph collection, that many survey respondents noted, continue to increase but soon it will be necessary to make drastic cuts in the access our campus has to on-line journals and other digital resources.

This crisis the library is facing in providing the core resources we need for research and teaching is being driven by economic forces that are international in scope and, largely, beyond its control. Long-term solutions to this crisis in scholarly communication will require collective action by the university administration, professional organizations and the faculty members who produce the publications that currently are being sold to our library by large corporations at costs increasing far above the inflation rate.

In the meantime, we urge the campus administration to shift its fundraising priorities so that the decline in the core functions that our library provides to the campus community is reversed. Without such a shift in funding priorities, the vision for the future of UCSB expressed in our long-range academic plan will not be met.

### **Budgetary Transparency**

While there was consensus among faculty respondents about the need to increase the library resources, their priorities differed. Without a sufficient understanding of funding available each year, the constraints on its allocation, how those allocations are made, and the basis for decisions in the budgetary process, the faculty cannot communicate with each other in an informed way to set priorities and make recommendations. Thus, budgetary transparency is directly related to the shared governance that is widely recognized as central to both the research and instructional excellence that the UC system enjoys. This information needs to be available to the Academic Senate in a timely way (i.e., not after budget allocations have already been made), and in an appropriate manner, so that we can provide our advice prior to the allocations for each fiscal year.

## Report on Results of the CRIR Library Survey

A key goal of the library survey was to solicit faculty advice concerning the strategies our campus and library administrators can use to meet UCSB's research and teaching needs, given the rapidly increasing costs of the journals, monographs, and other research materials we purchase from the large multinational corporations that dominate the academic publishing market. This problem of dramatically increasing information costs is international in scope and has produced a crisis in academic publishing that threatens the ability of our libraries to adequately support our research, teaching, and public service missions.

The survey was developed by the CRIR through consultation with Sarah Prichard, our former university librarian. It included questions designed to elicit faculty views concerning the importance of different types of collections and services the library provides and the mechanisms that should be used finance the library costs associated with new research initiatives and academic. Through the survey, we sought advice on how the library should deal with the escalating costs of the scholarly information we need to do our work; we were interested in obtaining suggestions concerning how the library's limited resources can best be allocated given the dramatic decrease in our purchasing power in a commercial publishing environment characterized by rapidly increasing journal and monograph costs. In the absence of any significant library budget increases, the effect of these rising costs has been a 7% annual decrease in UCSB's ability to purchase journals and books in recent years.

To gain insights into these complicated issues, we asked ladder faculty to indicate the library services and resources they value most highly. We also encouraged the survey respondents to provide narrative responses on both broad and specific issues related to the library. The goal of this report is to provide the campus community with a summary of the results of our survey and the recommendations that the Academic Senate has developed in based on this faculty input. We look forward to an ongoing dialog between the faculty and campus administration as we work toward resolving the important issues the survey raises.

