



## SOCIETY FOR CINEMA & MEDIA STUDIES

640 PARRINGTON OVAL | WALLACE OLD SCIENCE HALL #300 | NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73019-3060  
405.325.8075 | OFFICE@CMSTUDIES.ORG

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Dean Douglas Dempster  
College of Fine Arts – Office of the Dean  
The University of Texas at Austin  
2305 Trinity ST STOP D1400  
Austin, TX 78712–0340

Dear Dean Dempster:

The Society for Cinema and Media Studies is deeply concerned about the total elimination of books, journals, DVDs, and CDs from the Fine Arts Library of the University of Texas. Given the distinguished reputation of the University of Texas libraries and archives, this move has serious implications for all Research One institutions. We understand the need for office and classroom space, but those needs are continuous, and universities have always found ways to fund them. The resources for scholarship, in contrast, are specific and irreplaceable. And while undergraduates may enjoy spaces in libraries for studying and holding meetings, the reputation and value of Research One institutions depends on resources for scholarship available to its graduate students and faculty. Additionally, it is not just University of Texas graduate students and faculty that depend on them, but also the larger community of scholars, students, journalists, and researchers who visit the library and archives.

The use of these resources is central to our scholarship in film, television, and digital culture. While books can be requested and transported, there is no substitute for the ability of scholars to browse the shelves in the course of research. For fine arts books, this is even more important because it allows us to see images and illustrations that we otherwise would not know about.

Regarding CDs and DVDs—of which, we understand, 100,000 have been removed—we are especially alarmed about the myth that “everything is online.” Not everything is online, and what is available online changes unpredictably. Many streaming films, for example, are only available on one- or three-year licenses with no permanent purchase option. Content producers can pull their title lists from online platforms whenever a contract term ends and some producers refuse to work with platforms currently available to institutions. Also, online resources cannot be loaned between institutions.

The reliance on ebooks and streamed videos threatens the larger scholarly ecosystem in two ways. When institutions “de-dupe” and remove physical copies in favor of digital copies, there are fewer circulating copies to share/borrow via Interlibrary Loan. Also, in many cases, image quality in ebooks and streamed videos is inferior to physical/print media.

We hope the University of Texas will reconsider the further diminishment of the Fine Arts Library in light of these serious scholarly concerns.

Sincerely,

Pamela Robertson Wojcik  
President

Jill Simpson  
Executive Director

cc: The SCMS Board of Directors