



320 STEPHENS HALL  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

February 23, 2024

MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP  
ON THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

BENJAMIN HERMALIN  
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

*Subject: Comments on the June 30, 2023 report of the Joint Academic and Administrative Working Group on the University Library*

Dear Ben and members of the working group,

On December 11, 2023, the Divisional Council (DIVCO) discussed the *Report of the Joint Academic and Administrative Working Group on the University Library* (June 30, 2023), informed by comments from the committees of Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA) and the Library (LIBR), which are appended in their entirety. I apologize for the delay in writing this letter.

At this meeting, co-chairs University Librarian Jeffrey MacKie-Mason and Professor Molly Van Houweling (Law) presented a summary of the working group work and report. The enclosed slide deck summarizes their presentation. The three recommendations they highlighted were the following:

- (1) Increased funding annually and return to the 2013 level of funding, which amounts to \$17.6 million/year adjusted for inflation.
- (2) Improved funding methodology that would lead to an increase in funding to adjust for the mandatory cost increases.
- (3) Better study space planning with a more centralized and collaborative approach.

DIVCO discussed that the campus has many competing priorities with regards to the budget, such as new initiatives (Department of Neuroscience and the College of Computing, Data Science, and Society), infrastructure needs (the new campus heating and cooling plant), as well as ever growing costs of “doing business” (rising costs of energy, benefits, salaries).

The discussion also included the budgets peer institutions allot to their libraries. Columbia University and Princeton University spend roughly \$70 million per year, while the University of Chicago and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) allocate \$30 million and \$25-26 million per year, respectively.

DIVCO was unanimous in its agreement to most strongly urge the administration *to allot \$4.2 million to the Library over the next two years*. DIVCO respectfully, yet strongly, disagrees with the recommendation that the Library identify these funding sources. This should be funded by central sources, as there simply is no more central asset in a university than its library. I personally found the CAPRA report especially important in laying out some of the tradeoffs and providing some clear guidance as to what an appropriate short-term funding allocation would be.

To be clear, DIVCO's discussion was quite clear on the fact that not keeping up with funding of the library, while one engages in some project on "the future library", will result in serious and possibly irreparable damage to the Berkeley library and its collections.

That said, DIVCO discussed that the costs to access digital sources are increasing. Further, faculty continue to pay more page charges for publishing in leading journals (it is not uncommon to see charges approaching \$1000 per page). Faculty continue to provide world class research for free to these publishers, who turn around extract massive profits. *Elsevier* academic publishing company, for example, generated a profit 2.09 billion Euro on revenues of 9.2 billion Euro. The business model is simple. Charge faculty to publish the research they found funding for and need for promotion, use their services for free to ensure quality control in terms of refereeing, and then charge universities for access to the products generated by this free labor. Perhaps some of these publishing costs and costs of access can continue to be negotiated down at the UC system level, which has market power given its size.

Another area that DIVCO would like to highlight is that some changes made are irreversible – such as the closing of libraries and associated spaces.

Please refer to the enclosures for the complete committee commentary. We thank you for the opportunity to review the report and offer comments.

Sincerely,



Maximilian Auffhammer,  
Alice M. Saint Professor  
Agricultural & Resource Economics/Political Economy (ARE/PE)  
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Enclosures

cc: Amani Allen, Vice Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate  
Jocelyn Surla Banaria, Executive Director, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate  
J. Miguel Villas-Boas, Chair, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation  
Thomas Dandeleit, Chair, Committee on the Library  
Milo Knight, Senate Analyst, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation  
Andrea Lambert-Tan, Assistant Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff to the Provost  
Chris Yetter, Senior Advisor to the Provost



320 STEPHENS HALL

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

November 30, 2023

PROFESSOR MAXIMILIAN AUFFHAMMER  
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

*Re: CAPRA comments on Report of the Joint Academic and Administrative  
Working Group on the University Library*

The Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA) discussed the Library Working Group Report at its meetings on October 11 and November 8, 2023.

The committee agrees that the Library is among the campus' most important common goods, enabling students and faculty from all fields to conduct specialized research and acquire breadth in and beyond their respective fields. As a central resource, the library is key for many activities across disciplines on campus and for our student body. Support for the Library, given its central importance, should meet the needs of a modern research university of the caliber of UCB. Unfortunately, those needs have to be placed in the context of the dramatic budgetary challenges and constraints that the campus is facing and the urgency of other needs also requiring significant investment.

To start, we must keep in mind that the ways in which knowledge is stored, circulated, and processed have undergone fundamental changes, with a significant shift from print to digital, which implies a need to redefine what a library is and does. Within this bigger picture, it is important to note that the acquisition of digital resources currently makes up more than half of the collections budget. Costs to maintain collections, modernize facilities, and adapt the library to new needs have gone up at a rate that has not been met by the allocation from central campus and fundraising from donors, so that reserves have had to be used to the point of exhaustion.