### Survey Response Rate

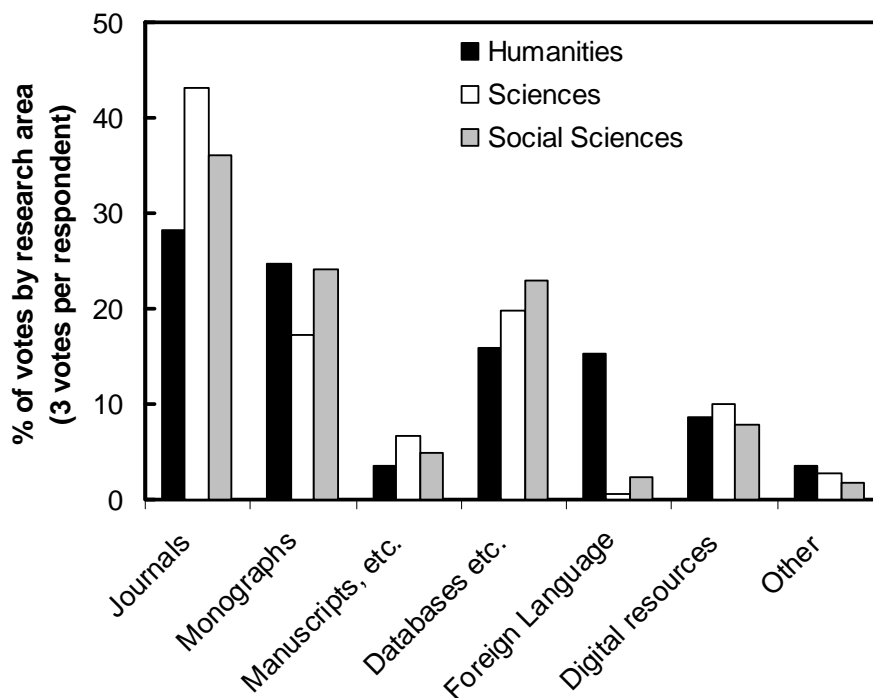
A request to take the survey was emailed in June of 2006 to all UCSB ladder faculty members (n= 857). We obtained a 21.7% response rate, which is considered excellent for surveys of this sort and is also a token of the keen interest our faculty members have in this issue (Table 1). The response rate was significantly higher ( $p<0.001$ ) for faculty members the social science departments relative to those in other research areas.

**Table 1:** Response rates to the library survey by research area

Research Area	Faculty		
	Surveyed	Respondents	% Responding
Humanities	272	48	17.6
General Sciences	402	67	16.7
Social Sciences	138	59	42.8
Other or Department Not Indicated	45	12	26.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>21.7</b>

### What library collections are most important to you?

Respondents in every discipline indicated that journals are the most important library collections for their research (Fig. 1). Faculty members in the general sciences rank journals more highly relative to other library collections than faculty in the social sciences and especially the humanities where access to monographs is of greater importance. The most striking disciplinary difference is in the high value the humanities faculty place on foreign language collections relative to their colleagues. While faculty members in the general sciences rate monographs somewhat less highly than people in other research areas, written comments by respondents in chemistry, biology, and mathematics all emphasized the critical role that books access to books plays in their research.

