

**REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE
ON LIBRARY COLLECTIONS**



California State University

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CSU TASK FORCE ON LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

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The Task Force on Library Collections was formed in 1997 as a result of informal discussions between several library directors, graduate deans, and vice presidents for academic affairs concerning the plight of CSU's library collections following years of budget reductions. The discussions led to the formation of a group representing those constituencies as well as the Statewide Academic Senate and Chancellor's Office staff. The group resolved to prepare a report to the CSU on the state of the collections.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CSU library collections support the instructional needs of students and faculty.

Support for CSU library collections has decreased since FY 1990/91 more than support for any other aspect of the university.

Reductions in expenditures for library collections began a year earlier than cuts in general fund expenditures throughout the CSU. Cuts in expenditures for library collections were greater than cuts in general fund expenditures. Expenditures for library collections began to recover later and more slowly than general fund expenditures as a whole.

During the years of expenditure reductions, reallocations occurred such that library expenditures in FY 96/97 were a smaller percentage of total general fund expenditures than in FY 90/91.

While reductions in acquisitions expenditures were occurring, the prices of books and subscriptions were rising rapidly. Cumulatively, library acquisitions expenditures were reduced AND prices were higher.

Coping strategies included reducing staff notwithstanding enrollment increases and hours of service, canceling subscriptions, buying fewer books, and borrowing more items from other libraries. System-wide collaborative initiatives of the Library Strategic Plan have also been undertaken to reduce costs through consortial purchasing and enhanced resource sharing and information access (the Academic Information Services Cooperative and the Unified Information Access System).

While electronic information access initiatives show benefits for enhancing access to and use of information resources, there is no indication that technology is yielding an overall reduction in the costs of information access, certainly not to the degree that offsets the reduction in acquisition budgets.

In the budgetary augmentations proposed in May 1998 for FY 98/99 the governor included and the legislature approved a one-time supplement of \$10 million for the purchase of library materials for CSU. It is understood that these funds are to be in effect "earmarked" for this purpose. In FY 99/00 it is essential that these one time funds be made permanent and that the total expenditures for library collections be augmented to accommodate inflation.

REPORT OF THE CSU TASK FORCE ON LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

CSU's library collections at the end of the 20th Century include a variety of resources and formats, e.g. books, journals, sound recordings, maps, posters, videos, movies, digital data sets, digital text, art works, etc. These library collections support CSU's instructional programs; that is, they support the information and recorded knowledge needs of students and faculty.

Support for CSU's library collections has decreased since FY 1990/91 more than support for any other aspect of the academic enterprise. This decline in support, combined with rampant inflation in the prices of the new resources acquired, has created a major crisis for teaching, learning and scholarship in the CSU.

EXPENDITURE CUTS

Reductions in expenditures for library acquisitions by CSU's libraries began in FY 91/92, a year before general fund expenditures throughout CSU were cut. FY 91/92 acquisitions expenditures were 6.6% less than in FY 90/91. Table 1 and Figure 1 display these reductions in comparison with overall CSU general fund expenditures.

In addition to occurring a year ahead of cuts in general fund expenditures for the university as a whole, the data above demonstrate that library acquisitions expenditures were reduced by a larger percentage; not only were library acquisitions **cut earlier** but they were also cut by **a larger percentage**.

The data also reveal that library acquisitions expenditures have recovered more slowly than general fund expenditure as a whole. The total expenditures for acquisitions in FY 96/97 by twenty-two* libraries — \$25,632,651— were just 4% more than the total expenditures for acquisitions in FY 90/91 by nineteen* libraries—\$24,024,731. **Cut earlier, by a larger percentage, recovering more slowly!**

Since the 96/97 expenditures include \$2,469,262 for electronic resources, which were for the most part, not purchased in FY 90/91, the 96/97 expenditures comparable to those in 90/91 were probably lower.

* The FY 96/97 expenditures include 22 libraries, San Marcos, Maritime Academy and Monterey Bay having been added since 90/91.