The Report of the Joint Academic and Administrative Working Group on the University Library of June 30, 2023, which presents a comprehensive analysis in terms of collections, staff, and space, clearly lays out that the library has been falling behind in comparison with peer institutions. Using 2021 data, compared to UCB's annual expenditure of \$56.4M, a peer institution like MIT, which has a greater focus on STEM and quantitative fields than Berkeley and whose total student number is about a quarter of UCB's, spends \$25.6M annually on the Library, while Harvard, Yale, Michigan, Princeton, and Columbia all spend more than UCB (respectively, \$106.5M, 91.6M, 71.8M, 67.3M, and 67.2M annually), with UCLA spending nearly the same as Berkeley at \$56.6M annually, and the University of Chicago (with less than a third of Berkeley's student population) spending less than UCB, at \$31.9M annually. Comparing

the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) statistics from 2012-2013 to 2021, a number of parameters that reflect the health of our library with respect to that of our peer institutions shows that we are dropping in some rankings (e.g., library professional staff has dropped from 4th to 7th) while improving in others (e.g., total materials expenditure has increased from 14th to 11th), but it is clear that the library is not keeping up with the increase in disciplines and students on the Berkeley campus. We also note that UCB will not be able to recruit top faculty in many disciplines if we cannot offer a top-tier research infrastructure that includes an appropriately funded library.

The decisions on the future of the Library must take into account different needs across campus. For many areas of research, especially disciplines that work with historical materials, the library is *the essential* site for research, providing both printed and digital materials for research and a critical space for researchers to undertake their work. In these fields, a library plays the role of laboratory of knowledge. For other areas, including most quantitative fields, the focus is on digital subscriptions, which require little physical library space. Balancing these different needs is part of the challenge we face.

It is important to note that even researchers who work exclusively with digital materials rely heavily on subscriptions that are maintained and provided by the Library. The cost for these subscriptions has been rising. Expert librarians are crucial to acquire, curate, make these materials searchable by crosslinking them through metadata, and maintain the platforms that will enable access as technology changes. Failure to do so will make our collections unsustainable and inaccessible in the future. Thus, specialized professional staff are needed to maintain both the digital and print collections.

In its report, the Joint Academic and Administrative Working Group distinguished between an optimal recommendation of an additional \$32.5M annually to fully restore our Library's preeminence, and a baseline recommendation of \$17.6M annually to return to inflation-adjusted 2013 funding levels. This recommended minimal re-funding would reverse some of the damage to collections caused by repeated sharp cutbacks in acquisitions since 2013 and would provide valuable support until a more comprehensive solution is found. While it would be highly desirable to provide this level of funding, CAPRA is concerned that the tight budgetary constraints faced by the university make such large allocations very difficult.

If the above allocations are not possible, the Senate Library Committee (LIBR) recommends, as a stopgap measure, that \$4.2M dollars be put at the immediate disposal of the Library, to compensate for the budgetary shortfalls in the last five years (since 2018), during which the annual acquisitions budget has been repeatedly cut.

Moving forward, it is worth considering what possible cost saving measures could be taken to improve the budgetary health of our library. Given the growing numbers of students and their need for appropriate learning facilities, we must find out whether there is room for recalculations, reallocations, and targeted and sustainable fundraising.

Also to be considered is whether the campus should invest more directly in infrastructure such as its library, which serves its core mission of teaching and research, instead of in new

administrative units that likely involve administrative positions with high salaries. Another possible redirection of funds towards a sustainable and modern library could involve reconsidering the expenses for Intercollegiate Athletics. As part of the FSI, Berkeley must find the right balance in central funds allocations to fulfill the basic needs of a library that serves its community and is so central to the campus.

As the library is currently at the critical transition stage of searching for a new University Librarian, CAPRA endorses LIBR's request for this emergency funding for the campus to begin restoring the Library's acquisition capacities immediately and avoid further decline of the collections. We also realize that the flexibility for the current year 2023-24 allocations is very limited. We thus propose that this one-time stopgap funding of **\$4.2M dollars proposed by LIBR** should be granted, with the amount spread over the two years, 2023-24 and 2024-25, but with at least \$2M in 2023-24. This would give the new University Librarian, once appointed, an opportunity to review and assess the library's operations and budget and develop a new plan regarding the organization and funding of collections, the need for specialized staff, and the use of space across campus.

CAPRA also recommends that the new University Librarian continue to consult regularly with LIBR about the most effective administration of the Library budget, and that they return to CAPRA in 1.5 years, in the Spring of 2025, with a plan for the future of the Library.

We note that, along with the Library, there has been significant under-investment over the last 25 years in two other key areas that are crucial to Berkeley's mission of research and teaching: ladder faculty FTEs and building maintenance. Both of these are in need of substantial investments, and we see them--along with the library--as the campus's highest priority for spending (with the exact allocations to depend on the analysis of the specific trade-offs between these three items) and superseding the need for expenditures in other areas that have recently demanded attention and investment, such as intercollegiate athletics or additional senior administrative staff.

We look forward to working with the campus administration to ensure that our highest priorities receive the funding they need to keep Berkeley at the forefront of higher education.

With best regards,



J. Miguel Villas-Boas, Chair  
Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation

November 8, 2023

## LIBR's comments on the WGUL Report and EVCP Response for DIVCO

This memorandum contains LIBR's comments on two documents:

- [Report of the Work Group on the University Library](#), submitted June 30, 2023
- EVCP Hermalin's [Response to the WGUL Report](#), dated September 19, 2023.

