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Library Annual Report, 1996-1997

Bates College

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**The George and Helen Ladd Library
Bates College
Annual Report - 1996/97**

Three innovative activities have framed the work of the Library this year: 1. The physical renovation of the Main Floor, including service points and staff areas, and developing the final plans for the rest of the building; 2. Thinking about and planning for closer links to Bowdoin and Colby libraries (and their information technology organizations) as a way of leveraging improvements in user services; and 3. The experiment of sending the cataloging backlog of audio and video materials to OCLC Techpro for cataloging.

The first phase of the Library building project (costing about \$1.2 million) has affected all our work. We had the opportunity to change fundamentally our reference services by making the desk more visible and by providing sufficient power, data, and equipment to build a full electronic reference services. With a new classroom, we have made more classes on information use available to students, faculty and staff, and we have developed greater coordination with Information Services instructional programs. We have expanded our capacity to store and use video materials, including two new rooms for group and individual viewing. The staff area redesign has brought serials and bind and mend into the staff area, and has removed some artificial barriers to communication among staff members. We managed to do this work and keep the Library open for most of the summer of 1996, by creating temporary locations for most services and by moving most services twice. From the point of view of use and user response, the renovation has been well worth the effort. Users appreciate the open feel of the building, the unobstructed views of the outside, and the care that was taken to keep the warm physical atmosphere. Throughout the year, custodial staff regularly commented on the apparent increase in use of the building. Year-end statistics confirmed his impression: at least 100,000 more people entered the building this year than in previous years. They also show reference inquiries to be up by an estimated 20 percent. Volume alone is no measure of success, but the Library's ability to reach users is greatly enhanced by their apparent desire to be here. Like many things done quickly, the renovation left some trouble spots that will need attention, including the design of the bind-and-mend area and the circulation desk. During the year, we completed the plans for the rest of the building, and with considerable financial support from the College, planned a schedule of renovations to be carried out over the next three summers.

The planning for a Mellon grant provided a framework to focus a number of activities we have wanted to try to accomplish. It will support planning for a Web implementation of the Innovative software that will make the catalog easier to use for most users. It will support planning and implementation of software to make Colby and Bowdoin's holdings more visible to Bates users and provide for direct user-initiated borrowing. It will help us look at our circulation policies to identify ways to make more materials available to more people in the three colleges. Most importantly, it will help us take advantage of the expertise of the other library staffs (and they of us) to find ways to make the collections more available to users. The agenda for CBB Libraries is very ambitious and promises long-term benefits for Bates library users.

The project to reduce the cataloging backlog for audio and video materials will also have long-term consequences. It has given staff members the opportunity to develop contract specifications with an external vendor for work usually done in-house and to begin to assess "outsourcing" as a way of processing materials. It has reduced a major impediment to our users by bringing all the videos (and by next fiscal year, all the audio materials) under full bibliographic

control. We still have much to do to make sure our processing activities for AV formats do not result in backlogs in the future, but the combined effects of experience with a full contract cataloging project and elimination of current backlogs will help us think through other options for processing materials.

We conducted a national search for an Acquisitions Librarian and hired John Harrison in November. Susan MacArthur served as Acting Acquisitions Librarian until John's arrival, and then assumed responsibility for cataloging work, concentrating on videos. Following Mary Riley's retirement in October, we conducted a national search and hired Kurt Kuss as Special Collections Librarian. Both Jason Grant and David Carpenter moved on to graduate study in music. Sean Galipeau served in a temporary position as evening supervisor in Audio, and then filled in as Acting Acquisitions Assistant during Carole Parker's maternity leave. Gerry Fornier retired from the Maintenance staff that serves Library users so well.

This summary merely highlights some features of the accomplishments of the Library staff. The attached progress report goes into greater detail. The staff of the Library attends well to the basics, so any summary of change or innovation takes as its base the assumption that excellent library services are provided at all levels. The staff sets very high goals and accomplishes a great deal. Their work is praised on the campus for its high level of productivity, effectiveness and good humor. It has been a very hard year requiring much flexibility in the face of rapidly changing physical facilities and considerable instability. It was also a year with more students during the regular year, and more students in Short Term, which combined with the attractiveness of the Library as a place to study, made it very busy and very hectic. The staff make this library a warm and inviting place to be, which makes delivery of high quality library services that much more effective. I have not been able to complete all the planning and all the organizational work I set out to do, but I know that as we think about ways to organize our work more effectively or make the facility more attractive, we will make our first priority to provide the high quality Library service College users' need to thrive.