TABLE1
Cumulative Percent Change in General Fund Expenditures FY90/91-96/97
(EXCLUDES MARITIME ACADEMY, MONTEREY BAY, SAN MARCOS)

	Cumulative % Change Total General Fund Expenditures <i>GF EXP</i>	Cumulative % Change Total Library General Fund Expenditures <i>LIB GF EXP</i>	Cumulative % Change Total Library Acquisition Expenditures <i>LIB ACQ</i>
1990/91	0	0	0
1991/92	0.8	-2.6	-6.6
1992/93	-3.1	-9.8	-15.2
1993/94	-2.5	-8.9	-8.8
1994/95	2.1	-5.6	-6.2
1995/96	8.9	-1.6	-1.5
1996/97	13.1	2.0	4.8

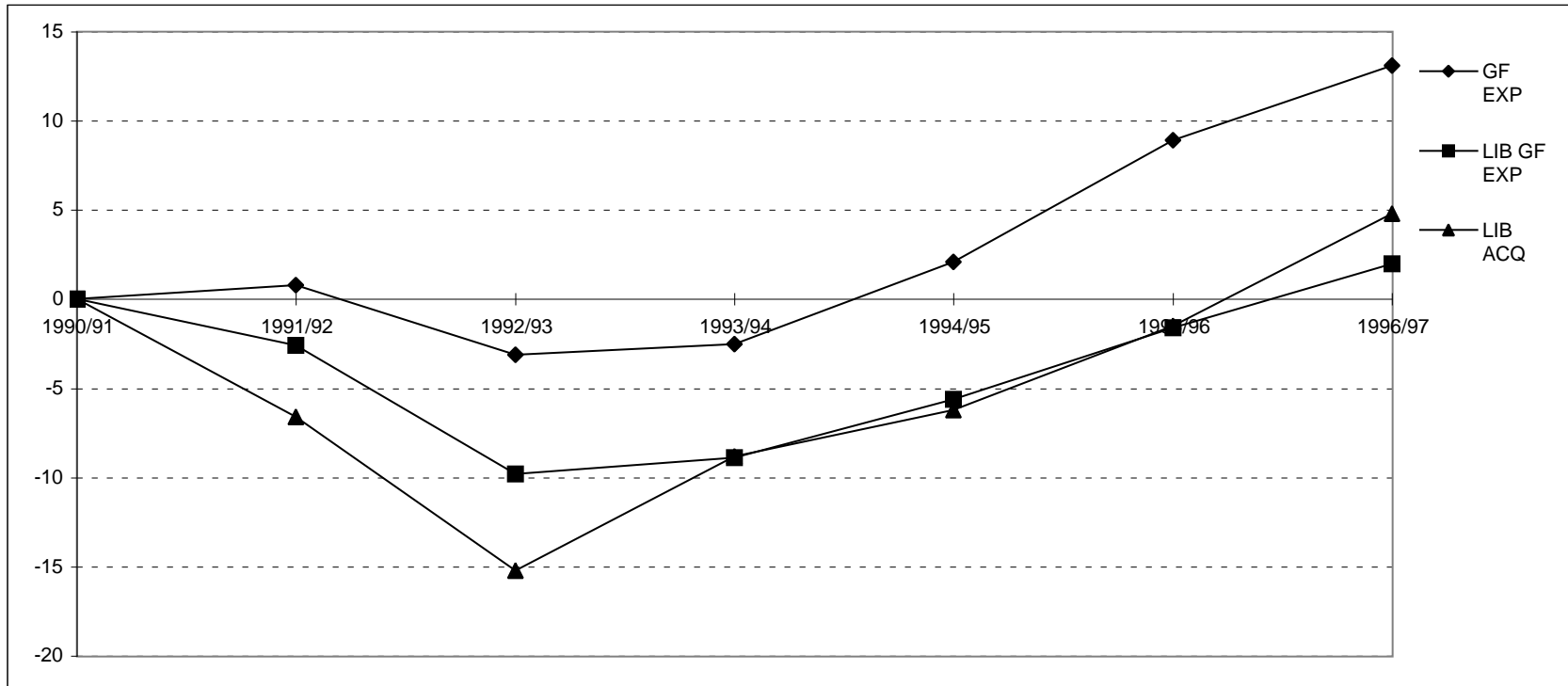


FIGURE 1 -- Cumulative Percent Change in General Fund Expenditures FY90/91-96/97

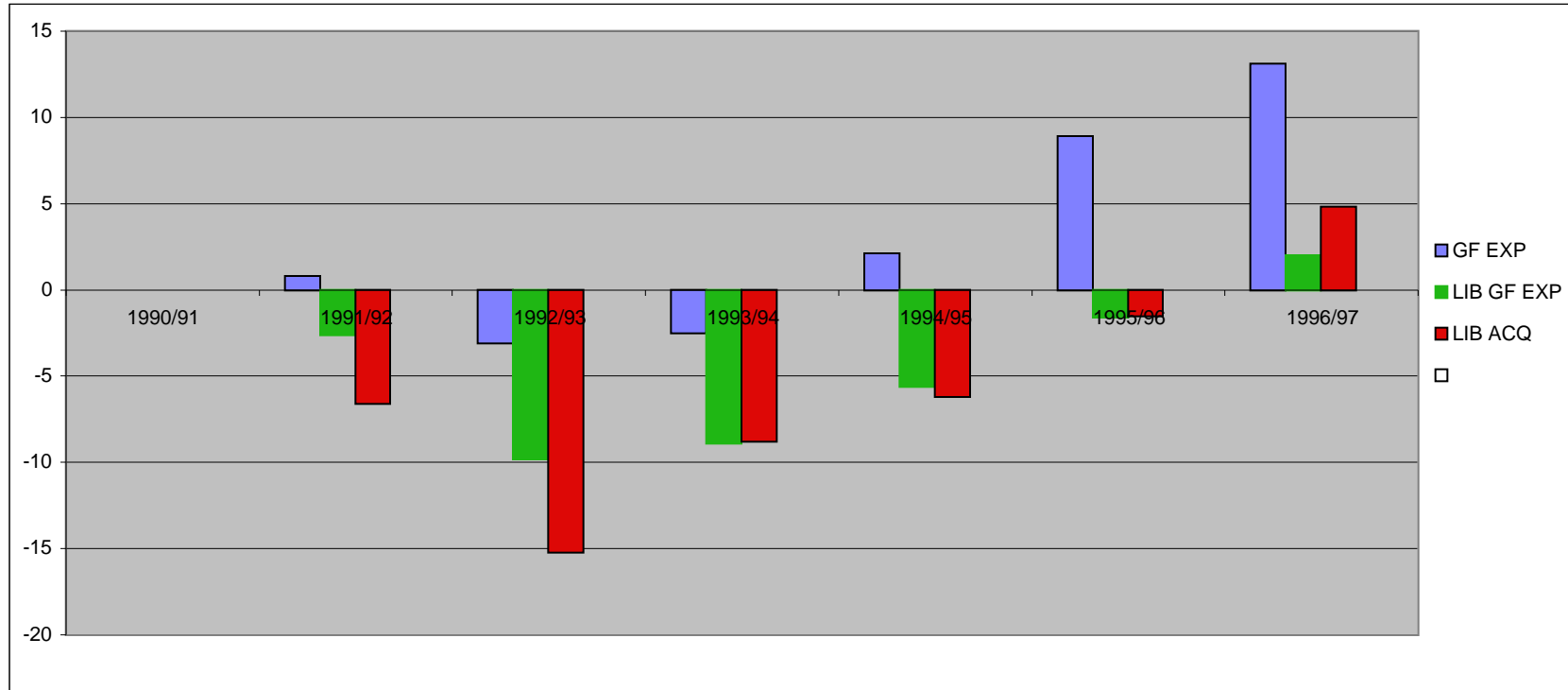
(EXCLUDES MARITIME ACADEMY, MONTEREY BAY, SAN MARCOS)

Cumulative % Change
Total General
Fund Expenditures
GF EXP

Cumulative % Change
Total Library General
Fund Expenditures
LIB GF EXP

Cumulative % Change
Total Library Acquisition
Expenditures
LIB ACQ

	GF EXP	LIB GF EXP	LIB ACQ
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REALLOCATION AWAY FROM LIBRARIES

In FY 90/91 the total expenditures for nineteen CSU libraries was 4.69% of all general fund expenditures by all campuses; in FY 96/97 total library expenditures for twenty-two campuses were 4.15% of all general funds expenditures by all campuses. The library portion of all general fund expenditures has declined by eleven percent over seven fiscal years. In effect, there has been a reallocation of funding away from libraries.

INFLATION

While reductions in acquisitions expenditures and reallocation away from libraries were occurring, CSU libraries were having to pay more for the fewer materials they acquired. The costs/prices of library materials rose faster in the Nineties than any other commodity purchased by the university. Table 2 and Figure 2 display the effects of inflation on library purchasing power.

Using a methodology approved by the California Department of Finance and employed in its annual "Price Letter" to state agencies, the prices of library books increased 29%, between FY 90/91 and FY 97/98. The prices of journal subscriptions increased 87% in the same period.