The Committee on the Library seeks to share with DIVCO its understanding of the Work Group report and clarify its views on some of the issues raised by the EVCP's response.

### Executive summary

In light of the findings of the Work Group — now that its report has furnished the Senate and administration with precise and documented information about the Library's financial needs — **LIBR asks DIVCO to reiterate its support both for immediate emergency re-funding of the Library and for the drawing up and prompt implementation of a comprehensive plan to ensure its future financial stability.**

**LIBR wishes to stress that the Work Group's central request (recommendation #8, pp. 3-4) for additional annual funding should not be understood as an all or nothing ask.**

Rather, the Work Group carefully distinguished between **an optimal recommendation of \$32.5M annually to fully restore our Library's preeminence**, and **a baseline recommendation of \$17.6M annually to return to inflation adjusted 2013 funding levels.**<sup>1</sup> This minimal re-funding would revert some of the damage caused since 2013 and would provide valuable support until a more comprehensive solution is found. **LIBR urges DIVCO to immediately search for ways to re-fund the Library at least at this baseline level (\$17.6M).**

LIBR's hope is that this baseline funding can be obtained promptly. Further, LIBR supports the Work Group's conclusion (recommendation #1) that the most serious aspect of the present crisis facing the Library is the damage to its collections from repeated sharp cutbacks in acquisitions. Therefore, should it no longer be possible to reallocate funds for the 2023-2024 budget, as the EVCP asserts in his response, **LIBR recommends, as a stopgap, an immediate \$4.2M allocation to the Library, to compensate for the budgetary shortfalls from 2018 to 2023-24, during which the annual acquisitions budget has been repeatedly cut, by a cumulative \$4.2M.**<sup>2</sup> LIBR believes that there are campus emergency reserve funds

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<sup>1</sup>The Work Group's optimal \$32.5M recommendation breaks down as: \$11.5M for collections, \$500,000 for digitizing analog collections and \$20.M5 for staff. The baseline \$17.6M recommendation breaks down as: \$5.6M for collections, \$500,000 for digitizing analog collections and \$11.5M for staff.

<sup>2</sup>See <https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/scholarly-resources/FY2022-24phase2> and <https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=706910&p=9528023>. The latest 2022-24 acquisitions cut amounts to \$1.7M annually, phased in over the two years (2022-2024). It came on the heels of prior cuts to acquisitions of \$1.5M in 2018 and \$1M in 2020 (during the COVID closures).

which could and should be used for this purpose.<sup>3</sup> LIBR is requesting this emergency funding because the University needs to begin restoring the Library's collecting capacities immediately in order to prevent further harm to the excellence of this institution.

**LIBR also draws DIVCO's attention to the need to stabilize, and even sanctuarize the funding of the Library**, which is the campus's most important common good. In this respect, **LIBR asks DIVCO to support the Work Group's recommendations #9 and #10, or their equivalent**, which would guarantee stable funding for the Library in the long run. According to these recommendations, the campus would adjust Library funding to match changing academic activity levels, and would make sure to steadily increase this funding on the basis of the Higher Education Price Index.

Finally, to develop stronger philanthropic support for the Library's collections and specialty librarians, **LIBR recommends that reinvesting in the Library become a central goal for campus-wide fundraising**, as detailed in Section 4 below.

In what follows, LIBR first reviews the history of the Library's current crisis, and reflects on the ways in which it was recently addressed on the campus. Second, we make recommendations as to possible sources of funds that might be reallocated to reinvest in the library on a long-term basis. Third, we explain why delay is no longer an option and the reasons for our emergency funding request. Fourth, we describe how campus fundraising capacities could be mobilized to reinvest in the Library's collections and grow its staff. Fifth and finally, we address the question of the lack of study spaces on campus, recommending that such spaces be created outside of the perimeters of our Libraries.

## **1. A brief history of the Library's current state of crisis, and of how it has been addressed**

Most if not all campus stakeholders are currently aware — and some have been saying for quite some time — that the Library is in crisis. The Work Group report carefully documents this crisis in all its major aspects, and declares it “dire.” Along with the earlier [2013 Report of the Commission on the Future of the UC Berkeley Library](#), it traces the financial troubles of the library back to even before the 2008-2010 financial meltdown, identifying a pattern of disinvestment starting as early as 2003.

After the 2013 report raised alarm about the underfunding of the Library, then EVCP Breslauer briefly increased campus funding by somewhat less than one-half of the 2013 Report's recommendations, but this increase was eliminated by 2017. Since that time, the Library has survived by spending down its discretionary reserves, which are now entirely depleted, resulting in sharp cutbacks in the years following the campus Covid closure, i.e., from 2021 to now.

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<sup>3</sup>This \$4.2M stopgap could for example be taken from the \$20M in-year exigencies fund referred to on p. 2 of the EVCP's letter.

In 2022-2023, the Library crisis prompted responses by all of the main institutions of Berkeley's faculty governance. On October 19, 2022, the faculty Senate unanimously approved a motion to restore funding to the Library by \$17.5M annually. Immediately after this vote, and at the solicitation of LIBR, CAPRA concurred with the faculty Senate about the need to reinvest in the library, but without offering a specific spending target.

