5-Year CUL Trends

Dear Colleagues,

The new Library Trends Report is now available to CUL staff. It analyzes changes between FY 2008 and FY 2013. Here are the major stories that the numbers tell:

- Responding to user trends and financial realities, during the last five years we made significant changes in some unit libraries. Two units are now virtual -- the Physical Sciences (since 2010) and Engineering (since 2011) Libraries. Toward the end of 2011/12 there were two consolidations: Hotel, ILR and Management; and Mann and Entomology. The decrease in several traditional library metrics such as physical visits, user seats, public computers, staffing, and checkouts reflects these changes.

- For ease of access, we continued to emphasize the licensing of electronic resources over buying print. 61.6% of our collection expenditures were dedicated to e-resources in FY13. While there was a 4.1% one-year increase in number of e-books, there was only a 0.7% increase in the number of new print volumes added. Likewise, FY13 saw a 9.5% increase in electronic serial titles and a 13.1% decrease in print titles. E-journal titles had an 83.1% five-year increase, and the overall number of serial titles increased by 19.4% from 2007/08.

- Use of electronic resources continues to eclipse print circulation. For the fourth year in a row, journal article downloads from our most popular publishers continues to hover at nearly 5 million a year. E-book downloads now add over 935,000 to this number, for a total of 5.86 million downloads of e-resources from publishers that provide reliable usage data (which does not account for all our e-resources by far). Physical circulation was at 873,445 in FY13, down 6.5% since 2012 and 31% since 2008. For the third year in a row, all types of checkouts dropped, including equipment. Laptops showed the largest one-year drop, mainly because the Hotel Library stopped circulating them.

- With 2012/13, we are adding two new data sets to describe the use of key e-resources. First we are starting to track the use of subject and course guides created by Ithaca/Geneva Library staff in Springshare’s LibGuides system. For FY13, Springshare reported 262,622 sessions on the over 1,100 published guides. We are also adding download counts from four repositories maintained by the Library: arXiv.org, eCommons, DigitalCommons@ILR and Scholarship@Cornell Law. In 2012, there were over 67 million downloads from these four repositories.

- To improve our standing relative to peers in collections support, the infusion of significant one-time funds increased our materials expenditures by 11.9% compared to 2008. This is reflected in our ARL rankings; we went from 19th in 2008 to 18th in 2012, excluding WCMC. Including WCMC, we held our ground at 12th both years. Total expenditures, including these one-time funds, showed a 3.3% one-year increase and a 1.4% five-year increase. However, adjusted for inflation, the Library lost ground over the past five years with a 4.9% decrease. Furthermore, these one-time expenditures are not sustainable beyond 2014.
• Deep collaboration with other major research libraries continues to enrich the research environment at Cornell. The inclusion of new major research libraries in Borrow Direct, for example, resulted in the continued increase in Borrow Direct borrowing.

• Financial challenges as well as collection and service changes have significantly changed the size and, to a lesser degree, the makeup of the library staff. Non-student staff showed a 16.3% drop from the levels preceding the 2008 financial crash. While FTE counts for all types of staff decreased, there is now a lower proportion of non-exempt staff.

Unit-specific data is also available.

Please contact us with any questions or comments you have.