

**Academic Senate
Committee on Libraries**

**Motion re Stanford's Reaction to the Serials Crisis
19 February 2004**

Revised Formulation 040212

Although the costs for production and distribution of academic journals are falling due to advances in technology, the prices of many (especially for-profit) journals have been rising much faster than the rate of inflation. This pricing trend puts severe pressure on Stanford's constrained library budgets.

Stanford has a practical and principled interest in the broadest dissemination possible of scholarly works, and the escalating cost of journals has the effect of limiting the dissemination of scholarship. It is ironic that many Stanford scholars – like scholars throughout higher education – volunteer their articles and labor in the production, review and editing of journal content, only to have the final product sold back to Stanford, sometimes at exorbitant prices.

Many for-profit journal publishers use the technique of “bundling” major journal titles with minor ones and further require multi-year contracts to lock-in revenue. These pricing strategies create more pressure on library budgets, thereby hindering the dissemination of scholarship.

Low-cost academic publishing alternatives, both traditional and innovative, do exist, many of which are non-profit. These alternatives serve the public good by enhancing wide distribution of knowledge, while simultaneously reducing the strain on library budgets.

For all these reasons, the Senate endorses the following guidelines as recommended by C-Lib to all Stanford libraries, faculty and departments.

1. Faculty and libraries are encouraged to support affordable scholarly journals, such as by volunteering articles and labor in the production, review and editing of journal content.
2. Libraries are encouraged to refuse “big deal” or bundled subscription plans that limit the librarian's traditional responsibility to make collection development decisions on a title-by-title basis in the best interest of the academic community.
3. Libraries are encouraged to scrutinize the pricing of journals and to drop those where pricing decisions have made them disproportionately expensive compared to their educational and research value. Special attention should be paid to for-profit journals in general and to those published by Elsevier in particular.
4. Faculty, especially senior faculty, are strongly encouraged in the future not to contribute articles or editorial or review efforts to publishers and journals that engage in exploitive or exorbitant pricing, and instead look to other and more reasonably-priced vehicles for disseminating their research results.