TABLE 2
Effects of Inflation on Library Materials Purchasing
 1990/91 - 1997/98

	Actual Dollars Available	Amount Needed for Books	Gap for Books	Amount Needed for Periodicals	Gap for Periodicals
90/91	100.00	100.00	**	100.00	**
91/92	93.40	109.30	15.90	109.30	15.90
92/93	84.80	110.35	25.55	119.25	34.45
93/94	91.20	116.09	24.89	131.05	39.85
94/95	93.80	120.27	26.47	143.63	49.83
95/96	98.50	123.63	25.13	156.56	58.06
96/97	104.80	123.89	19.09	169.71	64.91
97/98	??	124.38	??	186.85	??

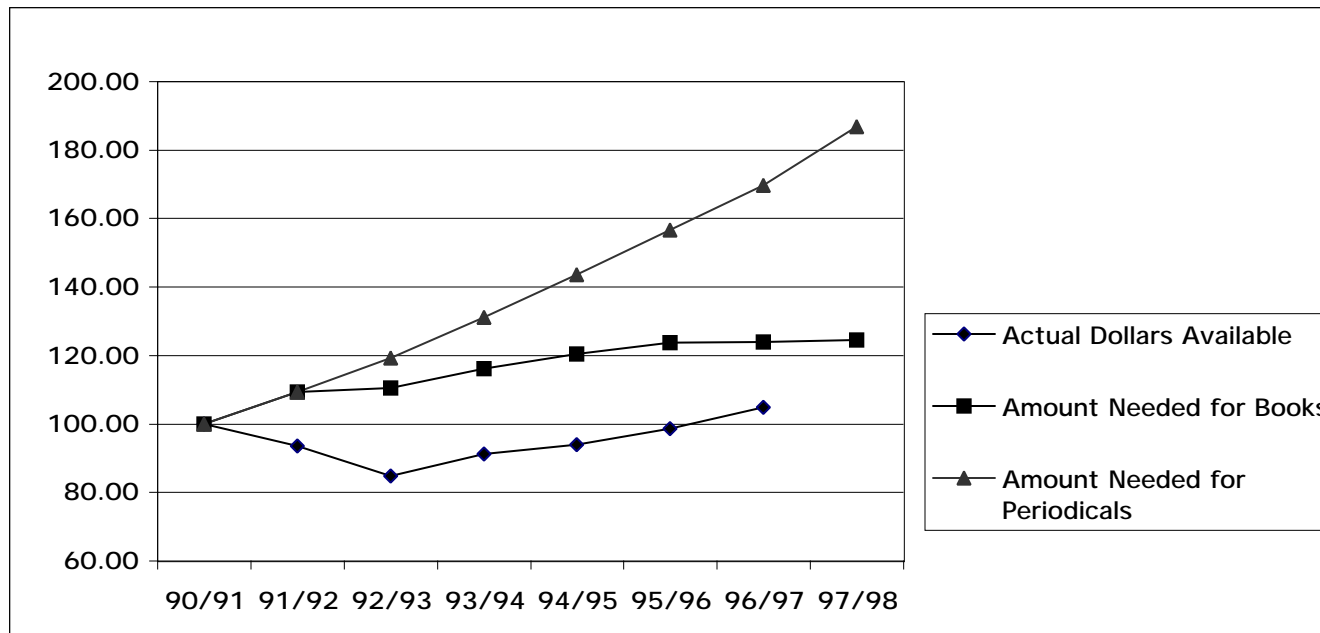


FIGURE 2 -- Effects of Inflation on Library Materials Purchasing

COPING

The coping strategies of the CSU libraries during these years of decline included cutting staff, canceling subscriptions, buying fewer books, buying cheaper books, and borrowing more items from other libraries.

- In FY 90/91, nineteen libraries had 1,217 FTE positions, a ratio of 0.6 FTE position per 100 FTE students. In FY 96/97 twenty-two libraries had 1,127 positions, a decrease of 90 positions and a ratio of 0.43 position per 100 FTE students. (In nineteen CSU libraries in FY 65/66 there were 1,097 positions serving 154,000 FTES, a ratio of 0.71!)
- In FY 90/91 nineteen libraries paid for 63,822 subscriptions; in 96/97 twenty-two libraries paid for 47,310 subscriptions, a twenty-six percent cancellation rate.
- In FY 90/91 nineteen libraries purchased 263,379 books; in FY 95/96 twenty-two libraries purchased 226,668 books, a decrease of fourteen percent.
- In FY 90/91 nineteen libraries borrowed 126,549 items from other libraries; in FY 96/97 twenty-two libraries received 159,671 items from other libraries, an increase of twenty-six percent in five years, and notwithstanding cuts in staffing.

