Thank you for this opportunity to talk today and I thank all of you for coming to our campus. This meeting exemplifies the best practices of library associations – bravely defending the rights of and ensuring protections for librarians, represented and not represented. I have the honor of being LAUC-R incoming chair this year while also continuing as Chair of the Union’s Librarians Caucus. My role in both organizations is to seek clarity of purpose and to advance work that highlights and empowers librarians and provides for their collective contributions. Of course, empowerment is really the key to understanding and advocating for change that improves the entire library organization. Today, maybe others will share their thoughts on the concept of empowerment of line librarians for the benefit of the Libraries.

The draft University Libraries Strategic Plan for UCR was released on February 7, and envisioned a library environment vastly different from that of today. The re-envisioned unit not only raises its own revenues through outside funders, but also seeks to offer increasingly robust and distributed library services in research, instruction, campus outreach, and subject liaison work. Further, promotional/marketing/branding activities and technological advances are concurrently transforming librarian roles and duties to match a myriad of new priorities and approaches.

There are several important concepts envisioned in the Draft Strategic Plan that could possibly “empower positive change by bringing together diverse individuals [and] communities.” Transformation of libraries can and should include improvements in services and collections, and most likely new duties, roles, and functions for librarians. However, changes that involve individual librarians or librarians as a class of employee require notification of and possibly bargaining with the represented librarians’ union, the UC-AFT Union. We did have to point this out, and when we did, we were able to join with management to hold Labor-Management meetings in order to discuss the planning and its impact on librarians who are expected to carry it out.

And, we have now held two meetings with the Library Administration and Labor Relations since May. We expressed the desires of our members (who are both Lauc-r members as well as UC-AFT union members) to improve communication, inclusion and accountability at all levels of the Libraries.

Our first recommendation was simple -- that the next steps in the reorganization demonstrate an increased inclusivity as the plan is re-worked and edited to respond to the campus input (which was due in 30 days, by March 7). Luckily, at the UCR campus level, our new Chancellor Wilcox has reaffirmed that unions provide a unique voice on the campus and create a space that should be protected, where members can give input, propose solutions and engage with campus policies and personnel. We agree and continue to meet periodically with
the Chancellor and the 7 unions on the UCR campus. (oh, and his dad was a teamster and his mom was union organizer!).

The February release of the UCR Libraries draft strategic planning process, as well as the content in the Strategic Plan Report, lacked any significant input, perspective, or ideas from represented librarians – until May 22 when we held our first Labor-Management meeting about the strategic plan. Our goals at the first Labor-Management meeting were to clearly communicate that because the terms and conditions of employment may be affected, we would like to have demonstrable, continuous and collective input on the Strategic Plan as well as the implementation process of transforming the libraries.

Next, I will discuss the changed work conditions and terms of employment, and I must stress, we’ve discussed the draft Strategic Plan in both LAUC-R and at union meetings. The critiques and concerns voiced by these two groups, LAUC and UCAFT (groups in which UCR Librarians hold dual membership), are very much shared and mutually reinforced.

The working conditions that we identified as affected or impacted as a result of the proposed "transformative" changes include:

- **New or altered work roles and duties.**
- **Training/re-training** needs associated with these new and altered work roles/duties.
- **New reporting lines** and increasingly complex reporting structures and merit reviews.
- **Workload.** As positions have been vacated and not filled (or filled with temp librarians or professional assistants), workload has increased with an expectation that the remaining workers absorb those duties. Similarly, as we explore new roles and services, our traditional workload will remain mostly intact, i.e., collection development, university service, departmental duties, etc. So, with only 32 librarians at UCR, we continue to raise the collective even if dwindling voice of the line librarian. Those UCR librarian numbers include 11 managers -- 5 UL/AULs, 6 mid-level managers), which means that over one-third of the librarians are "management." That’s two librarians to each manager).

- **Worker Morale.** The scale of changes proposed in our libraries’ re-org likely will impact every library employee, every job duty and every reporting line. These changes have the potential to lower morale and, as we know from the literature, morale is affected by lack of acknowledgement and transparency, lack of inclusion, fear that your job may be in jeopardy if you express a critical thought, and fear that you will be re-purposed for duties other than your current duties, or fear of being singled out for supporting the union/position or even supporting the union taking a position.
Is it a reorganization? Here locally, we’ve discerned that the SP is the first step in a re-org. However, if nothing else, the plan proposes several large technical, service, infrastructure, managerial, and personnel changes that will without question require, much like the scale of planning and change did at UCSD, a thorough reorganization of the library structure. Our hope is that through union involvement and attentiveness to these issues, UCR can avoid disabling developments and low morale while helping local managers make the strategic plan/re-org a success.

There has been no real concrete discussion of empowering the many good librarians and staff we have at UCR. Without genuine inclusiveness and collegiality there can be no empowerment. We need strategic planning led by managers/visionaries who respect knowledge, craft of librarianship as well as the accomplishments of all librarians. Those are the best practices that we want to support as LAUC and as UC-AFT.

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