CAPRA further proposed that, given that time had passed since the 2013 report, "another Senate-Administration look at library functions and resource needs" was needed, while underscoring that any such joint study should be "focused and brief" and "not distract from meeting [the Library's] urgent needs." On December 21, 2022, Senate Chair Smart, taking up this proposal, sent a letter to Chancellor Christ and EVCP Hermalin appealing for urgent action before July 1, 2023:

"A joint Senate-administration task force should be constituted, to meet over the spring semester and deliver a report by May 15, 2023. Before the task force delivers its report, we ask the administration to restore the \$1.6 million in funding cuts projected for 2022-24 as a gesture of good faith and an acknowledgement of the force of the resolution passed at the October 19 Division meeting. Considering that the Capital Campaign recently reached its goal of \$6B, perhaps the office of University Development and Alumni Relations (UDAR) could be directed to raise funds for this stopgap while the task force pursues a long-term funding model."

However, no emergency funds to palliate the daily damage to collections were offered to the Library in 2022-2023, and no specific fundraising efforts were carried out on its behalf.

Rather, further reductions in the Library's expenditures were implemented. Over winter and spring 2022-2023, the Library devised a plan to close 3 of its subject specialty libraries (Physics, Anthropology and Math). Members of LIBR disapproved of this plan on January 12, 2023, on the grounds that closing libraries would endanger a number of precious research and learning communities on campus. They also stressed that the financial savings which the Library was aiming for might not materialize.

In late April 2023, a Work Group on the University Library (WGUL) was convened by the EVCP in response to the request of Senate Chair Smart. Tasked with thoroughly examining the situation of the library overall, and making recommendations to the Senate and the administration about how to address the Library's current and future needs, the Work Group met during May-June 2023, and delivered its report on June 30, 2023.

**The Work Group report makes clear that the finances of the library have been fragile for two decades and are now extremely precarious.** The Library's budget, which since 2003 has **fallen by 47% in inflation-adjusted funding per student**, has become increasingly inadequate to support its essential expenditures. The Work Group's figure of \$95M as the optimal annual budget to restore the Library to the level of excellence appropriate to our University is more than 50% higher than the \$62.5M on which it now survives. As a result of this lack of funding, the Library's collections are now gravely endangered by ever sharper cutbacks in acquisitions. Staff



has also steadily diminished, gradually depriving the Library of crucial expertise, and constraining its professional Librarians to take on more and more duties in the wake of attrition and retirements. **Since 2003, the library's staff has shrunk by more than 40%.**

**The report also makes clear that the growing importance of digital resources has not lessened the pressure on the Library's budget.**<sup>4</sup> Far from it in fact: the purchase or licensing price of digital materials and the cost of cataloging them generally is the same, or higher, than for print materials. On top of licensing fees themselves, which currently cost the Library over \$12M a year, Library staff need to negotiate licenses, review their terms and conditions, and ensure perpetual access. The additional staff time and processing required for digital resources almost certainly outweighs any savings on shelf space. Meanwhile, the need for print resources (especially monographs) remains high: two-thirds of the books the Library currently buys simply cannot be acquired in digital form for library use. **Digitalization is part and parcel of the Library's current financial crisis and does not generate savings.**

**The Work Group report also convincingly shows that the Library's current shortfall is due entirely to prolonged defunding, and not to operational inefficiencies.**

The EVCP's response recognizes the existence of this alarming crisis, but offers neither supplementary funding, nor even a concrete timeline to determine appropriate levels of funding for the Library's needs. Rather, the EVCP ties any potential reinvestment in the Library to the FSI ([Financial Sustainability Initiative](#)), a body whose board is composed exclusively of senior administrators, rather than of active faculty whose research and teaching depend on the Library's collection.

LIBR is also disturbed that the EVCP cites our "consultative culture,... in which the principles of shared governance are taken very seriously" as a reason to delay action. He fails to acknowledge that, in 2022-2023, **all major institutions of faculty governance across campus have already requested immediate re-funding of the Library.** Several groups, including the Faculty Senate as a whole, CAPRA and DIVCO, have argued simultaneously for substantial long-term reinvestment in the University Library.

## **2. Setting priorities**

**LIBR requests that DIVCO recommend ways to reallocate campus funds to better support the Library.** This is especially important because the Work Group determined, in its own words, that it was

"(...) not the appropriate entity to make such recommendations, since [it] did not have a panoramic or fully informed view of expenditures and needs in other areas of the campus budget."

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<sup>4</sup> In FY2022, the Library spent \$12M on electronic resources and \$5.5M on printed materials out of a total acquisition budget of \$17.5M.

Both CAPRA and DIVCO however, do possess this panoramic view — and it is their institutional responsibility to make such recommendations.

The EVCP underscores in his letter that, in recent years (2021-2024), the main pressures on the campus's budget have come from salaries. However, the campus has little to no leeway to set salaries for its faculty and stipends for its graduate students, both of which are dictated by UCOP. This means that money must be found in other areas.

The need for such reallocations has been discussed among members of LIBR and we would like to share our suggestions with DIVCO.

