

UCSC Science and Engineering Library Destruction

The head librarian moved the science librarian from the science library to McHenry Library, thus unable to observe, moderate, or to preserve valuable and rare books.

During the summer, 2016, at the direction of the head of the UCSC library, Elizabeth Cowell, over 80,000 volumes were removed from the S&E library without any meaningful consultation with the faculty. In a blistering conclusion, the chair of the Academic Senate Library Committee (COLASC), stated that her committee was “blindsided” by librarian Cowell who was an ex-officio member of this committee.

To keep this operation secret from the faculty even the library staff were not informed until the removal operation began. Moreover, the volumes removed were sent to a shredder in direct violation of UC regulations about the disposal of excess library material.

The initial motivation for the removal of a limited number of volumes of the S&E library collection was a request of EVC Galloway to create study space for 200 students. But librarian Cowell’s plans call for space for over 1,500 students.

Ironically, the expensive S&E Library, built to support the enormous weight of stacks of books and journals is not well adapted to have a large number of students on each floor, because of lack of toilets, electrical utilities, and fire codes, etc., and will require millions to implement such a giant study hall.

The reaction of faculty members is well described by Professor of Mathematics Richard Montgomery when he discovered this demolition at the end of the summer 2016. He described it in an [article published in the San Jose Mercury News](#).

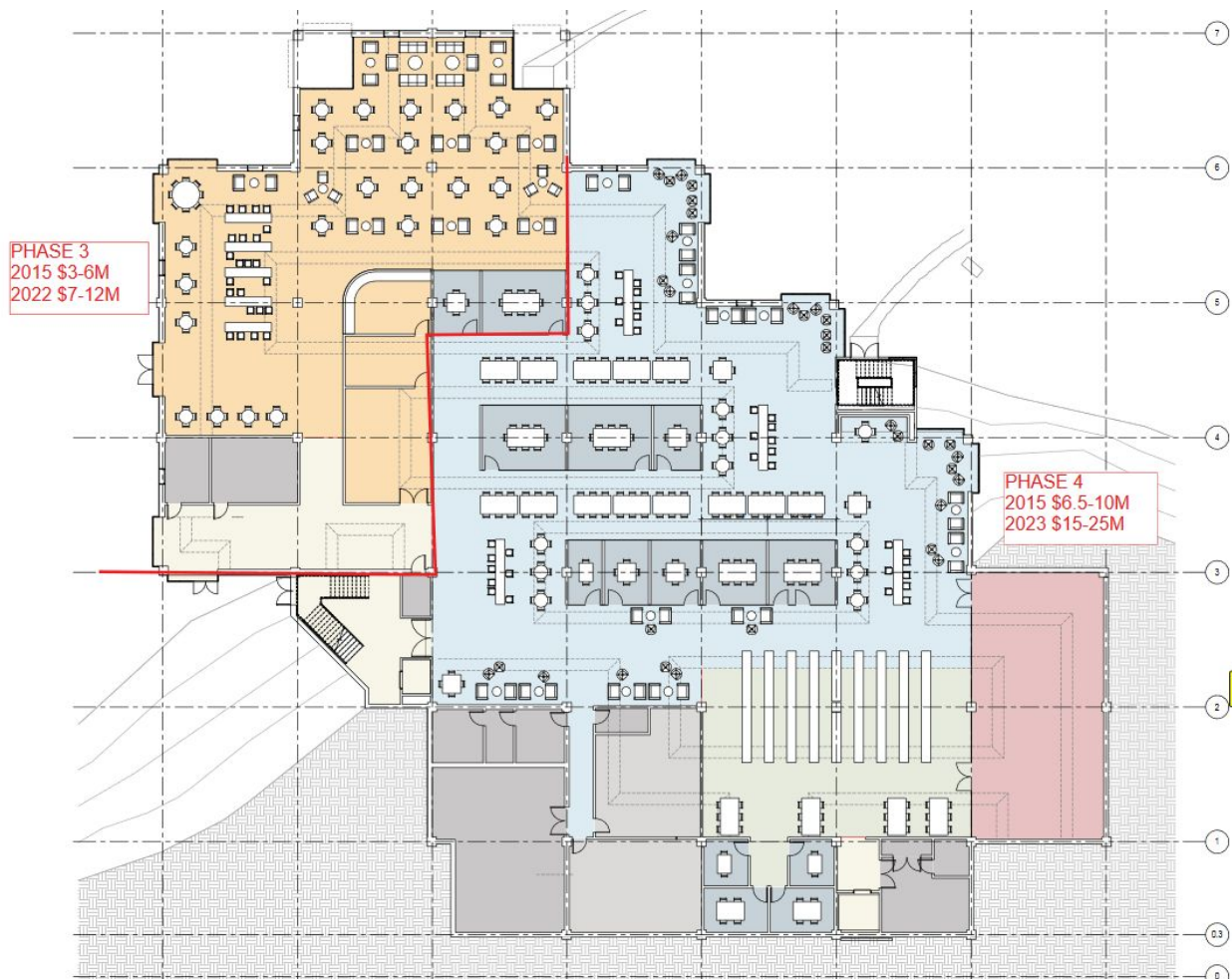
After this demolition was discovered, the UCSC Academic Senate passed a [unanimous resolution](#) demanding that the University Librarian take no further major action on the science and engineering collection without consulting the Academic Senate.

But in spite of this resolution, on Feb 10, 2017, Chancellor Blumenthal signed a Science and Engineering Library Renovation, Business Case Analysis (BCA) without consulting any faculty or department chairs. Moreover, the author of this BCA, University Librarian, Elizabeth Cowell refused to release it to the faculty. For example, the Academic Senate Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (COLASC) was not allowed to see the secret plan. The Chair of Physics requested a copy from Dean Koch, but was refused. Finally Professor Emeritus Michael Nauenberg made a California Public Records Act request to obtain a copy. Now the UCSCCEA makes those detailed plans *public*: see the [secret plan](#).

Of particular interest is the plan for the basement floor of the S&E library shown below and also part of the secret BCA plan. Originally the S&E library contained 55 stacks on this floor, today there are 34 stacks remaining, but the plan calls for only 9 stacks. Faculty do not know this! On the upper floor there were 60 stacks, now there are none and none on the main floor. The plan calls for none on those floors.

Nauenberg also requested a list of the books that were shredded and those that went to remote storage. Response: "No lists exist." This suggests ALL were shredded. See his [slides about our library](#).

The treasured Lick collection has been broken, some books have been moved to Special Collections so they can't be browsed or checked out, some were de-duplicated. There is no list of which books are now in Special Collections or de-duplicated. Astronomy faculty were not consulted.



Plan for the S&E Library Basement, only 9 stacks will remain. Previously we had 60 on the third floor and 55 in the basement, now 34 are in the basement, no stacks remain on the second or third floor. UCSC will have 9 stacks in the Science and Engineering Library, a UC Research University campus often ranking #1 or #2 in the nation in science citations?

Taken from [CUCEARReport2018UCSCOctober](#) report by Todd Wipke, wipke@ucsc.edu

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