

Appendix A
Questions to the President: Submitted by Professor Tom Palaima (Classics) and Al Martinich (Philosophy)

Dear President Fenves,

It has become clear that the removal of 55,000 books and 20,000 journal volumes from the Fine Arts Library phase 1 of clearing space for a design installation known as the Foundry authorized and enacted by Dean Doug Dempster and Vice Provost Lorraine Haricombe took place

- a. without consultation with the Faculty Council standing committees on Libraries and on Research Policy,
- b. without consultation with the faculties of music and fine arts most affected by the loss of these research and teaching resources, and
- c. without discussion in the Faculty Council.

The official policies and procedures guidelines for the Texas A&M Libraries System, which we received quickly upon request (UT Austin was able to provide us with no such comprehensive guidelines), state explicitly: "The Libraries will follow the below criteria as a guideline to remove or withdraw materials from collections. These criteria will be adapted for each subject area in consultation with subject librarians as appropriate."

For large projects, subject selectors are expected to consult with the teaching faculty. The removal of 75,000+ items certainly constitute a large project.

A small committee has now been formed to look into what has been done and what was about to continue being done in removing, remotely storing, and even apparently transferring out of UT ownership the teaching and research tools that are vitally important to day-to-day scholarship and learning and indeed to the rankings of the programs affected by their loss.

In addition, a survey on library use has now been promulgated by the Vice Provost Haricombe without any broad-based prior discussion of issues, even in the Faculty Council and its committees, that would help those being polled form 'true opinions' about the topics being covered by the questions.

Paul Woodruff, recipient of the Pro Bene Meritis (2002) and Civitatis (2007) awards and former Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Director of the Plan II Honors Program has commented: "My concern is that the survey seems to be going out to random people, not to those of us who depend for our academic life on the holdings of the library in codex form. The survey did not ask what field I am in. My only choice was humanities, which is too broad. And the questions seemed to lean toward disposing of books. I was alarmed by it."

Would you please explain:

(1) why the relevant faculty bodies (Libraries Committee, Research Policy Committee, and the faculties affected in their teaching, research and reputations of their programs) were not consulted on the matter of the FAL before removal of books and materials was well underway; and

(2) who formulated the questions for the poll distributed by Vice Provost Lorraine Haricombe?

We would also appreciate your ideas on how faculty governance bodies and their standing advisory committees going forward can best be involved in crucial decision-making.

Many thanks.

Tom Palaima, Classics
Al Martinich, Philosophy

Appendix B
Statement from Jorge Canizares (Professor, History), a member of the C-7 Committee
who was present but had just left to teach

I have been trying to focus on what I find most offensive, namely, the decision to quickly and deliberately destroy a specialized collection of great distinction drawing on argument of usage and circulation. We have been sucked into the technical debate of number of clicks and visits. This is for me a losing battle. We ultimately agree that we need to fund storage-retrieval and digitization systems. So, to fight on this ground leads us into litigating details:

The debate over the Fine Arts Library ought to be one of accountability: how is it possible that a special collection library of national distinction that took decades to build has been destroyed without consultation? This is the crux of the matter, not whether books circulated or not. We have a number of special collections on campus that no one on campus would dare to touch (and destroy) regardless of whether crowds of students visit them: Ransom, Benson, Briscoe, and the Tarlton Law Libraries. These are collections that took decades to build. The proper response vis-a-vis these collections is the exact opposite than the one taken by the Dean of Fine Arts and the Vice-provost for Libraries. No one doubts that storage and retrieval are needed for these collections as they grow. But it is an entirely different thing to box their holdings in crates and ship them away to storage facilities in order to repurpose their buildings. On the contrary, administrators fund these institutions so their collections are used by specialists worldwide via conferences and grants. We need to move the debate away from issues of circulation and storage to a debate over accountability: who ordered the destruction of one of the finest special collections on campus? Who gave these individuals such power? Finally, given what is going on, I call for the Faculty Council to demand that special collections of world-wide significance like the Benson be declared autonomous so it can be protected from the discourse of technological innovation and managerial expertise.