First and foremost, LIBR reminds DIVCO that the Library is key to the University's fundamental research and teaching missions, and serves every department. As such it deserves to be given at least equal budgetary priority in the competition for resources among core academic units. True, every non-FTE expenditure can be seen as a trade-off against faculty FTE, but common resources like the Library always lose from this perspective. Taken to an extreme, such reasoning would suggest abolishing the library, labs, computers and internet, classrooms... to fund many more FTE. Underfunding the library as severely as we do now is not so far from this. Of what value can additional faculty be to the University without the necessary resources to do their work?

Beyond that, LIBR suggests the following possible areas from which funds could be reallocated to stabilize the Library in the long term, starting with the ones we think should be considered first:

1. Capital projects: LIBR points out that the Library's collection should itself be treated as a capital project — one that is far more permanent, durable and fundamental to the well-being and excellence of the campus than most campus buildings.
2. Perennial subsidies for athletics deficits: the University of Michigan, a peer public institution which has been able to maintain the excellence of its Library, does not subsidize athletics deficits. Michigan athletics generates a surplus most years, and paid back the \$60M loan it received from the university to cover its exceptional deficit from the Covid shutdown. At UC Berkeley, subsidies for athletic deficits (not including the stadium debt) amounted to \$29M in 2021-2022, which is very close to the amount needed to fully reinvest in the library.
3. UDAR's support to fundraise for the Library: devote a significant part of the central campus's fundraising capacities to building the Library's collections and reinvesting in its staff, as discussed below in Section 4.
4. Endowment revenues: LIBR believes a part of the 6 billion dollars raised in the Capital Campaign should be allocated to the Library, either from the revenues of the endowment

or by using some of these funds to endow the Library itself.

5. Limit the ever growing number of administrative positions in comparison to faculty, and cap the salaries of our senior administrators.
6. Reconsider all campus expenditures that are not key to research & teaching (such as homecoming, etc.).

The above is by no means an exhaustive list, but only the items which occurred to LIBR members in their discussions.

### 3. The cost of inaction

After reading the Work Group report, LIBR is convinced that the Library's condition now constitutes a pressing emergency, and should be treated as such. Contrary to the implication of the EVCP's letter, which merely speaks of "concerning trends",<sup>5</sup> the Library is in a very difficult position, both financially and in terms of staff morale.<sup>6</sup>

Delay is no longer a viable option, for there are currently high costs to inaction in this crisis.

**First, shortfalls in acquisitions endanger the collection forever.** From 2016 to 2021, Berkeley acquired 623,274 volumes while the average for our 11 most comparable peer libraries was more than double that amount, at 1,300,676 (Work Group report, p. 11). As the Work Group report notes, "[b]ooks that are not purchased when they are published may simply be unavailable in the future." Beyond this, there are other immediate costs to the current inadequate funding of the Library.

To begin with, **the Library's unhealthy finances create daily discontent on campus.** As the Work Group has documented, both graduate and undergraduate students routinely voice their dissatisfaction with our Library system. In particular, they complain of perpetually overcrowded reading rooms in Doe and Moffitt libraries, and of severely reduced opening hours. Students now find our learning infrastructure – of which libraries are a central part – unwelcoming.

**Research faculty frequently complain that, over the last ten years, the library has ceased regularly buying materials in their fields,** forcing them to rely ever more on interlibrary loan. This reliance causes delays in obtaining materials, and often involves short time limits on their use, all of which impedes research work on a daily basis.

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<sup>5</sup> EVCP Hermalin bases his assessment (p. 4) that "the Library currently is relatively healthy" solely on 2021 ARL statistics that do not reflect the most recent cuts, using categories (total volumes and titles) more indicative of the legacy of the past than of current conditions. The contrasting findings of the Work Group that the Library has gone from an "inflection point" in 2013 to a "crisis point" in 2023, and that the pattern of disinvestment is now "dire," are based on a careful study incorporating current data from the Library itself, the most relevant components of ARL data, and reported experience of library staff and users.

<sup>6</sup> Now leading to significant labor discontent – as indicated by a recent [Daily Cal article](#).

In addition, because of the cutbacks in acquisitions, **our Library is about to become a net borrower in the interlibrary loan system**, after having been a net lender since the inception of the system. As explained in the Work Group report (p. 12), this change of status has a price tag, as the library receives credits as a net lender which offset some of its collections expenditures. Given that books we own in our own libraries are far more usable, and useful, for our faculty and students, it makes far more sense to buy books for our collections rather than have to pay for the privilege of borrowing them from other institutions for very short periods of time.

**Our library is heading toward mediocrity**, with numerous financial, moral, and reputational costs, including the immediate damage to our institution's standing and attractiveness to students and faculty. Allowing the Library's financial troubles to continue cannot but foster mediocrity in the university as a whole. For these reasons, **LIBR recommends immediately allocating \$4.2M dollars in stopgap funding to the library, pending the implementation of a longer-term solution.**

#### **4. Fundraising more effectively to support the Library**

As mentioned in Section 2 above, LIBR is convinced that central campus support for fundraising for the Library should be a significant component of a longer-term solution.