Respectfully submitted,

Eugene L. Wiemers, Librarian

June 4, 1997

Progress toward 1996/97 Goals

1. Provide services and information resources of the highest quality that meet user needs.

- We made significant efforts to expand and publicize the Library's instruction program and to work collaboratively with Information Services staff to present it. The 68 organized sessions conducted in the Library was double the number of the previous year. At the end of the year we began to explore with faculty members in the First Year Seminar Program ways to strengthen the bibliographic and informational instruction support we offer the program.
- Reference found a way to expand hours of service to include Sunday afternoons, one of the busiest times of the week in the building. Special Collections hours were also expanded for the summer months.
- We reviewed copyright policies for reserves and made changes in the standard copyright notification.
- Reference staff paid considerable attention to restructuring services to take advantage of increased visibility and new electronic access capabilities. This was frustrating at times, especially early in the year as performance of new equipment was not stable, and has required rethinking basic operations. The estimated number of inquiries is up over 20 percent from the previous year, with an increasing concentration of questions regarding use of computers.
- Circulation and systems staff implemented use of e-mail for overdues, recalls, fines and bills. This was a major improvement in service and reduced time required to get materials back to the Library. Circulation staff also implemented procedures to post student fines and bills directly to Banner, eliminating much handling of cash and associated paperwork.
- Interlibrary lending was down this year, because we did not lend to other libraries during the summer construction. Borrowing of materials for Bates patrons continues at a steady pace, though its increase has been slowed, we think, because we have added full-text journals in electronic form and placed subscriptions for some of the most heavily-used periodical titles.
- Circulation improved its performance in getting materials back to the shelves at peak times, with student help coming from other Library units.
- The Government Printing Office conducted its periodic review of our U.S. Government depository program, giving our staff high marks and high praise for exemplary work, leadership and innovation.
- We reviewed several policies related to increased traffic in the building, including the policies on use of computers, access to the Instruction Room, Courtesy Card holders, and food and drink policies. Policies related to BatesCard implementation led to confusion among patrons and staff. Several ad hoc adjustments in procedures were

instituted to alleviate confusion and account for delays in getting the card up and running. Delays in implementation of the new card are ongoing as the College seems profoundly ambivalent about requiring the use of an ID card to obtain services. Library users appear to expect to show an ID to borrow materials, and we continue to require it.

- New closing procedures were implemented, these not requiring presence of staff from Campus Security. We hired student workers specifically dedicated to closing.
- We hosted a series of public occasions to celebrate scholarship, including a faculty book talk series in Special Collections, and poetry readings in Special Collections and on the main floor.
- CBB efforts centered on writing a successful grant proposal (\$975,000) to the Mellon foundation to more closely link our catalogs and services. This will be a major focus of the coming year.
- We began a major review of policies and procedures for user services in Special Collections. This has included revisions in use policies, user registration, copyright compliance notification, and statistics. This will continue. We also participated in the planning work for a Bates oral history project, the results of which will be deposited in Special Collections.

2. Provide collections in print, non-print, and electronic formats that meet present and future needs of the College.

- The University of Maine's decision to stop providing the Expanded Academic Index on its system led us to change suppliers. We have added the version that includes full texts of selected journals, with good results. Additional efforts continue to add full-text information to the Library via the campus network, with the addition of JSTOR in the spring.
- We completed one full year of keeping track of in-house use of periodicals. Results are not definitive, but have been useful means of comparison.
- We continued the weeding program begun in 1995/96, making a major effort to clear unneeded materials from the ground floor collections in anticipation of the move of those materials.
- We continued the program to review serial subscriptions, with 24 cancellations. We developed standard procedures for review of new titles and completed the work to add some 50 new titles to the collection.
- Documents staff continued the zero-based review of the depository item selection, and implemented additional cooperative agreements with Bowdoin and Colby.
- We reviewed budget allocations for monographs against publishing industry benchmarks and liaison's perception of demand. Some adjustments in materials budget are expected for 1997/98. Budget support from the College to build collections continues to be close to price inflation in this sector, allowing us to plan for some increases in serials support as well as steady-state monographic purchasing.

- We used the planning period for CBB Mellon project to reach agreements on methodology and timetable for developing shared framework for collection policy. This will be a multi-year project, with a goal to have all three libraries use similar frameworks and tools to analyze and describe their collections.
- We began a review of collection strength and collecting policies for Special Collections. This will be a multi-year project. We suspended the agreement with Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance pending review of the program.