CONSEQUENCES

The decline in acquisitions, a function of expenditure cuts and inflation, has had demonstrable effects on the composition of library collections, specifically on the inclusion in these collections of current publications. Book collections for three disciplines were selected as a sample to illustrate the decline in the number of current items acquired over the past several years. The biology collection at Humboldt, for example, is comprised of 27,209 books published prior to 1990, fully 88 percent of the total collection in biology of 31,039 books. The biology collection contains only 405 books published in 1996, or 1.3 percent of the total.

Table 3
Books in Biology at Humboldt by Year of Publication

Year Published	Books	Percentage
Pre-1990	27,209	88.0
1990	651	2.1
1991	593	1.9
1992	591	1.9
1993	507	1.6
1994	530	1.7
1995	553	1.8
1996	405	1.3
Total	31,039	100

Table 4
Books in Computer Science at San Jose by Year of Publication

Year Published	Books	Percentage
1988	404	21.1
1989	365	19.0
1990	229	12.0
1991	182	9.5
1992	130	6.8
1993	124	6.5
1994	193	10.1
1995	174	9.1
1996	117	6.1
Total	1,918	100

Table 5
Books in Psychology at Bakersfield by year of Publication

Year Published	Books	Percentage
Pre-1990	13,025	92.0
1990	291	2.1
1991	308	2.2
1992	114	0.81
1993	104	0.73
1994	100	0.71
1995	129	0.91
1996	93	0.66
Total	14,164	100

These tables illustrate the distortion of book collections that have resulted from inadequate acquisitions budget over the last several years; they starkly display the aging of the three collections. The third column shows the overall trend of newer books comprising ever-smaller proportions of those collections.

The consequences of the decline in support for library acquisitions, and the resulting aging of the collections, have severely limited what the CSU students use. Undergraduates' needs for information resources, driven by the time constraints of instructional cycles— semesters, quarters— have forced students to choose between or combine inadequate research strategies. On the one hand students—who borrow the vast majority of the materials CSU libraries circulate— use library materials of increasing age, given the declining ability of the libraries to acquire current publications. On the other hand, students can and do rely on the World Wide Web and the Internet for current but incomplete, and often unverified, material. Graduate students increasingly seem to give up on CSU libraries and look for resources elsewhere, undesirable as an institutional plan but arguably a feasible strategy in selected regions of the state.

The aging collections in CSU libraries do not of course escape the notice of accreditation teams. One team member remarked during a recent campus visit that the library's collection of books in computer science was "museum quality."

MYTHS

Pronouncements abound in the media and elsewhere regarding the revolution of electronic publishing, the demise of the printed work, and the panacea of information technology as the solution to libraries' problems. In the context of the problems facing CSU's libraries, three of these mythical pronouncements merit discussion.

Myth 1: Digital is Less Expensive

During these years of decline, statements of concern from faculty and librarians were met with assertions that digital formats would replace print and that digital was inherently better and less expensive. The evidence to date suggests that since the

introduction of the personal computer in 1981 the number of new books published each year has **not** decreased, but rather increased. The evidence to date suggests that the digital format has not replaced print for books. With respect to journals, the evidence to date suggests that **some** significant journals in scientific, technical and medical fields are available electronically, but that social sciences, humanities and other disciplines continue to be served primarily by printed journals. Across all disciplines, it should be noted, digital formats rarely include retrospective issues.

The evidence to date also does not support the notion that digital formats will be less expensive than print. In fields where current core journals may be available electronically, the price is often equal to, greater than, or **in addition** to the print version. In sum, digital formats seem more likely to have an impact on access to and use of journals than on access to and use of books, and in any event the digital format has not yet demonstrated that it is or ever will be less expensive than print.

Myth 2: Resource Sharing will Solve the Problem

Another common response to expressions of concern about the decline in acquisitions has been to urge more sharing of resources among libraries. As noted above there has been a twenty-six percent increase in borrowing items from other libraries by the CSU libraries, this notwithstanding reductions in staffing. The Council of Library Directors has taken the lead in making existing resource sharing mechanisms more economical through changes in contracts with courier services and the UC libraries. The Council has also taken the lead in implementing, with funding approved by the Commission on Learning Resources and Instructional Technology (CLRIT), a technological infrastructure (Unified Information Access System, UIAS) which will make resource sharing less staff intensive and capable of quicker delivery. However, unless the decline of the past seven years is arrested, more efficient resource sharing among CSU libraries will be much ado about less and less.

