

## MEMORANDUM

To: Sue Ott Rowlands, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs  
From: Faculty Senate  
Re: Resolution on Steely Library funding  
Date: November 29, 2018 (approved at the Nov. 19, 2018 meeting of the Faculty Senate)

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### Resolution:

**Steely Library provides resources and services used by the entire campus community and critical to the mission of the University. Without a strong library, the quality of both research and instruction suffers. The Faculty Senate of Northern Kentucky University endorses the development of a sustainable funding model for Steely Library. We call upon NKU's administration to work, in conjunction with the Dean and the faculty of Steely, to implement a funding model that allows the library to continue providing access to the databases, electronic journals, monographs, and other resources necessary for the academic and scholarly success of our students, faculty, and staff.**

### Background

In the spring of 2018, Steely Library announced the cancellation of three databases, including MLA International Bibliography, Credo Reference, and LexisNexis, as well as several electronic journals. The decision to cancel these resources was not made lightly, but was due to a lack of available funds. This deficit was due to several factors, which include a flat materials budget, a budget cut, and serials inflation. A detailed process was followed to identify the items that would be cut.

The loss of MLA International Bibliography was of significant concern to faculty in the Department of English. While access to this specific database has been restored for one year using funds obtained from outside of the library, this situation is representative of a major challenge facing Steely Library—the lack of a sustainable funding model which will ensure that students, faculty, and staff have access to the print and electronic resources that they require to meet their research and instructional needs. Without a change, Steely is again facing the prospect of significant cuts to library resources, some of which may be implemented as early as December 2018.

To clarify the challenges facing Steely Library, consider the following:

1. The Steely Library materials budget has remained at \$1.2 million per year since 2008.
2. The inflation rate for continuing subscriptions is around 7% each year.
3. The library's purchasing model makes it difficult to simply cut many individual databases or journals:
  - a. First, many purchases are made through consortial agreements with other libraries in the state. Steely relies on these agreements to gain access to resources at a lower price that is negotiated by the consortium and are unable to just opt out of certain parts of

the agreement. Removing the library's participation in such agreements might allow the library to cancel some resources that are not heavily used at NKU but at the cost of losing access to other resources that are needed. These resources would then need to be purchased individually.

- b. Second, many resources come as part of packages provided by publishers and database vendors. While a specific database or journal may be lightly used, these are often all or nothing packages, so the library cannot simply remove certain resources without cancelling the entire package, which may contain other more highly-used resources.
4. 96% of the materials budget goes toward electronic subscriptions. As a result, the library has to significantly limit the amount of print books purchased each year.
5. Since so much of the materials budget is consumed by existing electronic subscriptions, it is a major challenge to purchase the resources needed to support any new programs.
6. The lack of resources means that faculty, staff and students need to use the SourceFinder service (Interlibrary Loan) to obtain needed materials. However, not having a current, relevant collection limits the library's ability to participate in the reciprocal borrowing and lending agreements that allow SourceFinder to work.

The lack of library resources impacts both faculty and students. Existing faculty members may not have access to the materials needed for their research. NKU may also struggle to recruit talented faculty members if unable to provide them with the expected level of research support. Our students may not be able to access materials needed to complete their assignments or to undertake their own research projects, which negatively impacts their ability to succeed while at NKU and in their future careers. With the increase in the number of 7-week courses being taught, the cancellation of full-text journals and databases will become an even greater problem; students and faculty in these courses often need immediate access to resources.

This situation is not unique to Steely Library. The current model of scholarly publishing is placing tremendous challenges on academic libraries across the country. Steely Library has made efforts to minimize the impact on our students and faculty. However, the decade of consistent cuts has eroded the collection to the point that the library is now faced with the prospect of cutting essential resources, some of which may impact program or university accreditation.

For 2018-2019, Steely Library is preparing for a cut of approximately \$80,000. Among the resources in danger of cancellation is the e-journal collection from SAGE, which includes hundreds of titles in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Additional cuts can be expected at the end of the fiscal year 2019.

Steely faculty members and librarians do not want to cut any resources. Doing so is antithetical to the profession. However without the development of a sustainable funding model, we will be forced to make additional cuts this year and each year in the foreseeable future, and these cuts will impact greater and greater segments of the NKU campus.

Passed by PCC, November 2, 2018 without dissent.