Appendix C

Statement from Professor Rabun M. Taylor, Department of Classics

In the arts and humanities, physical libraries constitute our lab space. The books that crowd the stacks are the essential equipment of our profession. But in important ways, they differ from inanimate and interchangeable things, like equipment. Drawing on my own field of study, the ancient Mediterranean, I can think of no better analogy to a living library than an olive grove. Books put out roots, which entwine with others. One taps another, and then another; they all tap the collective earth beneath them. Periodically we cut the trees back, and they reward us with denser blossoms, better pollination, and more fruit. In the ancient agrarian economy of the Mediterranean, olive trees were among the most reliable assets you could own. With careful pruning and cultivation, they lasted for centuries (sometimes a millennium or more). They fruited reliably and prolifically. The density of their ranks ensured cross-pollination. The gravest damage you could commit against a person's property was to destroy his olive trees. A kind of unwritten law, founded in common sense, dictated that even marauding conquerors reverently spared the groves of the lands they conquered, confident that they would enjoy them in turn.

The FAL is our ancestral olive grove. Those who bulldozed more than a third of it are pretending that their gambit is just a healthy pruning--even as they rip out the stumps and pave over the land. They may argue that the uprooted trees still exist, but those trees are now torn from the soil, and dumped a hundred miles away. The sap doesn't flow anymore.

So much for poetic analogy. Let's talk in the language of the contemporary university. Let's talk outcomes.

One entire floor of stacks is already gone, and part of another. By uprooting a sizable section of one of the best-tended and most important fine-arts libraries anywhere in the United States, Dean Dempster has literally made it much harder for us to do our jobs: to conduct our research, to teach our students, to serve the public. There's no digital workaround for browsing the stacks. How is this good for UT?

By taking away the tools of our trade and basically putting them in hock to buy a new school and more students, Dempster diminished our capacity for productivity. How is this good for UT?

Virtually the entire faculty of the College of Fine Arts are angered and demoralized by Dempster's action. Seven curators at the Blanton Museum has openly opposed it. How is this good for UT?

The president of the College Art Association, Suzanne Blier of Harvard University, openly opposes the scheme, and has made her letter of protest public. How is this good for UT?

Over 4300 people have signed a petition condemning the action. Comments have come in from around Texas, the nation, and the world decrying this action. Many of the most outraged are from UT alumni. Think about all the lost revenue of potential donors. How is this good for UT?

Students in the College of Fine Arts are demoralized. They now wonder what their degree will be worth, given the diminished standing of their institution. How is this good for UT?

Prospective graduate students are taking notice. Yesterday, one of them left an anonymous note in DFA saying, "I was considering attending UT for my Art History

MA/PHD. I no longer am, since you're dismantling the library. Your loss." How is this good for UT?

By prompting such an uproar, Dempster, Haricombe, and the central administration have created an accountability crisis. How can we trust them to be good stewards of the university's resources if they displace them so casually when nobody is looking? How is this good for UT?

Finally, Dempster went about this like a tinhorn dictator. This was a nakedly authoritarian LAND grab, which leaves the library stakeholders feeling like refugees. How is this good for UT?

I've been canvassing colleagues around the country and the world. I've tracked the comments in our online petition. Overwhelmingly, the respondents express outrage, disbelief, and dismay. "What an embarrassment!" "An absolute travesty." "Are they insane?" "What were they thinking?" Etc.

Initially, my presumption was that Dempster and Haricombe weren't thinking anything at all, but were just acting according to the bubble mentality that besets so many university administrators. But upon reflection, I find it hard to believe that this action was driven solely by foolishness, financial distress, or desperation.

Whether conscious or not, it was a test of our collective will. The powers-that-be seem to have presumed that we, the faculty and students, are too diffuse, or too apathetic, or too preoccupied, to put up resistance. That we would just roll over and keep our silence. And maybe he was right. That remains to be seen. All I can say is that if we do keep silent, then we'll get the future we deserve.