March 31, 2006

To: Bernie Hurley, Chair, SOPAG
From: John W. Tanno, SOPAG Representative, UCD
Re: Comments on the Bibliographic Services Task Force Report

These comments regarding the Bibliographic Services Task Force Report reflect the thinking of the Administrative Team for the UCD Library, based on a series of meetings devoted to discussions of the report. There was a general meeting open to all library staff at which Amy Kautzman, a member of the BSTF from Berkeley, gave an excellent presentation of the Task Force's work and responded to questions. There was a meeting of public services staff which Gail Yokote led and provided feedback that she will report through HOPS. There was a series of Technical Services meetings that provided Pat French comments to report back to HOTS. There was a general LAUC-D meeting, followed by a series of brown-bag meetings led by LAUC-D Chair Karleen Darr, and comments from these discussions formed the basis of her report to LAUC. While disagreement with the various recommendations of the report were articulated, there was at the same time, an expression of appreciation for the hard work of the Task Force and how well they covered the major issues and trends in bibliographic services that need to be considered by the University of California Libraries.

Our comments follow under the questions that were asked in the Invitation for Comments dated February 6, 2006 from you.

1. *The recommendations of the report are organized into four sections:*

> I.   *Enhancing Search and Retrieval;*
> II.   *Rearchitecting the OPAC;*
> III. *Adopting New Cataloging Practices*
> IV. *Supporting Continuous Improvement.*

There are a total of 15 major headings under the four sections (I1 – I8; II1 – II2; III1 – III4; IV). While we recognize that many of these items are interdependent, that is, some must precede or accompany others, we ask that you try to comment on them without considering dependencies at this point. Which 3-5 of these 15 major headings do you think are the most important for UC to address?

2. *For each of the 3-5 major headings selected above:*

> ▪ *Which of the sub-recommendations do you think should be given the highest priority; that is, which do you think UC should address first and why?*

The following five sub-recommendations are considered the highest priority:

I.1. Provide users with direct access to item

The general principle should be to get users to what they want with the fewest "clicks" possible. Providing a series of screens with choices on each screen in attempt to be helpful actually creates barriers to the user getting direct access to what they want. Both recommendations (I.1.a & I.1.b) would greatly improve the current MELVYL.

I.5. Offer better navigation of large sets of search results

Searching in MELVYL and many other OPACs for voluminous authors or common titles is particularly tedious. Sub-recommendation I.5.a. (implementing FRBR concepts to present related works hierarchically) and and I.5.c. (implement faceted browsing) would make it possible to more directly access items wanted and correct this major deficiency—the inability to quickly find specific works by voluminous authors, in the desired format, and works have which have common titles words.

I.6. Deliver bibliographic services where the users are

Both sub-recommendations are important to bring library resources into campus portals and learning environments. There is a growing national trend to provide more direct access to library resources through course management systems, to make it easier for faculty and students to have seamless access to materials in support of instruction. The UC Libraries should strive to develop these capabilities.

II.2. Support searching across the entire bibliographic information space

If it were possible to provide result sets arranged by format, grouped in terms of granularity and other facets as described under sub-recommendation II.2.b., it would greatly enhance users' ability to discover resources that currently are divided into a variety of silos. This recommendation, together with sub-recommendation I.5. (offer better navigation of large sets of search results), would make for a much more robust and powerful discovery tool.

III.1. Rearchitect cataloging workflow

We believe this recommendation should be expanded to include acquisitions and that the University of California Libraries should strive to build on current collaborative efforts and develop cooperative acquisitions and cataloging programs. We endorse sub-recommendation III.1.a.and would support an initiative for a system-wide planning process to standardize cataloging practices and increase efficiency through cooperative programs. It should be understood, however, that there will be a need for local practices to handle special collections materials and other unique holdings requiring special expertise and/or more detailed cataloging appropriate to the discovery and use of these materials.

In addition, the following sub-recommendations are considered important and well worth pursuing:

III.2.a. Use the level of description and schema appropriate to the bibliographic recourse.