Another common response to concerns about declining library acquisitions has been to advocate greater coordination among CSU libraries in the materials acquired. The Council of Library Directors has addressed this matter and successfully secured funding through CLRIT for the purchase centrally, leveraging the size of the University, of an Electronic Core Collection, a selection of five electronic information sources which were the titles most commonly subscribed to by campus libraries. There will continue to be opportunities to take advantage of aggregation and achieve economies of scale for the CSU libraries, but there will continue to be a need for

collections on each campus appropriate for and responsive to the local instructional program.

To the extent that there are unique curricula across the CSU, it would be possible to coordinate the acquisition of materials in support of those programs and efficiently share with other campuses materials uniquely held at the library supporting the unique curriculum. As part of the Academic Information Services Cooperative (AISC) initiative, the Council of Library Directors, with support from CLRIT, will undertake collection analysis projects that will enable the strength of collections supporting unique curricula to be gauged. These projects will serve as the basis for developing funding strategies to assure that the collections are adequately supported in the future as university wide resources.

Myth 3: Distance Learning Will Relieve the Pressure

Finally, it has been assumed by some that as distributed learning/distance education becomes more pervasive, libraries will be able to meet the needs of students in those programs with existing resources, and it has been assumed that the need for library collections at campuses will in fact diminish since the students in this scenario will increasingly not be at the campuses. The CSU currently has a tiny percentage of its FTES in distributed learning mode less than two percent. Regardless of what proportion of the CSU enrollment is served through distributed learning, students need access to information resources. Since CSU's enrollments are campus based, it will remain the responsibility of the "home" campus to provide "its" distributed students with adequate library collections and services. For example, the School of Library and Information Science program at San Jose State currently serves students enrolled at other sites (Fullerton, Sonoma, Sacramento, San Diego) with access to digitized materials supporting its three core courses. These materials are in a computer at San Jose and are accessible by password by students at any/all locations.

RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTION PLAN

FY 1998/99

The task force concluded after reviewing the data that library purchasing power

should be restored to 90/91 levels. The cumulative inflation factor using Department of Finance calculations is 60 percent since 1990/91. Applying that inflation factor to CSU library materials spending in 90/91, and accounting for the addition of three campuses, yields a funding shortfall for 96/97 that totals approximately \$14 million.

The task force is aware of the keen competition for resources at the campus level. During the seven years of decline in acquisitions resources, it is clear that many, if not all, campuses reallocated funds away from libraries to other priorities. More recently, the task force notes that some incremental funding has been distributed to the campuses earmarked for technology (student access to computers), e.g. BATS funds. Given the health of the California economy and corollary improvement in the state's fiscal condition, the task force encourages campuses to treat the \$10 million one-time supplemental funds for library materials, announced in the 1998/99 "May revise," as "earmarked" to assure that these funds are used to restore in part the library purchasing power lost since 1990/91. The allocation of these funds to libraries will permit restoration of book acquisitions to 1990/91 levels, i.e. 263,000 volumes, and it will permit further system-wide collaboration in the acquisition of online bibliographic and full text resources.

FY 99/00 and Beyond

For the future, the task force proposes strategies that will, if implemented, stabilize funding for library collections. First, acquisitions funding must be indexed to accommodate inflation. As noted above, not only were there cuts in acquisitions expenditures by the CSU libraries over the past seven years, there were also very large increases in prices for the materials libraries acquired. Absent funding for inflation, expenditures for the commodity inflating more slowly (books, still heavily used by students) will be victim the commodity inflating more rapidly (journals).

Second, the task force urges that every effort be made to add the \$10 million one-time supplement funding in 98/99 to the base budget in future years with adjustments for inflation and to assure that it is used for library acquisitions. The Council of Library Directors has taken a leadership position in advocating that a portion of the 98/99 funds be used for continuation of system level programs of strategic benefit to all twenty-two libraries (for example, the Electronic Core Collection), and will continue to support system-level investments of strategic importance.

SUMMARY

The experience of the past seven years has created a crisis for CSU library collections. The deficiencies will not be remedied overnight, but library service and collections for CSU students and faculty can, through a set of interwoven and complementary strategies, be better in the years ahead than the recent past. The strategies include restoration of funding, continued support of resource sharing through infrastructure improvements, further leveraging of the size of the system through coordinated contracting for selected resources, use of appropriate technologies, and cooperative collection development in the context of curricular coordination.