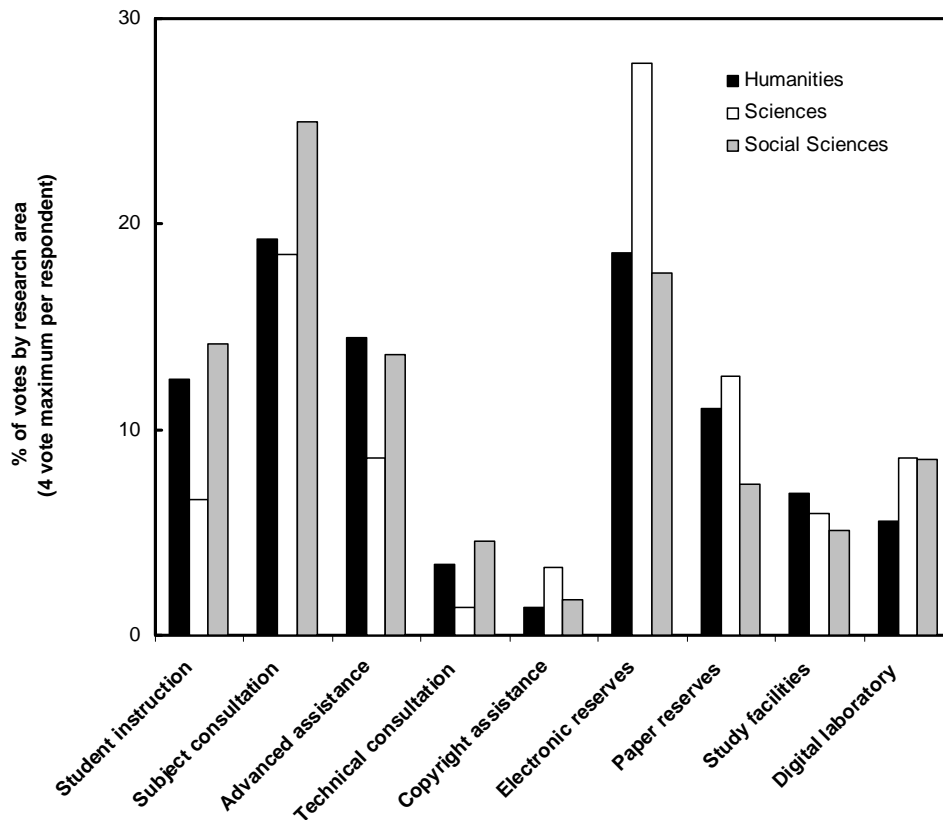


**Figure 1:** Responses to the question: *What library collections are most important to you?* Each respondent was allowed to cast up to 3 votes for library collections that they considered most important.

### What library services are most important to you?

When queried about what library services are the most important to them, most faculty agreed that electronic reserves (100 votes) are one of the library services that they highly value. Electronic reserves are especially popular among our science faculty. Of equal importance (also receiving 100 votes), is “informal consultation with subject librarians, for myself and for my students.” Subject consultation is considered especially important by our social science faculty members.

In the written comments on library services, interlibrary loan and electronic journal access were emphasized. Regarding interlibrary loan, one Bren School respondent emphasized: “I rely on this!” A linguistics professor requested that wireless be available in the carrels. Several faculty members expressed frustration with their inability to locate items on the shelves and one requested “timely reshelving of books and regular shelf-reading.” Another noted that library materials often are listed as “lost” and two were frustration with the off-site storage system and expressed a strong desire for more shelving in the library: “books should be in the main library, not in off-site storage.”



**Figure 2:** Responses to the question: “*What library collections are most important to you?*” Each faculty member was given the opportunity to select up to three library resources that are most important to them.

### Funding of Library Resources for New Programs

Although the Academic Senate reviews new programs for their potential impacts on the library, there currently is no mechanism whereby library needs identified in this way translate into the necessary ongoing library funding. Given the dire budgetary problems the library currently faces, meeting the needs of the new programs that are continually being established on campus presents an especially vexing problem. Over the last 7 years, almost every newly established major, degree program, and organized research unit has required that the library reallocate existing resources to provide the

needed books, journals and databases. In the absence of a budgetary mechanism that provides ongoing additional funding for these new programs, the library has been forced to meet their needs by reallocating funds that formerly were used to support other library services and academic programs.

When asked about this issue, the faculty expressed overwhelming support for the creation of an administrative policy that provides the library with additional funding to meet the ongoing costs of new programs. Support for the creation of such a funding mechanism was especially strong for new PhD programs, with 98% of the respondents agreeing that some form of guaranteed ongoing support was essential.

When asked what the basis of such program-specific budgetary allocations should be, half of the respondents cited collection needs as the metric that they would use for the cost estimate. Only a quarter believed that a student-faculty ratio formula should determine allocation. Written comments on this issue did not break down neatly by discipline. Faculty members felt they needed “relevant empirical data,” as one from Philosophy put it; several stressed that numbers of students would be a poor yardstick because such criteria would hurt the growth of smaller programs and did not necessarily relate to costs or collection needs. One respondent from Religious Studies suggested that allocation should reward excellence or national ranking. A few respondents from disciplines across the divisions argued that organized research units, centers, and programs with large grants should subsidize and support additional library resources in their areas. A few respondents suggested that programs should not be started without “honest accounting of the long-term costs,” as a Geographer explained. In summary, the survey respondents stressed that multiple criteria relating to specific needs would be necessary to decide on the size of such allocations.

### **Scholarly Communication Issues**

Prices of scholarly journals have risen at an average rate of about 10% per year over the last five years and university library collections budgets have been unable to keep up with these steeply rising costs. As a consequence, libraries have had to cancel many existing journals and have been unable to subscribe to new journals in developing fields. The pricing policies of a few large publishers have produced annual increases in the costs of journals that is far above the inflation rate for other products; the price per article that our library pays for scholarly journals owned by the large commercial publishing houses averages 4 or 5 times the price charged by non-profit publishers such as professional societies and university presses.

These escalating costs driven by the unsustainable business models of publishers (some of which envisage a 15-20% yearly profit increase as a reasonable target!) have created a scholarly communication crisis that, if it continues, will soon make it impossible for libraries such as ours to meet information needs of our faculty members. The rapidly increasing cost of books, journals, and other academic works that we produce is also limiting the access that the scholarly community has to the research output of UCSB faculty. Although, new digital technologies can provide cost effective alternatives to traditional publishing venues, there is some reluctance in the scholarly community to accept research these new publishing models, especially in the critical area of evaluations for academic promotion.

Our survey explored these issues by posing the following series of questions concerning electronic-only publications:

*In scholarly publishing some publications are in print form only, some are in electronic form, some are in both. Does the distinction between print and (high quality, peer reviewed) electronic-only information matter in your field?*

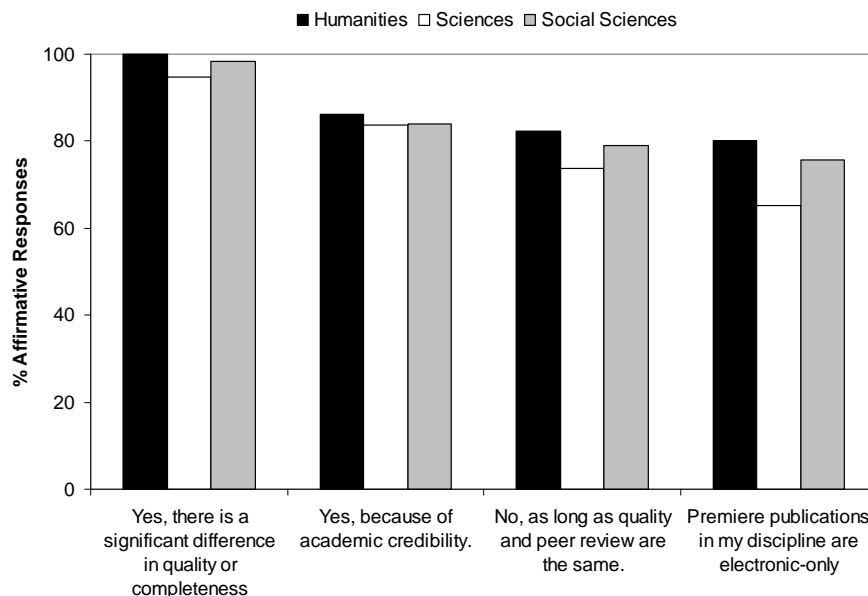
*Yes, there is a significant difference in quality or completeness.*

*Yes, because of academic credibility.*

*No, as long as quality and peer review are the same.*

*No, premiere journals and conferences in my discipline have recently opted for electronic-only as the primary means of dissemination, without impact on credibility.*

The responses to these questions show that almost all faculty members (98%) believe that there is a significant difference in the quality and completeness of print versus electronic only publications (Figure 3). Many respondents (85%) believe this derives from a lower credibility of electronic-only publications. However, if the question is rephrased to emphasize the same quality and level of peer review, 78% of the respondents agreed that the distinction between print and electronic dissemination of research results did not matter in their field. Also, when asked if premiere journals and conferences in their discipline have recently opted for electronic-only dissemination without a credibility impact, 72% answered affirmatively.



**Figure 3:** Responses to questions related to the credibility of high quality, peer reviewed electronic-only publications.

In the written responses to this question, faculty members in the Fine Arts expressed concerns about the disparity between images found in electronic and print journals. These faculty members view electronic images as being much inferior, both in terms of quality and accessibility, to those published in print journals. One faculty member put it this way: “In art history and architecture history we need high quality

images for teaching with power point and/or slides. Books are a primary source for copying images. Electronic versions cut us off from this source.”

