

FROM THE LIBRARY

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Letter from the Librarian

This newsletter is devoted to introducing the new Library Materials Order Form, which was revised with assistance from the Library Committee, and to explaining some changes to ordering procedures, which were prompted by the need to contain costs. The new form now is available under "Services and Forms" on the Library gateway page.

What has changed? You must now indicate whether an order request is "Standard" (which has an average 8-week maximum delivery time) or "Emergency" (with average delivery time of three weeks or less); and you must provide a reason for placing emergency orders. We understand that you sometimes learn, only after the semester has started, about titles needed for your classes. We ask you to consider ordering these under the Standard option and borrowing the titles through Maine InfoNet until the Bowdoin orders arrive.

Why are these changes being made? Last year, faculty designated over 850 orders as "rush" or "emergency". Vendors then removed price discounts and imposed additional shipping and handling fees of 15% to 100% of the original book price. While we cannot precisely track the additional funds spent (we are not informed of the non-rush order price) hypothetical fees of 35% added to average per-volume prices of \$45 mean the Library spent \$13,400 on fees—money that could have bought 300 new books. In reality, factoring in lost discounts, we believe actual losses were closer to \$25,000 or 555 new books.

While it always has been important to spend funds wisely, over the last decade inflation rates for both book and periodical prices have considerably outpaced Library budget increases, and in recent years the Library has experienced budget reductions or flat funding. As a result, the Library's ability to acquire the materials you need for your research has been significantly eroded, placing new imperatives on spending funds effectively.

I also again ask you to be deliberate when considering whether to order titles already owned by Colby or Bates, particularly for works of only secondary value for your research interests, as another way of "stretching" Library dollars. Several years ago we established an order form default setting of "Do not duplicate if already owned by CBB". Since we removed this default in response to faculty complaints, very few selectors have chosen "Do not duplicate". Thus I reiterate the request to be thoughtful about which titles should be held by more than one CBB library.

My thanks to Library Committee members Rick Broene, Pamela Fletcher, Jisoo Kim '06, Sarah McMahon, and Chair Scott Sehon for advice on the revisions. As always, I welcome your thoughts and comments.

Sherrie Bergman