LIBR was troubled to see EVCP Hermalin disagree with recommendation #11 of the Work Group, which encouraged the Chancellor to:

“instruct the office of University Development and Alumni Relations (UDAR) to make fundraising for (and collaboratively with) the Library a higher priority, and to report annually on progress as part of the annual review of the Vice Chancellor for University Development and Alumni Relations.”

LIBR concurs with this recommendation and strongly believes that campus assisted fundraising for the Library can and should be developed.

Since the arrival of current University Librarian MacKie-Mason, the Library has benefited from a significant increase in external fundraising, which now provides nearly 30% of its total budget. **Yet, the Library still has only three dedicated fundraisers, and at present benefits from no regular assistance from UDAR in its efforts.**

EVCP Hermalin, in his response to the Work Group, expresses skepticism regarding the possibility of expanding the Library's funding efforts, cautioning that: “(...) there are not philanthropists out there simply willing to give to whatever cause the campus asks them to give.” According to the EVCP:

“(...) most donors — and nearly all donors with significant capacity — give to what they

wish to give: a donor interested in, say, biomedical research or a particular athletic team is not going to be steered to donate to the Library.”

While LIBR is aware that some donors prefer to give to their own areas of special interest, our committee is firmly convinced that there are many other donors in UC Berkeley’s community of alumni and supporters — including donors of major capacity — who would be prepared to give to the Library, provided its value and needs were made clear to them.

It is sometimes also believed that major donors would only want to fund new construction on campus, in order to have their names displayed on buildings providing long-lasting forms of memorialization.

However, Library collections, too, endure for centuries, when carefully curated and preserved. **Donors have long given to develop print collections, with their names memorialized through bookplates**, thanks to which every successive reader of a book in a donated collection is aware of their generosity for generations. **The equivalent of bookplates also exist for digital collections.** The Library also can and does name library spaces after major donors—including for donations to support collections.

There is no reason why the long-standing tradition of giving to grow the collections of a major research library could not be continued and extended among the UC Berkeley donor base.

Certain speciality librarian positions could also be permanently endowed, as faculty chairs sometimes are, as could the position of University Librarian, by a donor wishing to fund a prestigious appointment.

Of course, the Library could not be sufficiently or durably funded on fundraising alone — nor, obviously, should it be. Yet, collections and librarianship are two areas which should elicit an influx of support.

To develop stronger philanthropic support for its collections, and grow its team of speciality librarians, the Library urgently needs more support from UDAR. **This should include, on an annual basis, being given first shot at a group of donors who might be most open to supporting the Library.**

## **5. Why it is not advisable to turn libraries into all-purpose study spaces**

Finally, LIBR wishes to call DIVCO’s attention to one further issue: whether it would make sense, financially or institutionally, to close some of the campus’ decentralized library spaces and turn them into independent study spaces. The Work Group report discussed this at length, and EVCP Hermalin has also commented upon it.

LIBR generally approves of the Work Group’s perspective on space issues, including its recommendation #6. As a consequence, it is very concerned by the EVCP’s response to this

recommendation, in which he effectively calls for a systematic “reconceiving of Library space as dedicated study space” (p. 3). **Here, the EVCP’s proposed action entirely contradicts the Work Group’s perspective, as well as LIBR’s conclusions.**

In truth, the Work Group report’s conclusions on this issue (pp. 31-42) were nuanced. However, LIBR’s understanding of the Work Group report is that **while it is a truism that a library is an expensive way to provide a study hall, it does not necessarily follow that decommissioning library spaces to turn them into study halls will alleviate either the Library’s financial crisis or the shortage of study space on campus.** Though this position may seem counterintuitive at first, LIBR fully supports it, for the following reasons.

It is widely acknowledged that there is an acute shortage of study space on campus, a consequence of increased enrollments and a housing market in which more and more students live far away and/or in cramped quarters uncondusive to study off campus. As traditional places for study, the libraries feel the impact of the housing crisis, with every seat taken much of the time in the Doe Library North Reading Room, Moffitt, and the Kresge Engineering Library in Bechtel (whose current temporary closure for construction exacerbates the problem). There is therefore a clear need for more quiet common spaces outside of libraries where students can study when not using physical library resources, as well as enjoying conveniences not possible in libraries, such as snacks and drinks.

Nevertheless, **consolidating and converting libraries can yield at most a limited net gain in study space, and may even frequently yield a loss.** Indeed, there is no guarantee that a former library space will not be put to some other use, or even disappear entirely, as will occur with the Math Library, which is being consolidated with the Engineering Library because of the impending demolition of Evans Hall.

**Most importantly, even though some or many students may use a library space for unrelated study, that library still needs to be open and accessible for those who do specifically need its bibliographic resources.**

**Finally, closing libraries can be a false economy. Even in purely financial terms, the benefit is often unclear.**

In this regard, LIBR would like to remind DIVCO of **the recent example of the Anthropology Library.** Indeed, the seemingly generous \$846,600 ‘critical priorities fund’ allocation to the Library alluded to in footnote 5 of the EVCP’s letter — which was effectively the only emergency funding the Library received last year — was in fact for the sole purpose of covering the costs of closing the Anthropology and Physics-Astronomy Libraries. Central campus provided another \$46,000 to the Anthropology Department to help repurpose the library space, bringing the total cost of the central Library’s disengagement from these subject area libraries to nearly \$900,000.