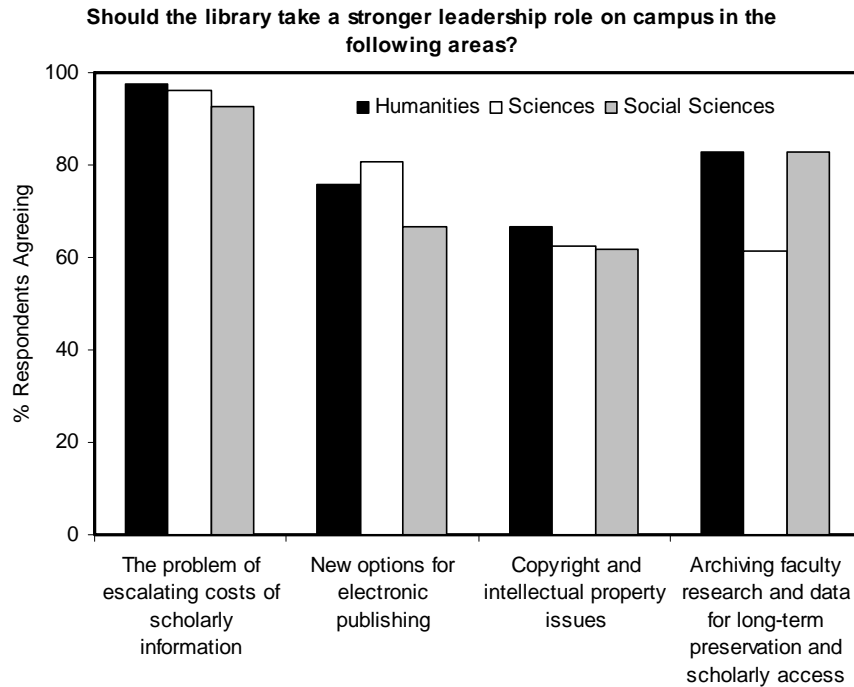
There were some disciplinary differences in the responses we received to the question: “Does the distinction between print and high quality, peer reviewed electronic-only information matter in your field?” In the humanities, print still carries more publication prestige. Those dependent on images (art history, and others as well) insist on continued access to print, because they feel that the images in electronic publications are inferior to printed images. Even those who prefer print for quality of images or prestige, however, like ease of journal access from home office, and so on. Most respondents in the general sciences prefer electronic publications. Although some say print is totally outdated, others raise the issue of image quality. Most of the humanities respondents believe that if the quality and peer review are the same for electronic and print journals, then the distinction would not matter, but the issue of credibility is still a concern. One respondent stated that “in the humanities, it’s not a yes or no situation. We’re very gradually getting to a point of coexistence of the two media, but are nowhere near the situation of the scientists.”

In general, the distinction between print and electronic journals appears not to be significant for most of our faculty members in the sciences. However, some researchers in these areas are “leery” of the unresolved question of archiving electronic journals and raised the possibility that “when electronic subscriptions are cancelled, archival access can be denied by publishers.” Concern was also expressed about archiving/continued access to electronic-only publications: “If we cease to subscribe to a print journal, we still have the old issues in our possession, but what happens if we cease to subscribe to an electronic journal – will the publisher deny access to archives, even if we paid for subscriptions for the archived years-in-question? Some also worry that electronic-only materials will not be archived at all – that they will disappear altogether.”

### **The Role of UCSB in Scholarly Communication Issues**

Nearly all of the respondents (95%) believe that our library should take a stronger leadership role in finding ways to control the escalating costs of scholarly information (Figure 4). Faculty members have less certainty about the advisability of expanding the library’s leadership role in developing new electronic publishing options (75% agreeing) and exploring copyright and intellectual property issues (63% agreeing). Most faculty members (75%) were in favor of the library exploring options for archiving faculty research and data for long-term preservation and scholarly access. Interest in data archiving is significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) greater among the humanities and social science faculty members than among our general sciences faculty.

Written comments divided between those who emphasized the need for increased library power and resources and those who felt that these issues were system wide or professional ones and could not be solved at UCSB. Some faculty members did not respond to the specific question but instead argued that library funding cuts be restored and that an undergraduate library be created. Other respondents suggested that the library provide us with access to electronic journals available to other UC campuses and long-term patent related data storage.