3. Provide records and systems that enhance users' ability to access materials.

- Staff in systems, public services and technical services spent an inordinate amount of time trying to get the printing function to work with all platforms and software packages. One of the Big Lessons of the transition to full electronic support in the Library has been the frustrations and cost of making this basic function work for users.
- The serials group reached basic agreements regarding display of periodicals to the public. Work to implement changes and correct records is about half complete.
- Cataloging and audio staff developed contract specifications and implemented the project to send cataloging backlog of audio and video materials to Techpro. Techpro work on video cataloging is complete, and audio materials will be complete next fiscal year. Analysis of pros and cons of this approach is underway.
- Acquisitions staff continued efforts to take maximum advantage of Innovative's systems support for acquisitions functions, including developing custom lists and new budget reports, and eliminating the hand calculation and writing that had been used to process invoices for payment.
- Documents staff proposed a tapeloading solution to improve public access to catalog records of government documents. Implementation will need to wait until a library-wide review of this procedure can take place early in 1997/98.
- Innovative's Passport downloading software was implemented. Continued progress has been made to streamline downloading of OCLC records and uploading of holdings information to OCLC.
- We worked intensively with IS staff to get menus and helper applications available on the network for use of major library indexes and full-text resources. We redesigned the reference menu of the Web to make it easier to use.
- Staff began again to review III inventory module and see how it can support our work. They also experimented with hand-held device to support inventory control, shelf reading, and weeding.
- Audio staff began to use the circulation module to keep track of headphones, rather than retaining IDs (this in response to the BatesCard which is also a bank card).
- Our goal to design and implement a web front end that integrates electronic resources with existing services and a Z39.50 interface for CBB was the major impetus for the

successful Mellon grant application. Implementation of these ideas will be the major activity of 1997/98.

4. Provide a physical environment that enhances the use of information and promotes independent study.

- We completed renovation on most of the main floor, installed new group and individual viewing stations on the ground floor, and spent much effort getting used to new space and services. The planning committee worked with architects, builders and campus planners to finish the detailed building plans for the rest of the library renovation project. We sought and got approval to complete this work over the next three summers. Additional planning needs to be done on some problem areas, including the circulation area, bind and mend, and the shared student space for processing, and we will need to complete plans for Special Collections.
- We made some progress on developing assumptions for a shared CBB collections storage site, which should be complete early in the next fiscal year. Colby's interest is somewhat longer term, as they are in the process of installing compact moveable shelving on their ground floor. Both Bowdoin and Bates will need this storage space within 3 - 5 years.
- We reviewed photocopy and microform needs, including number and type of machines. We made recommendations for the new space. We completed an analysis of costs and revenues of current service, and adequacy of current equipment, and developed plans for new fee schedule for the fall and new photocopy equipment to be delivered in the summer. The new Microdax machine for reading and printing microforms promises to make this activity more pleasurable. We reviewed the policy for charging for printing for microforms and decided to remove the fee.
- We continue to work with Physical Plant staff to attempt to keep the building in a high state of repair. Routine maintenance has been slowed in anticipation of major renovations for the next two summers.
- We also continue to work with Dining Services and the Student Activities Office to allow for coexistence of regular Library services and the non-academic uses of the space around the building, especially the Library Quad. The charcoal fumes from the barbecues were the most noticeable point of discussion, but noise and disruption during short term is an ongoing concern.

5. Attract and retain staff of highest quality, train and equip them, and manage human and financial resources of the Library to provide for best possible services to users.

- Ideas to improve communication within the Library, and to clarify roles and responsibilities have been incorporated into a comprehensive review of organizational structure, groups, and accountability. This work is not yet complete, but we expect to complete the review and make needed changes by the beginning of July.

- The campus-wide pay equity study gave us the opportunity to review compensation in terms of the market. The Library will need to take an active role in assessing the next steps the College takes to develop a compensation plan.
- A great deal of internal work remains to review staffing needs and existing position descriptions. An organized ongoing forum to develop goals and assess progress toward library priorities is needed.
- We continued to provide enhanced opportunities for staff development including taking advantage of increased availability of computing classes on campus, and off campus conferences and workshops.
- We made progress on a complete review of Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, including review of some basic questions regarding the need for such a document.

6. Develop relationships with constituencies outside Bates that enhance the Library and its services to users.

- We undertook a major effort to develop the CBB Libraries into an organized consortium, and will use funding from Mellon to design and implement these ideas.
- We outlined needs for a new bookplate system, and with new designer at College Relations, we expect to get a new system in place next year.
- We continued to work on improvements in library stewardship activities, including gifts and endowments. We conducted a review of practices on stewardship for small gifts with Development and Financial Office staff, and established new mutual understandings for processing of memorial gifts, small gifts, and gifts-in-kind.