**Petition Facts: Summary Minutes of April, 2016 consultation of academic and library faculties:**

In April, academic faculty in the Colleges of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences and Social and Behavioral Sciences held a consultation with Katherine Martin, Interim Associate Dean Content Discovery, and other library faculty and staff about concerns expressed by academic faculty about the library. Persons unable to attend the consultation have shared their concerns also. All concerns are summarized here under the headings of weeding, communication issues, library budget, and personnel issues:

1. **“Weeding” the library collection without adequate faculty consultation:**

While the library faculty regularly consults with academic faculty and departments for their recommendations on titles to add and for their assessments of the utility of potential large-cost acquisitions, such consultation has not regularly occurred on the weeding of library resources.

**Example A:**  A professor in philosophy went to the library to check out a book. It is no longer in the collection. He later found it for sale online by a used book company. The listing stated that it was for sale by the University of Northern Iowa. He had not been consulted (nor had any of the faculty in philosophy) about weeding philosophy holdings in the library collection.

**Example B:** While the physical deterioration of aging titles is a factor, consultation with the academic faculty about the use of these titles would be beneficial before retention or replacement decisions are made. Historical research by students has been hampered when the library has been purged of print copies of magazines, which have been replaced with electronic files. Because these files contain articles but not advertisements, students are unable to research costume design, clothing, and other cultural artifacts as they have in the past.

**Example C:** In the humanities and social sciences, the notion of an “outdated” publication is an anathema to research. In every discipline, scholars can tell stories of how a book unread for decades can catch the eye of someone browsing the stacks and spark innovative research. Scholarship ignored for decades suddenly experiences a renaissance as one generation’s outdated monographs are celebrated by a subsequent generation as groundbreaking scholarship. For some scholars, theserendipitous discovery of a research-transforming book encountered while one is browsing the shelves looking for something else is the defining feature of the scholarly experience in an academic library. Faculty are concerned that weeding in Rod Library puts at risk the very existence of an academic library on the UNI campus.

*Sense of the Consultation:* There is widespread anxiety on campus that there have been damaging reductions in collection holdings in the last five years due to an absence of consultation with academic faculty. There is profound concern that criteria used for weeding have not taken into consideration HOW the academic faculty actually uses the collection. There is strong concern that the collection has been and will continue to be substantially weakened, negatively impacting student learning and faculty research and scholarship. There is a desire to put a mechanism in place immediately to incorporate through consultation the needs and perspectives of the academic faculty into library policies, strategic planning, etc. Support was registered at this meeting for veto rights by academic faculty over a weeding directive by the library faculty to eliminate an item in the library collection deemed of value to any academic program.

1. **Communication Issues:**

**Example A:** Persons attending the consultation were startled to learn that that one factor used in collection management decisions is “internal circulation:” records are made of library resources as staff reshelves them. Faculty who regularly return to shelves books they have browsed did not know that they are skewing use statistics. Other faculty said that they routinely tell students to incorporate into their library visits a few minutes of work in the section of the library with holdings in their discipline. Students are asked to remove books from the shelves in order to secure their disciplinary collection from “weeding” because these books, placed on desks to be reshelved, will be incorporated into use statistics that preserve books from “weeding.”

**Example B:**  Several professors discussed the value of historical materials to their teaching and student research. In the past, for example, one professor had her students do research in the youth collection to examine past attitudes about gender and race. But “curating” of this collection has eliminated these books. When asked, Katelyn Browne, Youth Services Librarian, stated that these books had been weeded because their inclusion in the collection does not fit with her curating philosophy. No consultation had been conducted with the professor whose students used these weeded books.

**Example C:** When the main floor of the library was redesigned as a learning commons, the reference collection was dismantled. In addition to considering factors such as physical condition and availability of more recent titles, librarians examined internal use data for each title and whether each is available to library users electronically. Decisions were made to keep a title in the Reference Collection, to distribute it to the stacks, or to discard it. But persons attending the consultation pointed out that 1) key reference works that they use are NOT available electronically, and 2) they construct assignments for students that entail students’ working with the reference collection of works in their discipline as a “collection.” A powerful technique for introducing undergraduate majors to the depth and breadth of their discipline are assignments that require students to visit disciplinary holdings in the reference collection. With these books now weeded or distributed in the stacks, students can no longer complete such assignments. The sense of the meeting is that the academic faculty would like the reference collection restored.

**Example D:** Academic faculty expressed concern that their recommendations for acquisition do not receive follow-up. They do not know if the books they have recommended have been purchased and added to the collection. A mechanism that would automatically track acquisition requests and notify faculty when books have been added to the collection would be very helpful.

*Sense of the Consultation:* An advisory committee is needed to create processes that will enhance communication between academic and library faculties.

1. **Budget Issues:**
2. During a presentation by Katherine Martin, she shared concerns about the impact of a stagnant budget on the collection and services. Not only are student needs of concern but also there is concern about the need for robust library support for faculty research and scholarship. There was a consensus that academic and library faculties need to work together to create an advocacy mechanism for funding the library at levels that support excellence in learning, teaching, research, and scholarship across the university.

1. A key funding issue is that the library has engaged in active weeding, in part, because it does not have an off-site storage facility as does the University of Iowa. The academic faculty attending the consultation does not support ongoing weeding, which is causing reductions in the library collection. We prefer that funding be secured for off-site storage, as is the case at the University of Iowa. Library patrons there have only a 24-hour wait to get access to a book out of storage; however, this wait is highly preferable to losing access to volumes altogether.
2. There has been a significant reduction in the number of library faculty in the last five years. This is a budget issue; it also is a personnel issue. See below under “personnel issues” for more on this point.
3. The library is developing consortium relationships with other libraries in order to reduce costs. These relationships provide for interlibrary loan s (ILLs) and sharing of electronic subscriptions. Persons attending the consultation support, in principle, these developing relationships. However, concern was expressed that these libraries are, in the majority, undergraduate libraries with holdings similar to UNI’s. Access to research library holdings should remain an ongoing priority in order to support faculty research and attract/retain new UNI faculty. As e-books proliferate, research libraries will lend through ILL fewer print books. *Securing access by UNI faculty to e-book holdings at research libraries should be an important goal of long-term library strategic planning.*

*Sense of the Consultation:* An advisory committee can serve as an advocate for growing the library budget in order to maintain key markers of quality for an academic library that supports student learning and faculty research and scholarship.

1. **Personnel Issues:**

There has been a significant reduction in the number of Rod Library faculty. Library data show that library faculty numbers have dropped from 20 to 15 in the last five years. Recent position announcements for new hires also show that new library faculty hires are no longer required to hold a second advanced degree (e.g., MA, Ed. D. or Ph.D.) in addition to their library science degree. Some recent hires do not hold a second advanced academic degree. The second advanced degree is the hallmark of library faculty at a university library. This level of expertise is deemed critical to supporting research by academic faculty at university libraries across the United States. There is a strong concern that librarians who have no direct experience with thesis or dissertation research will not be able to offer adequate support to the research and scholarship of UNI graduate students and faculty.

*Sense of the Consultation:* An advisory committee can serve as an advocate for personnel policies that will support key markers of quality in an academic library: 1-for-1 replacements for departed library faculty and traditional credentialing (a second advanced degree in addition to a library science degree).

**Petition facts, meeting notes, and later feedback compiled by Martha Reineke, Professor of Religion**