Subject: Provost's memo
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Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2009 14:33:01 -0600
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Fellow SCL Committee Members:

Provost Katehi has sent the attached memo to Paula Kaufman, who in turn has circulated it to librarians (and possibly others). The memo is consistent with the message we have been hearing from White, Herman, and Katehi: revising how the University functions, making it more efficient, is something that has to happen almost immediately, certainly by 7/1/09.

There are several reactions we might have to the current situation:

- Circle the wagons, try to slow down The Deluge. It is quite clear (at least to me) that this is a recipe for disaster.
  The budget cuts are coming, and if we don't act proactively, the cuts will be done TO us rather than WITH us.
- Meekly act as requested. This too is disaster. We have scholarly needs, collective insights on what is essential
  and where our fields are going, that no one individual can muster, and thus need to shape what is happening.
- Get ahead of this before it gets ahead of us (obviously what I'm hoping we'll do!). This means looking at some
  of the ideas proposed, guessing how much those moves would save, and then going back to the Provost with
  a suggestion that says, "your proposal would cut $X and do damage Y. We can save more than $X and do less
  damage if we do ______________." While no one has said what $X might be, my reading of the tea leaves is
  that those who want to control their future had better quit playing defense. Whoever shows a way forward that
  costs less and serves essential needs can retain some measure of control. Stonewalling is going to be met with
  cuts that don't take our insights into account.

The Library will be responsive to Katehi's request one way or another. Our task is to ensure
that the viewpoint of the various parts of the campus community are made known so that
the restructuring is shaped either to maximum benefit (what one hopes) or to minimize
harm to scholarship.

I can not unilaterally get us to focus only on how things might work after a massive
rescission, but I can recommend that for the balance of this fiscal year we choose NOT to
deal with any current issues. That will free time to work on how next year (and thereafter)
will look.

I am hoping that we can use our 4 spring meetings not only to focus on collection
development and next year’s budget, but also on how to get the faculty as a whole to
consider the costs implicit in the way they disseminate their scholarship. If we can
recommend a strategy that, in cooperation with other universities, REALISTICALLY cuts
the cost of procuring materials, we do all scholarly activity a service while simultaneously
avoiding cuts to information access.

I will try to set up a meeting (probably April) with someone from the Provost’s office so we
can provide input on how to move forward most effectively. In league with the national
theme that Change Is Coming, we will do best for the campus and university if, instead of
saying, "we can't stop doing Z," we instead say "the most efficient way to move forward for
the community that is used to Z is instead to do W, that costs 2/3 as much."

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