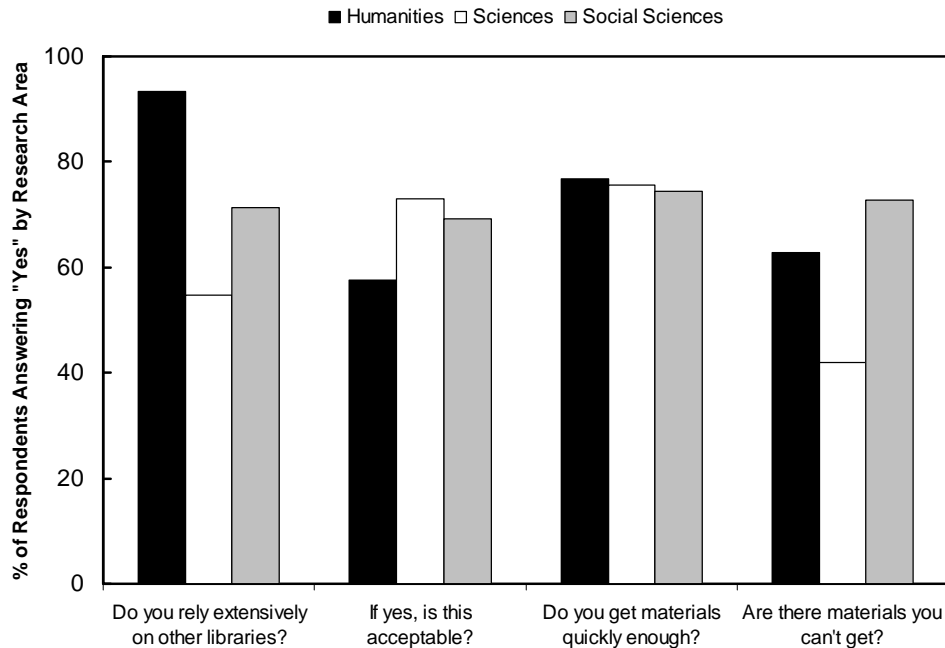


**Figure 4:** Responses to questions related to the leadership role the library take on various scholarly communication issues.

The strength of support for proposals of specific actions faculty members could take to help resolve the scholarly communication crisis varied. Most respondents (74%) agreed that it was important to urge their professional societies to retain (or obtain) ownership of their society journals rather than sell them to (or leave them in the hands of) commercial publishers. Fewer faculty members (51%) are in favor of posting all of their own published articles on their own websites or in a university archive. Only 46% of the respondents would consent to letting the university cancel journals that offer poor value per dollar as measured by objective standards like citations and downloads, and only 35% of the respondents would agree to perform unpaid referee and editing work only to "reasonably priced" journals.

### **Interlibrary Loan**

The budgetary constraints that our library operates under are making loans from other libraries an increasingly important means through which our faculty members obtain research materials. When queried, 71% of the respondents stated that they rely extensively on interlibrary loan (ILL) for their teaching and research (Figure 3). Of those who rely heavily on ILL, 66% said that this system for obtaining research materials is acceptable. Researchers in the sciences are the least dependent on ILL and have the greatest satisfaction with the current system. Most faculty members (76%) report that they are satisfied with the speed at which documents are obtained through ILL. In the Social Sciences, 73% of the faculty members stated that there were certain kinds of materials that were unavailable or not easily available through ILL. Researchers in the Sciences (42%) and the Humanities (63%) reported less difficulty in this regard.



**Figure 5:** Responses to questions related to the UCSB interlibrary loan system.

Several faculty members in the Humanities and Social Sciences expressed concern over the difficulty in getting rare books and books from Special Collections. Many Life and Physical Sciences faculty argued that if one campus has electronic access to a resource, all campuses should have it. Researchers in all three areas mentioned that they would use ILL more if the requested resources arrived more rapidly. One faculty member stated that “I would rely more heavily if I could receive more materials held by other libraries through electronic delivery” and another that “Electronic document delivery is great but it does not include everything in my field. Inter-library loan for books can be frustrating, slow, and have short loan periods. Older books often cannot be loaned at all, even to Special Collections.” Two respondents (one from History of Art & Architecture and one from Spanish & Portuguese) remarked that foreign language materials are difficult to obtain via interlibrary loan.