The practice of using the metadata schema appropriate to the resource is a practice already in place in many cases, and a practice that should be continued.

III.4. Automate Metadata Creation

Sub-recommendations III4.a., b, and c, speak to making greater use of metadata that may be available from vendors or other sources that would enrich bibliographic records and enhance the discovery and retrieval of resources. In so far as this data can be acquired at a reasonable cost, and efficiently ingested into bibliographic systems, we believe this recommendation is well worth pursuing.

IV. Supporting Continuous Improvement

Supporting continuous improvement should be an ongoing goal and a basic principle for the University of California Libraries.

- *Are there any recommendations that you think should be added? Why?*

The report has provided a rich spectrum of recommendations to consider and we don't have any suggestions for additional recommendations.

- *Are there any recommendations that you think should NOT be pursued? Why not?*

III.2.c. Consider using controlled vocabularies only for name, uniform title, date and place, and abandoning the use of controlled vocabularies [LCSH, MESH, etc.] for topical subjects in bibliographic records.

There seems little purpose or benefit to be gained in abandoning the use of controlled vocabularies for topical subjects, particularly since these headings are regularly included in records from bibliographic utilities, vendors, and other sources. While it is understood that enriching the metadata in a variety of ways provides additional points of access, the controlled vocabularies for topical subjects provide a focused way for retrieval based in a continuity of established cataloging practices. For UC to abandon this practice would not achieve any appreciable cost savings and would eliminate one effective way of bringing together seemingly disparate items which share in common a topical subject.

III.4.d. Change the processing workflow from "Acquire-Catalog-Put on Shelf" to "Acquire-Put on Shelf with existing metadata—Begin ongoing metadata enhancement process through iterative automated query of metadata sources.

There is a long history of cataloging projects that were done quickly and cheaply, with the intent to go back and complete or enrich the cataloging later. It rarely happens. The principle of doing it once and doing it right should be considered first. While there would be debate as to what it means "to do it

right," however it is interpreted, it should be understood it will be done just once. Machine enhancement of records should be fully explored, but the idea of manually touching the cataloging at a later date or mounting major cataloging projects to correct the records, should be rejected as impractical.

3. Section II.1 recommends creating a single public catalog interface for all of UC while recognizing that more debate and discussion is needed to identify the best option for that single interface.

If a decision is made to pursue this recommendation, which of the two options that the Task Force analyzed would you recommend, and why?

- *Creating a single UC OPAC system*

While the original MELVYL system was developed in house, currently it has been outsourced. The reasons for discontinuing the in-house development of MELVYL are still very much valid today, so we do not support UC attempting to develop its own OPAC system.

- *Outsourcing the UC OPAC (to OCLC, RedLightGreen, Google, etc)*

It would be valuable to explore all current possible means for outsourcing the UC OPAC. The current Aleph OPAC lacks many of the capabilities and features necessary to implement the recommendations of the BSTF report. Is there another vendor that could provide a path to enhancing search and retrieval in the ways the report envisions? Perhaps not; but perhaps other options would be closer; or perhaps the current vendor could continue to develop their product to come closer to this vision.

If you agree that we should pursue the recommendation to create a single point of entry for our users, are there other options we should consider?

Yes, we agree that a single point of entry should be pursued, and we suggest a group of experts be enlisted to determine what options should be considered. Whatever options are pursued, however, it should be possible to tailor the point of entry for different categories of users, e.g., undergraduates, graduates, faculty, patient care professionals, etc. In other words, while a single interface is desirable, it should be possible to customize the interface for different users.

If you disagree that we should pursue the recommendation, what alternative action would you recommend? N/A

4. Section III.1 recommends re-architecting cataloging workflow to view UC cataloging as a single enterprise while recognizing that more debate and discussion is needed to identify the appropriate mechanism for implementing such a single enterprise vision.

a. If a decision is made to pursue this recommendation, which of the three organization options that the Task Force analyzed would you recommend, and why?

It seems that the first and third organization options are not mutually exclusive, so both would be recommended, whereas the second option would not.