Meanwhile, because of the staunch opposition of the Anthropology community, it turned out not

to be possible to reallocate the Anthropology Library space to create an all-purpose study-hall. Instead, it will become a reading room with a small non-circulating collection of about 21,000 volumes (some deaccessioned by the Library as duplicates, and others belonging to the Anthropology Department rather than the Library) out of about 47,000 previously held in the Anthropology Library. The remainder of this rich and diverse collection of books, assembled over decades, and once browsable in a single place, will be dissolved into our main collections.

**There are real costs beyond the financial ones involved with this and other potential closings, which in eliminating libraries as places of communal study, effectively threaten the existence of the knowledge communities formed around these uniquely discipline-specific collections.** It is because the closing of the Anthropology Library was seen as a threat to the shared spaces which bring together this disciplinary community on campus, while testifying to its intellectual history, that this attempted closure met with such extended and strenuous protests from the users of this library, as well as with strong objections from LIBR.

Yet, even the far less objectionable consolidation of the Math Library into Engineering can only create small relative savings: the Library will still need to employ a Mathematics Librarian and to maintain the Mathematics collection wherever it is housed.

On the whole, closing libraries may generate only very modest budgetary savings, if any, and, up until now, it has not been possible to turn any of the closed libraries into independent study spaces. Indeed, as the report of the Work Group makes clear, for the campus to be able to do so, it would need to establish an office charged with creating and maintaining study spaces. Like the Work Group, LIBR believes that creating such an office would be advisable, with the *caveat* that **the University should open study spaces where our students need them the most, such as in the Student Union, in the numerous new dormitories being created for our undergraduates, and in our most central teaching buildings, as they are refurbished or newly built, not in repurposed library space.** Study spaces created near cafés and food outlets would especially facilitate communal learning, mitigate the effects of Berkeley's housing crisis, and reduce atomization among our students.

**The University's response to the housing crisis should not be shutting down its libraries.** Creating spaces specifically designed to be study spaces will likely always be less costly and more efficient overall than refurbishing library space.

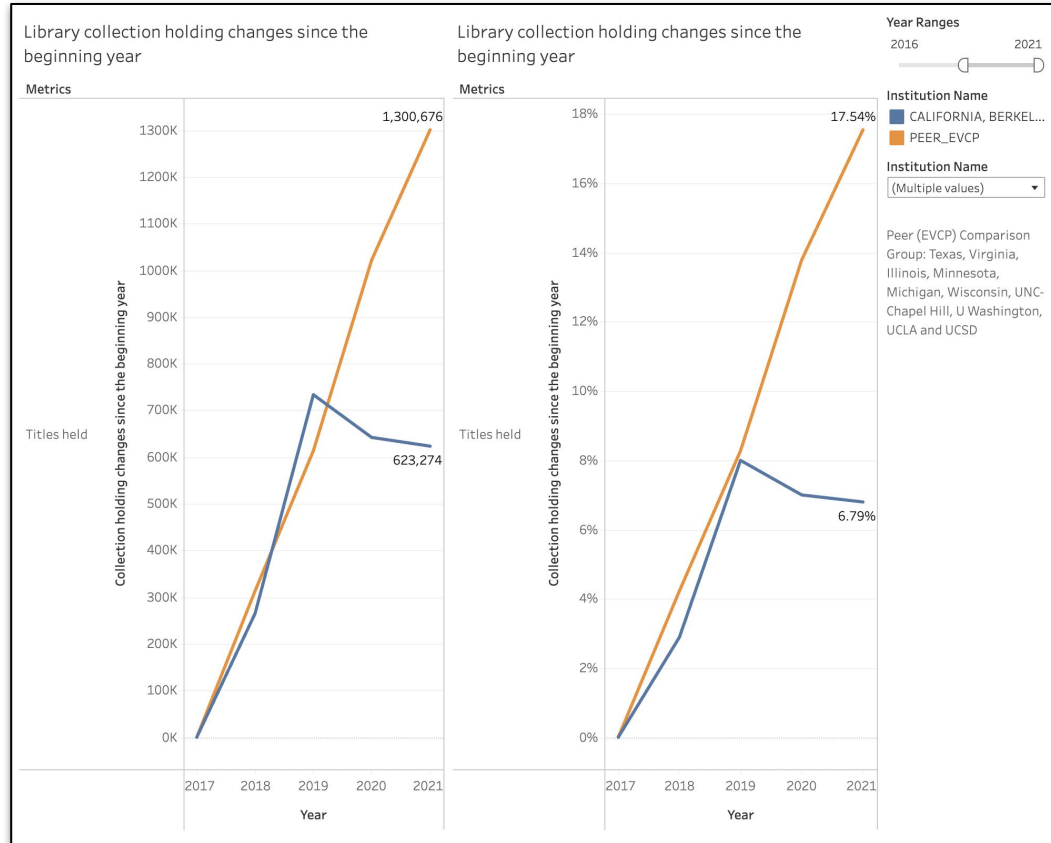
## **In conclusion**

LIBR very much hopes that DIVCO will support immediate reinvestment in the Library. **Funding should first aim, as a stopgap, to restore \$4.2M to the Library acquisition budget this year. In the longer term, DIVCO must help ensure that the Library is appropriately funded at the level, and with the stability, needed to preserve the excellence of the country's premier public research institution. For this to happen, the minimal reinvestment is \$17.6M a year, while \$32.5M a year remains the optimal reallocation.**

Joint Academic and Administrative  
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**Figure 1b: Library Collection Trends Comparison Between Berkeley and Peer Comparison Group Average From 2016- 2021, Source: UC Berkeley Library ARL Statistics Trends**



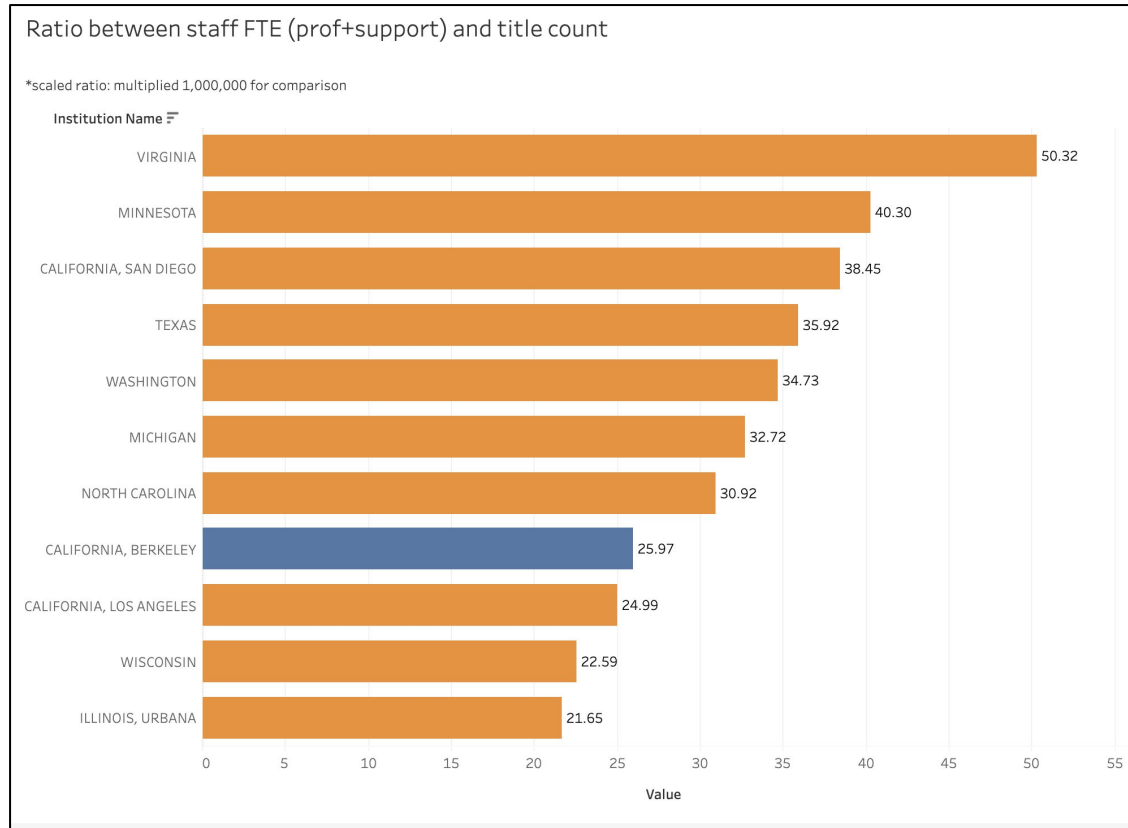
## UC Berkeley Library Staff FTE

	2010	2018	2023	Net since 2010	% since 2010
Librarians	86	69	67	-19	-22%
Other staff	293	258	210	-83	-28%
Total non-student staff	379	327	277	<b>-102</b>	<b>-27%</b>

**Table 5: University Library Public Hours Fall 2019 vs. Fall 2023, Source UC Berkeley Library**

	F 2019	F 2023	% reduction
Total hours/week, all locations	1333	951	29%
Total weekend hours, all locations	201	102	49%
Hours/week, locations outside the Doe/Moffitt complex	784	469	40%

**Figure 3: Loss in collections-relevant expertise, Source: UC Berkeley Library**



## Graduate student:

*I spend hours upon hours a day in [the library], looking at, e.g, plates of how Greek triremes were represented in pottery, or studies on Greek epigraphy.... How will I be able to use these resources ... if my other academic obligations eclipse the reduced hours? . . . In addition[, the subject specialty library] is ... a communal space for us.... sharing a table with my colleagues has kept me from feeling isolated within academia, and that is a rare thing.*

## Faculty feedback

*From the perspective of graduate funding, we are already at a disadvantage in relation to top PhD programs at places like Princeton and Stanford, which have magnificent general collections as well as excellent dedicated subject libraries. A university that has also given up on making its library a place where serious research can be done with any sort of convenience or efficiency will just not be able to compete with the PhD programs at these institutions.*

# Recommendations

- Annual funding increases
- Improved funding methodology
- Better study space planning