

**A RESOLUTION ON SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION AND LIBRARY SERIALS
ACQUISITIONS 03/9**

WHEREAS, a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Libraries studied the current status of scholarly communications and library serials acquisitions; and

WHEREAS, scholarly communication through published journals, both print and electronic, is central to the healthy functioning of the scholarly community, and the instruments of scholarly communication should operate for the primary benefit of scholars and students engaged in the enterprise of learning and teaching; and

WHEREAS, large commercial publishers are increasing prices for many journal subscriptions at a rate far exceeding the rate of inflation; and

WHEREAS, licensing agreements for institutions are becoming increasingly restrictive; and

WHEREAS, leading institutions in the US and abroad, are beginning to respond to this problem;
NOW, THEREFORE

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FACULTY SENATE OF THE GEORGE WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY THAT:**

- 1.** The Faculty Senate encourages faculty members to educate themselves about this issue.
- 2.** The Faculty Senate supports the libraries' efforts to balance priorities by deciding to cancel or not to purchase journals available only through bundle purchasing, and in some cases by purchasing newer, less established journals.
- 3.** In reference to the production of scholarly publications, the Faculty Senate encourages faculty authors to consider accessibility when choosing where to publish their research: to consider more affordable publishers whose institutional pricing policies are in line with reasonable price increases, and to consider newer open-access publications.
- 4.** The Faculty Senate encourages faculty who serve on editorial boards of journals to be aware of, and to the extent possible, involved in decisions concerning pricing of periodicals and thereby concerning dissemination of knowledge, scholarship, and research.

Drafted by John Heins, German and Slavic Languages, Caroline Long, Librarian,
and Anne Linton, Librarian, on behalf of the Senate Committee on Libraries;
Sylvia A. Marotta, Chair.

February 19, 2004

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Resolution Concerning Scholarly Communication and Library Serials Acquisitions

Preamble:

Librarians have brought to the attention of the Faculty Senate Standing Committee on Libraries a continuing crisis in scholarly communication affecting academic libraries throughout the US and overseas, particularly in reference to serials acquisitions. As large commercial publishers are increasingly dominating the market for scholarly journals, the prices for many journal subscriptions, both print and electronic, are unjustifiably increasing at a rate far exceeding the rate of inflation. The Association of Research Libraries reports that serial costs for member libraries increased 215% over the past 15 years, while the Consumer Price Index increased only 62%. At the same time, journals are becoming subject to increasingly restrictive rules regarding use by virtue of the licensing agreements between publishers and institutional subscribers (e.g. restrictive downloading, photocopying and lending rules). At GW, the effect of these changes is a necessary decrease in the number of serials the libraries may acquire, and simultaneously an unavoidable increase in the overall cost of those we do acquire, cutting into budgets for book purchases as well. With other institutions being forced into similar cutbacks, access to scholarly output is diminishing in the aggregate. (For fuller explanations of this dynamic and a wealth of resources related to this growing international problem, faculty are invited to consult the website <http://www.gwu.edu/gelman/guides/general/scholarly.html> maintained by Caroline Long, Associate University Librarian for Collections Services.)

Leading institutions both here and abroad, including Harvard, Cornell, the University of California, and the Parliament of the UK, have begun taking strong action in response to the problem. This action in some cases has included cancelling subscriptions from certain "prime offender" publishers such as Reed Elsevier rather than submitting to their unfair use restrictions and "bundling" practices. ("Bundling" refers to a practice wherein libraries purchase electronic versions of the print journals plus many other of the publishers' titles for a modest amount beyond the cost of their paper subscriptions, only to face large price increases at renewal time. As libraries are unable to afford the increasing price of the bundle and they seek to tailor subscriptions to university research and curricula, they are forced to buy individual subscriptions at substantially higher prices.)

The resistance to the increasingly severe restriction of scholarly information will be most effective if that resistance becomes widespread in the scholarly community. The Faculty at GW has a vital stake in the acquisition of new scholarly knowledge through academic journals, and is integrally involved in the production and distribution of that knowledge through its publication in, and editorial work on, scholarly journals published by a variety of publishers. In order to address this crisis in an effective and comprehensive way, we at GW must consider not only the principles whereby the GW libraries should acquire serials, but also the principles whereby we choose to support journals by submitting our scholarly work and to accord journals our scholarly acclaim.

Whereas: Scholarly communication through published journals, both print and electronic, is central to the healthy functioning of the scholarly community, and the instruments of scholarly communication should operate for the primary benefit of scholars and students engaged in the enterprise of learning and teaching,

Be it Resolved That:

- 1.** The Faculty Senate encourages faculty members to educate themselves about this issue.
- 2.** Recognizing that in light of the circumstances indicated above, and in a state of quite limited resources, the GW libraries must regularly make very difficult choices among potential serials purchases, the Faculty Senate supports the libraries' efforts to balance priorities by deciding to cancel or not to purchase journals available only through bundle purchasing, and in some cases by purchasing newer, less established journals.
- 3.** In reference to the production of scholarly publications, the Faculty Senate encourages faculty authors to consider accessibility when choosing where to publish their research: to consider more affordable publishers whose institutional pricing policies are in line with reasonable price increases, and to consider newer open-access publications.
- 4.** The Faculty Senate encourages faculty who serve on editorial boards of journals to be aware of, and to the extent possible, involved in decisions concerning pricing of periodicals and thereby concerning dissemination of knowledge, scholarship, and research.