### Library Collections

In their written comments, respondents across the disciplines decried the lack of materials in their research area housed at UCSB’s libraries. Many noted that key resources in their fields are locally unavailable: “It is extremely aggravating that the collection of books in my field is so poor” (Physics); “I have a real problem with the UCSB library having such limited resources, not being able to find what they list owning, and then having what they can find being ripped up and otherwise marked up. It is a pretty big disgrace in my opinion for an ostensibly major research university to have such really bad library resources in print books” (Political Science); “I find ILL inconvenient and wish our own library had the books and journals I need” (Linguistics). “It’s frustrating that UCSB seems consistently to have the weakest collection of monographs in the UC system” (English); “The depleted nature of the UCSB stocks makes the library a poor environment for browsing” (Bren School); “For a research institution all faculties

should be supported equally for research, particularly as it applies to library materials” (Art).

Based on the survey, it is apparent that our faculty members have a clear perception that the UCSB library’s collection is lagging behind those of other UC campuses to the point that our ability to teach is hobbled. One professor was forced to teach an entire course on Neurotoxins, a topic for which we did not subscribe to a single relevant journal, and for which we do not have easy access to electronic subscriptions of other UC campuses. Another remarked that we have dropped subscriptions to most medical journals, despite the existence of a pharmacology major for which such journals are extremely important. An EEMB professor complains that it is no longer possible for students to “learn” by physically browsing through our collections and a mechanical engineering professor complains that our library’s resources consistently lag behind those of the other UC campuses. This problem is also hobbling our capacity to recruit faculty members. One professor in the social sciences explained that that attempts to recruit a world-class researcher were halted when the candidate inspected our library holdings and realized that they woefully insufficient for his research needs.

These deficiencies in our library’s holdings appear to be especially acute for our Humanities and Fine Arts faculty who rely heavily on monographs. One faculty member noted that “ILL is great, but not as a compensation for a collection that is increasingly falling behind. Again, the observation is made that our monograph collection consistently lags behind those of the other UCs – a fact that is easily noticed whenever you search titles on Melvyl. Also, you can’t get reference works through ILL. Again, those who use images note that electronic ILL does not work for them. Recent basic books are not on the shelves, we are even further behind in foreign languages than in other areas.”

### **Suggestions for Improving Library Services**

Forty respondents offered written suggestions on how the library could better serve their instructional needs. The comments across disciplines focused on a need for more access, more monographs and more journals. The predominant pattern is the need felt by faculty for additional resources for journal and monograph acquisitions by the Library. As other data indicate, the split between journal and monograph requests is largely determined along divisional lines, with faculty members in the sciences advocating more strongly for journal holdings, especially electronic journal holdings, and the humanities advocating strongly for more monographs holdings. Several respondents expressed a strong desire for parity in electronic journal holdings among all of the UC Libraries, in essence so that the system owns the subscription to all journals and they are equally accessible by and from all campuses.

Many emphasized the need for better communication of what is available and how to access new materials, especially digital ones, on a regular basis, either through email or yearly workshops. Three respondents requested that the search capabilities for finding materials in online journals be either simplified or streamlined to be more efficient. The other main request was for the digitization of monographs, particularly older ones which are difficult to obtain through Interlibrary Loan.

A few people remarked on the difficulty they experienced in using e-reserves and the understaffing of the reserves area in general. Some wanted help with course web pages. Those who use videos/DVDs wished to have more and better viewing facilities.

Specific responses ranged from a request to stop sending materials from the 1940s-1960s to off site locations, since such work is now subject to research, to a plea that the administration should shift resources away from new buildings so that our library can purchase books and journals we need to maintain our status as a first-rate research university.