- *Coordinate cataloging expertise and practice across the entire system.*

Some efforts for coordinating cataloging expertise and practice have been successful over the years. Perhaps HOTS should be charged to further these efforts, or create a group specifically for coordinating cataloging practice.

- *Consolidate cataloging into one or two centers within UC.*

The physical consolidation of cataloging into one or two centers does not seem practical to us and would entail transporting a large volume of materials back and forth between the UC libraries and the proposed cataloging centers. Given the current state of information technology, it does not seem necessary to be physically in one place in order to have use of a common system and follow common cataloging standards and practices. Furthermore, there is an evolving closer relationship between acquisitions and cataloging, in fact it is now possible to receive and catalog items as a single operation, particularly for those common English-language acquisitions for which LC cataloging copy is readily available.

- *Outsource a greater proportion of standard cataloging work*

Where cost effective and efficient, the outsourcing of standard cataloging should continue to be pursued.

If you agree that we should pursue the recommendation to implement a single cataloging enterprise, are there other organization options we should consider? If you disagree that we should pursue the recommendation, what alternative action would you recommend?

We believe that a combination of closely coordinating the cataloging for the UC Libraries and selectively outsourcing cataloging that can be more efficiently and cost effectively handled by others outside of UC would be a prudent way of streamlining current practices and containing cataloging costs.

b. *If a decision is made to pursue this recommendation, which of the three architecture options that the Task Force analyzed would you recommend and why?*

- *Create a shared central file with a single copy of each bibliographic record*

We think this option would be feasible, would eliminate the complicated merging of the various UC cataloging data flows in MELVYL, eliminate the duplicate records for the same bibliographic entity, and greatly enhance the quality and specificity of retrieval from the OPAC. While not the most ideal

option, it is probably the most practical and less expensive than adopting a single ILS.

- *Adopt a single ILS for the entire University of California system.*

In many ways, the adoption of a single ILS for all UC Libraries would be an ideal solution. From both operational and user perspectives, this option would greatly enhance cataloging workflow and efficiency while providing the user a much improved discovery and retrieval tool. It would also facilitate cooperative and standard cataloging practices and make cooperative collection development programs much easier to manage. However, the costs for implementing a common ILS, both in terms of purchasing the system and the staff effort necessary to implement and effectively use it throughout the UC Libraries may be beyond our means. Furthermore, it would require some or even all of the libraries, depending on which ILS system were chosen, to give up their current systems and implement a new, common one. The gains from such an option would be terrific, but the implementation would be painful.

- *Rely on OCLC as the single UC database of record for bibliographic data.*

This seems the least desirable of the three options. UC's ability to control and influence such a large non-profit organization that attempts to meet the needs of the international library community would be very limited. It would not provide the kinds of search and retrieval enhancements the BSTF report recommends. It would perhaps be the easiest of three options to implement and require the least change in terms of current cataloging and workflow.

If you agree that we should pursue the recommendation to implement a single cataloging enterprise, are there other architecture options we should consider?

One variation for creating a central file might be considered, and that is to expand the MELVYL OPAC by adding a cataloging module, making it possible for catalogers to catalog directly on the Aleph system, having a separate instance for the local catalog and system-wide instance to serve as the union catalog (MELVYL).

If you disagree that we should pursue the recommendation, what alternative action would you recommend? N/A

5. *Are there any other comments or suggestions you have with regard to the next steps that should be taken in following up on the recommendations of the report?*

It is recommended that once the decisions are made by the University Librarians as to which recommendations of this report should be pursued, that the BSTF be asked to develop a plan for the implementation of those recommendations. In other words, continue the momentum gained and utilize the expertise of the Task Force to move forward as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

6. *Is there anything else you think UC should be doing in pursuit of improving bibliographic services?*

Whichever recommendations are pursued, it would be useful to develop prototype projects to test the concepts and possible approaches before full implementation is undertaken. If we can accomplish even a few of the recommendations of the report, the bibliographic services for the University Library will be improved considerably.

Thank you in advance for your comments and I look forward to receiving your response on or before March 31, 2006.