

Barry Foord

Bob MacDonald *RF*

cc D. McInnes

Dr. R. D. Russell

Nov 8/85.

Campus mail

Since talking with you in early October about our problems arising from campus mail backlogs, we have been monitoring our receipts day by day as well as trying to 'live' with the problem.

If anything, the situation has become worse, indeed we have yet to see any real improvement in receiving periodicals. Because there has been no improvement, and discussions with the campus mail supervisor indicate no prospect of resolving the situation, we can only view it as chronic, and serious. A copy of a memo from our serials division librarian is attached, outlining the situation as we understand it (in campus mail), and describing some of the problems we are encountering.

If no improvement can be obtained, the library and its users will face a continuing deterioration of services, a great deal of extra and perhaps wasted effort, and inevitably there will be extra direct costs.

Other departments and faculty must be experiencing the same kinds of problems, since most journals are sent by third ~~or fourth~~ class mail. The library has no means to circumvent this problem, at least not quickly. Our plans to use postal boxes cannot be put in place quickly because the mailing addresses must be revised for more than 22,000 current subscriptions. As you know, we are also investigating the use of boxes in the United States, and this will also take some time to implement. We expect it will take more than a year to implement the use of postal boxes. When in place, this will reduce the handling of this mail through the campus mail operation, but requires that their truck pickup mail at Station G on 10th avenue. I don't know what the net benefit will be to campus mail, however, the library should gain by getting materials sooner as well as reduce our internal sorting of some mail.

I understand the difficulty of budgets, but urge the university administration to seriously consider putting additional staff into the campus mail operation, if only on a temporary basis. The operational problems for the library and the reduced services to faculty and students represents a very high price to pay for saving a couple of staff positions in campus mail operations. The extra time and wasted time within the library serials operations alone represents a considerable expense that should be weighed against any direct savings in campus mail.

RECEIVED

NOV 21 1985

UNIV. OF TORONTO
UNION (C.I.T.)

TO Bob MacDonald FROM Madina Baldwin
Library Administration, LPC Serials Div., LPC
DATE Nov. 6/85 PHONE 5038

Re: Serials Division Mail

Background

The Serials Division, which maintains approximately 22,000 current subscriptions, does not keep track of incoming mail, however, our deliveries have been so unpredictable over the past few months that we have begun to do so. Starting October 9/85, we began a rough measurement of only incoming periodicals (this is third class mail) in 8 inch stacks (or 'bundles') in the same way as we measure periodicals checked in. I have attached a copy of one of our recent charts. You can see how erratic our deliveries are from the chart. We receive our mail from Campus Mail. Prior to October 9, various people in LPC have called Campus Mail supervision to find out the cause of the delay and urge Campus Mail to get us our mail. Our calls do not seem to have had much effect. This whole situation seems unusual to Serials Division staff. In the past, there have been occasional problems (lots of mail one day, little the next, and so on). However, this situation seems to be the norm now. My check-in staff is unable to do their job under these circumstances.

Campus Mail

Today, Kathy Scardellato, Phyllis Reeve, and I visited the Campus Mail Room in order to get first hand information from the supervisor, John Howe. Mr. Howe was most co-operative and informative. Here is the Campus Mail Room situation as I understand it from our visit today:

1. Staff.

Prior to budget cutbacks, there were 15 people working for Campus Mail. That dropped to 7 full time and 3 hourly this year. It dropped recently to 7 full time and 2 hourly. Apparently, there is no flexibility left in staffing. For instance, if anyone of the existing staff is sick or on holiday, backlog of mail is a certainty. Yesterday, some of Mr. Howe's hourly staff was restored temporarily (now back to 7 full time and 3 hourly). In addition, overtime is being worked virtually every night.

2. Priorities.

Campus Mail priorities are:

- A. First class mail;
- B. Campus mail;
- C. Mailing lists (sometimes becomes first priority);
- D. Third class mail.

3. Backlogs.

My guess, after 'eyeballing' the backlog, is that there are probably 200 bags of unsorted third class mail

...continued...

Nov. 6/85

Re: Serials Division Mail...page 2

Campus Mail

3. Backlogs...continued...

stacked on the loading dock. This is in addition to any backlogs that may exist for the other priorities. It appears that the first three priorities are always cleared before the fourth priority (third class mail). For instance, Serials Div. knew that Campus Mail was scheduled to work overtime the night of Oct.5. We expected to receive a lot of our third class mail this morning (Oct.6). We got less than a normal day's worth. Mr. Howe explained that this was because his staff spent their overtime on getting part of a backlog of mailing lists out. My conclusion is that, even if Campus Mail works overtime, we may still not get many of our journals.

Implications for the Serials Division

Our journals are lowest priority for Campus Mail sorting. Whenever there is a backlog, our material is delayed. When a large backlog develops (the current situation), we will receive the backlog a little at a time out of sequence. This means we will send our vendors claims for issues already here. If we do much of this sort of thing, we will damage our reputation with our vendors. The mail tends to come in waves when we do get it. It is difficult to rationally allocate staff resources under these circumstances. This applies to all Library locations receiving journals via Campus Mail. Some less critical problems are that the journals may be damaged if left in the mail bags for long. Leaving them on the loading dock at this time of year may cause water damage as well. Lastly, we do not really know what is in the mail bags until they are opened and sorted. Thus, first class mail may be trapped in the backlog. This is our heavy subscription renewal time. If our renewal invoices (first class mail) are accidentally trapped in the backlog, there is a danger that some of our subscriptions will lapse. Of course, my remarks above do not only apply to the Serials Division. Anyone receiving third class mail in the Library system or elsewhere on campus must be experiencing some or all of the problems outlined above.

What to do

My personal opinion is that this situation should not be allowed to continue as it is potentially damaging to the University's reputation and certainly damaging to the Library's reputation. We will not be able to get our journals to our customers (faculty, students) in a timely manner. Our vendors may not trust our claims. I would appreciate anything you can do to urge the University Administration to see that Campus Mail is staffed at a level which will make backlogs the exception rather than the rule. While you try to resolve this situation, I plan to keep in touch with Mr. Howe so that I can monitor the situation.

Nadine Baldwin

PERIODICAL RECEIPT / CHECK-IN FLOW

WEDNESDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 9/85, SORTING
 BINS EMPTY, PERIODICAL CHECK-IN CURRENT.

8" bundles

IN BUNDLES

DATE	PERIODICAL BUNDLES IN	PERIODICAL BUNDLES OUT	BALANCE UNPROCESSED	DAYS BEHIND
WED., OCT. 9/85	24		24	
THURS., OCT. 10	17.18	8	33.8	1
FRI., OCT. 11	3	13	23.8	
TUES., OCT. 15	18.19	5	36.99	
WED., OCT. 16	2.7	11	28.69	
THURS., OCT. 17	5.25	11.5	22.44	4
FRI., OCT. 18	12	5	29.44	
MON., OCT. 21	7.5	12.5	24.44	
TUES., OCT. 22	2	12	14.44	
WED., OCT. 23	5.4	5	14.84	
THURS., OCT. 24	8	13.5	9.34	5
FRI., OCT. 25	2.75	4.75	7.34	
MON., OCT. 28	4.5	5.75	6.09	
TUES., OCT. 29	1	7.75	-	
WED., OCT. 30	3.25	13	-	
THURS., OCT. 31	4	8	-	1
FRI., NOV. 1	4.5	6	-	
MON., NOV. 4	1.5	3.5	-	
TUES., NOV. 5	3.5	3.75	-	
WED., NOV. 6	4	6.8	-	
THURS., NOV. 7	6			