

Memo to Faculty Chairs & Directors

Background:

Last academic year Western engaged in the painful process to reduce spending on library journals. Years of accumulating inflation without sufficient budget increases made it impossible for the Libraries to pay for the university's current journal subscriptions, and it became necessary to cut titles. The Senate Library Committee and Western Libraries worked with faculty to reduce spending by \$225,000 on several journal publishers (Sage, Oxford, Taylor & Francis, and Springer).

Faculty feedback in spring 2016 was crucial in identifying 579 journal titles desired for retention. The small amount of money available to retain requested titles (\$47,000) meant that a large number of journal retention requests could not be met. The Senate Library Committee, Libraries, and Provost's Office heard the faculty's frustrations loud and clear.

Good News:

In conversations with the Provost's Office during winter quarter, it became clear that Western must find a permanent solution to pay for annual inflation on library subscriptions. Provost Carbajal is committed to locating resources for this purpose. He has asked that the Libraries and Senate Library Committee not reduce spending levels on library subscriptions any further.

Predictable annual funding for inflation on library subscriptions dramatically improves the university's ability to negotiate more favorable pricing with vendors. Journal packages are often the best way to subscribe to individual titles; however, journal package subscriptions necessitate regular budget increases and can limit Western's ability to add new titles, swap titles for something different, or drop titles no longer desired by faculty. Western will enter into journal package license agreements when it is to the university's best advantage.

What Does this Mean Today?:

With a commitment to predictable annual increases for inflation on library subscriptions, Western recently renegotiated fiscally responsible journal package license agreements with Taylor & Francis and Springer and thereby retained an additional 269 of the 579 titles identified by faculty last spring. By subscribing again to the journal package, the full range of Taylor & Francis and Springer titles available last year, though not specifically requested by faculty, also were retained. Please check [here](#) for more detailed information about the subscription review process.

What Happens Next?

Western must renegotiate its expiring journal package licenses with Wiley and Elsevier. Preliminary discussions with Wiley to renew the university's current journal package at a sustainable price increase look promising. Elsevier has indicated drastic changes to its pricing and access models for 2018 and extraordinary increases of as much as 23 percent if Western wants to continue to subscribe to all of its current titles. Clearly, the university cannot sustain a price increase at this level and will be working with Elsevier and partner universities in the Orbis Cascade Alliance on a solution that reduces the final cost increase and minimizes any loss of content. The Senate Library Committee and Western Libraries will engage with faculty as these complex, ongoing discussions progress.