Report to the Senate of
University Libraries Committee
December 6, 2005

The Committee convened shortly after noon in the Training Room of the library (a secret place where librarians exercise on treadmills and elliptical machines). Topics of interest to students and faculty were discussed, as follows (there were no action items or votes during the meeting):

1. Partly in response to a recent Letter to the Editor of the Current, there was an extended discussion of the library hours and the possibilities for modifying or extending them during weekday evenings or on weekends. This issue had last been addressed seriously some five or six years ago; at that time it was determined that there did not seem to be enough demand from patrons to justify additional hours. However, Director Arnott and the Library staff are open to suggestions that would lead to better service, including modification of hours if resources for the changes can be made available either externally or by reallocation.
   UMSL students have access to other area Mobius libraries (SLU, WU, Webster, Community Colleges), some of which may be available when ours are closed. We suggested that a reminder of this be placed in appropriate locations on the library Web pages.
   Library hours are tied to availability of other campus services, of course. As long as other campus facilities are closed, it is unlikely that there will be large demand for library access. Therefore, library hours may be part of larger considerations that may have to be addressed by Vice Chancellor Coonrod. As a new residence hall opens next year, the campus climate may change, creating greater justification for increased library and pubic computer facilities. Director Arnott promised to continue to monitor patron statistics at times near the boundaries of current library hours.

2. Barbara Hufker reported that infinitesimal progress continues toward the goal of moving away from Social Security Numbers for patron identification, but this is a much more complicated issue than might first appear, as it impacts students, staff, and faculty in many different institutions, each with a different patron identification system. There is universal agreement that this transition needs to occur, but it needs to be done so as to avoid disruption of access. Students at UMSL can already use their student identification number when requesting Interlibrary Loan materials, and faculty can use the PeopleSoft employee number for this purpose.
   While we were discussing this question, we learned that users of online databases sometimes have trouble accessing them if they have entered the library pages through MyGateway. Anyone experiencing these problems should try entering the system directly from the library homepage.

3. The library still intends to change to a system of copier access that will accommodate the same copier cards that are used elsewhere on campus. The cost to patrons will be lower, as well as more convenient. The new system will not

quite be ready by the beginning of next semester, so the change will not take place until after the end of the Spring term.

4. Frances Piesbergen reported that a new, one-credit course on library usage (for freshmen students only) is being piloted and will appear in the catalog (Interdisciplinary 1010). It will be graded pass/fail and provide useful information for anyone using print or online library resources.

5. At least four new online databases will become available January 1, 2006. These include PsychArticles, Chemical Biology, Oxford University Press life sciences journals, and possibly one other, depending on final price negotiations.

Hal Harris
Libraries Committee Chair