THE FACULTY SENATE

October 22, 2004

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Martyn Gunn - Speaker, Faculty Senate (2004-2005)
Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics (MS 2128, jmgunn@tamu.edu)

From: Dr. Cady Engler - Chair, Academic Affairs (2004-2005)
Biological and Agricultural Engineering (MS 2117, c-engler@tamu.edu)

Subject: Intellectual Freedom for Academic Libraries

On Monday, October 18, 2004, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate approved the attached resolution in support of intellectual freedom for academic libraries. We request that this resolution be placed on the agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting on November 8, 2004, for adoption. From time to time, questions arise as to why certain items are included in the library collection, e.g., a subscription to Playboy for its literary articles and a collection of Holocaust denial literature for research purposes. While the university libraries have operated under the principles in the attached resolution, they have never been formally approved by the Faculty Senate. We believe it is appropriate for the Senate to adopt these at this time.
Resolution in Support of “Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries”

Whereas, academic research materials collected by The Texas A&M University Libraries are occasionally challenged by members of the Texas A&M University community;

And, whereas, the privacy and confidentiality of library patron records are threatened in violation of the ethical principles of librarians by the subpoena powers of the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act of 2001;

And, whereas, the document, “Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries” has been approved by the Association of College and Research Libraries Board of Directors, adopted by the American Library Association Council and endorsed by the American Association of University Professors;

Be it Resolved, that the Texas A&M University Faculty Senate endorses the following:

Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

A strong intellectual freedom perspective is critical to the development of academic library collections and services that dispassionately meet the education and research needs of a college or university community. The purpose of this statement is to provide an interpretation of general intellectual freedom principles in an academic library setting and, in the process, raise consciousness of the intellectual freedom context within which academic librarians work. These principles should be reflected in all relevant library policy documents.

1. The general principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights (http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.htm) form an indispensable framework for building collections, services, and policies that serve the entire academic community.

2. The privacy of library users is and must be inviolable. Policies should be in place that maintain confidentiality of library borrowing records and of other information relating to personal use of library information and services.

3. The development of library collections in support of an institution's instruction and research programs should transcend the personal values of the selector. In the interests of research and learning, it is essential that collections contain materials representing a variety of perspectives on subjects that may be considered controversial.

4. Preservation and replacement efforts should ensure that balance in library materials is maintained and that controversial materials are not removed from the collections through theft, loss, mutilation, or normal wear and tear. There should be alertness to efforts by special interest groups to bias a collection through systematic theft or mutilation.
5. Licensing agreements should be consistent with the Library Bill of Rights, and should maximize access.

6. Open and unfiltered access to the Internet should be conveniently available to the academic community in a college or university library. Content filtering devices and content-based restrictions are a contradiction of the academic library mission to further research and learning through exposure to the broadest possible range of ideas and information. Such restrictions are a fundamental violation of intellectual freedom in academic libraries.

7. Freedom of information and of creative expression should be reflected in library exhibits and in all relevant library policy documents.

8. Library meeting rooms, research carrels, exhibit spaces, and other facilities should be available to the academic community regardless of research being pursued or subject being discussed. Any restrictions made necessary because of limited availability of space should be based on need, as reflected in library policy, rather than on content of research or discussion.

9. Whenever possible, library services should be available without charge in order to encourage inquiry. Where charges are necessary, a free or low-cost alternative (e.g., downloading to disc rather than printing) should be available when possible.

10. A service philosophy should be promoted that affords equal access to information for all in the academic community with no discrimination on the basis of race, values, gender, sexual orientation, cultural or ethnic background, physical or learning disability, economic status, religious beliefs, or views.

11. A procedure ensuring due process should be in place to deal with requests by those within and outside the academic community for removal or addition of library resources, exhibits, or services.

12. It is recommended that this statement of principle be endorsed by appropriate institutional governing bodies, including the faculty senate or similar instrument of faculty governance.

Adopted by ACRL Intellectual Freedom Committee: June 28, 1999
Approved by ACRL Board of Directors: June 29, 1999
Adopted by ALA Council July 12, 2000