A Greater Restriction of Library Book Circulation is Urgently Needed

The Kerr Library reaches its peak usefulness in the summer shortly after journals and books have been returned for inventory. After this any intensive research becomes increasingly complicated; one must wait several days for needed books to be recalled, and many potentially useful references go unseen because one hesitates to recall a book from another staff member unless he is sure he needs it.

It would be valuable to know the reasons why faculty members keep bound journals and books for extended periods. I suspect, in the absence of any hard facts, that only a very small number of volumes are actually being used in the compilation of reviews or bibliographies, the only use of extended loan privileges that may be justifiable. I suspect that the vast majority of books presently checked out to faculty fall into one of the following categories: 1) books which the faculty member has finished reading but which he is too indifferent or forgetful to return, 2) books of particular importance and reference value to the faculty member which have been checked out for his personal library, and 3) books checked out for graduate students or for students in a particular course. There is no excuse for books being held out for long periods for any of these reasons. Anyone doing so is making students and his colleagues suffer and is misusing library funds. All books needed for extended periods for personal or course requirements should be purchased by personal or course funds. The Reserved Book Room at the library is available for course books.

If you feel as I do that a university library should be a place for research and not a free source of personal reference material, I urge you to make your opinions known to the Faculty Senate Library Committee. I recognize the fact that it may take some time for general acknowledgement of the importance of having all the books available all the time to all the university community. In the interim at least the habitual misuse of extended privileges due to indifference can be reduced as follows: 1) institute a messenger service whereby any library books would be picked up for return at the individual departmental offices much the way Campus Mail is collected, and 2) make extended privileges an active rather than passive process by requiring that all books wanted for longer than specific period, say two weeks, be checked out on a special form. Neither of these suggestions would abridge any present privileges but probably would cut down greatly on the length of time books are out of the library.

Last Spring in an issue of the Staff Newsletter Rodney K. Waldron, Director of Libraries, invited comments about restricted circulation of bound journals. According to a summary he later distributed only 227 letters were received, about 50% of which were from graduate students, and only 9 of which favored restricted use! Because 90% of the letter writers were from only 5 departments one is led to the conclusion that a relatively few individuals organized letter-writing campaigns and that
the decision to continue with existing policies was not based on a representative sample. Therefore, I am asking all faculty members wanting a voice in this matter to mark the ballot below and send it to me. I am not a member of the Faculty Senate Library Committee or of any other group making library policy. I am just one individual who is very tired of not finding journals and books that I need, and I would like to see changes instituted that would make the library more useful to everyone instead of just those who get the books out first. Regardless of the outcome of this survey I will send a summary of the results to Dr. McMullen, Chairman of the Library Committee, and to Mr. Waldron. Also I will submit it for publication in this Forum, and will keep the ballots for anyone who cares to stop by to see them.

Respectfully,

John E. Morris, Assistant Professor
Department of Zoology
November 18, 1969

Send to: J.E. Morris, Zoology (Must be received by Dec. 19 to be included in the summary)

I favor the policy (or policies) for Kerr Library circulation indicated:

______ prohibiting circulation of all library holdings.

______ prohibiting circulation of bound journals.

______ initiating a messenger service for returning books.

______ making faculty privileges automatically short-term unless extended privileges are specifically requested each time a book is checked-out.

______ keeping all existing circulation restrictions and policies.

______ other (explain:)

Name:

Title:

School or Department: