1999

Library Annual Report, 1998-1999

Bates College

The George and Helen Ladd Library
Bates College
Annual Report - 1998/99

This year has been a most unusual year in the history of the Library. We undertook and completed the largest phase of the building renovation project in the summer of 1998, requiring us to suspend normal library operations, including circulation and interlibrary lending, for three months. We also took major steps forward in extending library service through electronic means by implementing a new Library Web site, installing the Web version of the Innopac software with simultaneous searching of CBB catalogs, and implementing patron-generated interlibrary borrowing for CBB libraries. These were major changes that involved extraordinary efforts on the part of Library staff, disruption in our services during the renovation project, and extensive education and orientation programs to introduce new and expanded services.

The Library's reports have highlighted four major management challenges for the coming years: (1) Managing the transition to an electronic collection; (2) Managing and financing a growing collection characterized by persistent inflation in the cost of information content and the addition of new formats; (3) Making the rapidly-expanding collection available without corresponding increases in staff; and (4) Developing staff to learn new techniques, acquire new skills, build expertise, and fashion partnerships with others to manage for the future. In many ways our activities this year have been case studies of response to these challenges.

Library renovations

With the reluctant understanding of the Bates user community, we closed the Library from the end of May through the end of August in 1998. This is the kind of thing a librarian is likely to try only once in a lifetime, as it created major inconvenience for researchers and turned routine chores of scholarship, like checking footnotes, into major efforts. The closing was required by the sheer scope of the project. We moved, stored on site, and reshelved more than 250,000 volumes (about 124 tons of material) plus all the furniture on the ground floor of the Library. We tried not to move anything more than twice, with some success. The construction project included complete renovation of the ground floor and third floor of the Library, plus reconfiguration of photocopy rooms and periodicals collections on the main floor. Sprinklers, fire alarms, and smoke detectors were installed covering every square foot of the building. About a football field's worth of carpet was installed, along with miles and miles of power and data cable. Reference service, along with interlibrary loan pickup, was available in a temporary location in Coram. Much of the staff's effort over the summer was dedicated to making the move work, as well as assuring that normal operation and full service could pick up as soon as the Library was open.

User reaction to the renovation has been very positive. Users have commented on the open and clean look of the Library, and the way the interior design has improved the feel of the building. Reaction to having current periodicals on the main floor has been positive. Careful

readers of statistics will note that some indicators of use are down for the year. We did not lend any materials to users for three months, and we extended the loan period for staff borrowers to one year, so circulation is down. We did not lend any books or articles on interlibrary loan, so lending is down. However, the combined effects of extensive use of interlibrary borrowing as a solution for summer researchers and the effects of enhanced access to CBB collections have kept the level of borrowing from other libraries on its upward slope. Use of the building continues to grow, with a gate count at the front door now averaging more than 8,500 visits per week.

The final phase of construction should be completed in 1999/2000. We asked that the renovation of Special Collections be delayed when it became clear that there was an opportunity to reconsider the way the College delivers archival services. We also put furniture purchases in the last phase of the project, in order to spread costs over a longer period of time, and in order make it possible to schedule delivery of new furniture in an off-peak time of the year for furniture manufacturers. This should help keep costs under control. Once the plan for Archives and Special Collections is approved, we expect to complete the building plans and schedule the final phase of the building project.

Improvements in direct user services

With funds from the Mellon Foundation, we implemented the CBB virtual catalog along with patron-generated requests. This was done simultaneously with implementation of the Web version of the catalog. These changes have put in motion a number of forces that will profoundly affect all Library services. Users can now easily find and request materials from all three college libraries, making coordinated collection development more than a theoretical possibility. Bates users (faculty, students, and staff) have equal access to Bowdoin and Colby resources, due to the work we did to make the loan policies as close to equal as possible. This has not been easy, as it has required all three libraries to completely rethink how materials are paged and delivered among the libraries. This service has been enthusiastically received; the volume of CBB borrowing has increased by 50 percent in the first year.

Reference and Instructional Services continues to enhance the Library's effectiveness as a teaching and learning institution. The staff participated in two retreats to reexamine services and roles, and with the focused energy created by a new position in Instructional Services, have increased the number of instructional sessions. The additional staffing also allowed us to provide reference services on Saturday, with very positive responses from users. In the latter part of the year, we have begun a concerted effort to work with instructional staff in Information Services to develop a coordinated instruction program in all aspects of information use for the Bates community.

The Web catalog provides a mechanism to get users directly to information content (text and images) in addition to bibliographic information. This has enabled us to make direct links to all the electronic resources the Library purchases, as well as many other electronic journals and files. We have tried to make sense of how users might find materials, and developed guidelines for processing materials that attempt to identify when the Library will catalog electronic resources, and when we will use Web pages and search engines to help users get what they need. As the Web changes so quickly, we expect to have to regularly revisit these guidelines, and as the year ends, we are undertaking with Colby and Bowdoin a look at

developing common understandings of how to provide access to serials and electronic resources. We have the opportunity to make previously unimaginable resources available to Bates users--as well as the opportunity to confuse users if we are not careful.

In a crash program in the summer of 1998, we put out a new Library Web site. While the old site was modeled on the organizational structure of the Library, the new site is intended to provide a unified view of the Library's resources and to direct users to information they want. It was clear when the new site was installed that the overall goal of providing a unified approach was a good one, but the design had some basic problems. The Web implementation team led a series of events to provide some basic feedback on the performance of the site, which enabled me to construct a new charge to a Web Group to manage the Library's site. The new group began its work in January, and plans to implement an improved unified Library Web site later this summer. One of the features of this site is its goal to connect a commercially-produced Web interface from Innovative Interfaces (the Web catalog) with the rest of the Library's Web presence. This is difficult work, which will be increasingly important throughout the College as other commercial Web packages, like Banner's, become available.

We also passed a series of milestones in acquisitions and cataloging. All new federal documents titles are now cataloged, with the first full year of service from Marcive, a company which provides electronic records that we load into the catalog. Acquisitions produced no printed purchase orders, having reached understandings with vendors that they will accept orders in the BISAC electronic format, e-mail, or fax. We passed the 1,500 mark in electronic titles available through the catalog. Our investigation of other options for vendor-supplied services is moving toward an implementation stage.

Planning

Two major planning efforts are underway, both at the request of the President. An *ad hoc* Information Services and Library Strategic Planning Committee is in the final stages of completion of its work. A draft document will be available for review before the end of June, and will be submitted for administrative review over the summer. This has been a major effort with input from faculty, staff, students, Library, and Information Services personnel, to produce a plan that helps align our services with the College's Goals 2005 plan. The Librarian, the Special Collections Librarian, the Dean of the College, and the Director of the Muskie Archives have also just completed a plan to merge Special Collections and Muskie to form a new unit that will coordinate existing services and establish a College archives for the first time. We expect that implementation of these two plans will be the principal focus of organizational work in the coming year.

Collections

This year was a difficult one for our collection development and management programs. The College-wide freeze on operating budgets (not including salaries) required us to trim monographic purchasing in order to finance the routine increase in periodicals prices. Our collections programs are now at a scale where the routine annual price increase for periodicals and serials is about $50,000. We began the year with a planned reduction of the same amount in our non-serials purchases. At mid-year, the Treasurer was able to respond to the situation by

providing an additional $30,000 in one-time funds, which was put directly into routine monographic purchases. This has enabled us to keep monographic acquisitions very close to normal. We also conducted another review of serials holdings, with cancellations of about $7,000. Over the past five years, review of serials has allowed us to redirect more than $75,000 of the annual budget to higher priority materials, mostly new journals which support the curriculum.

Special Collections finished processing the Dorothy Freeman/Rachel Carson materials, which we celebrated with a reading with the donors and other alumni in the fall. We also acquired a near complete run of the Falmouth Press imprints from the estate of Leon Tebbetts, a major addition to our holdings of Maine small presses. The French Department purchased for the Library a collection of materials from the library of the Dominican Fathers, which complements other French holdings in Special Collections and the general collection. We found a package of services for chemists that has allowed us to cancel the print version of *Chemical Abstracts*. This will result in great savings in space, as well as better service for this basic resource. We are about to complete the addition of the more than 40,000 records of *Evans Early American Imprints* to the catalog, enabling much more effective use of this pre-1900 material (and creating a major blip in our cataloging statistics!).

We also finished work with College Relations and Print and Mail Services on a new bookplate system. While we are still working out the kinks, we have a system that will provide attractive bookplates for large and small gifts, and will get us out of the business of producing custom bookplates.

Staff

New staff have made a big difference in our ability to serve our users. Maryann Hight joined the staff as Instructional Services Librarian. Melissa Gilmartin was appointed as Public Services Assistant, and Brenda Reynolds was appointed to a permanent position after several years of highly effective service in temporary and student positions. Kate Perry accepted the temporary position of Public Services Assistant funded by the Mellon grant which provided additional help in circulation that was needed to put patron-generated borrowing into place. We conducted a successful search for a new Systems Librarian, and Andrew White will join the staff at the end of June.

What follows is some additional detail on progress in Library goals. This is an exceptional library with an exceptional staff. Our goal is to provide library services of the highest quality in support of the curriculum of the College. I have no doubt that we do, and that we can do it because we have talented people working together.

Respectfully submitted,

Eugene L. Wiemers
Librarian

June 11, 1999

Goals for 1998/99

Annual goals are not intended to encompass all the Library does, but rather to identify major areas of focus, highlight short- and long-term organizational objectives, and provide a framework to help the Library pay attention to the most important immediate needs. These were what we outlined for this year:

•   Processing. Institute an organized way to make and express choices about processing of library materials on a Library-wide basis, and to link those priorities to organizational and college priorities.

Staff in acquisitions and cataloging are examining all the ways we can take advantage of vendor services to extend our ability to process all the materials we acquire. This has taken the form of implementing the Marcive project for government documents cataloging, using Techpro to process arrearages in media, and exploring in depth the possibility of purchasing cataloging and processing services from our major book vendor. This effort should begin to take final shape in 1999/2000, and will form a major component in our ability to take on the task of processing a larger portion of the College's archives and special collections.

•   Management. Strengthen department/unit management. This entails getting decision-making to the lowest appropriate level. This may involve workshops, training, and other steps to improve decision-making in the Library, and to clarify decision-making processes. Support creativity, courage, broad communication and consensus. Promote qualities we want to encourage, including creativity, professionalism and flexibility.

This is an ongoing process. My own objective in establishing an Administrative Group was to provide a better way for me to get a library-wide view of operational and strategic directions. I am establishing a set of expectations for department and unit heads that should result, in the long run, in having more decisions made in operational units and fewer made by me, with the accompanying expectation that unit heads will consult closely with each other and with their staffs. This will require constant work.

•   Implement and publicize major changes in the building and in Library services. Get the Library put back together in the fall. Install and promote WebPac. Promote CBB circulation system.

This has been described above. Our efforts to publicize our services blend with efforts to instruct users, and we continue to try new things, discard efforts that do not work very well, and promote an atmosphere of experimentation.

•   Strengthen link between Library collections, services and the curriculum. Blend concepts of just in time and just in case in order to provide information support for increasingly diverse curriculum. Develop the idea of the Library staff as having a role in the educational process - as educators who take responsibility to be educated and keep an open mind about education. Broaden the vision of the curriculum and strengthen the Library's role as an agency that transcends boundaries and supports a broad concept of diversity.

This is a very long-term vision of how we can be of service. We have worked very hard to provide rapid delivery of materials for CBB borrowing. Paula Matthews's position on the Curriculum and Calendar Committee provides us with a very close look at new courses and new materials requirements. We also interview candidates for tenure-track positions, primarily to help build the close links that will enable us to get and stay in synch with their needs. The activities of the CBB User Education Committee to promote innovation in use of information and information technology, as well as thoughtful approaches to the basics of teaching and learning, spring from this vision of library service as a broad, interdisciplinary, and multifaceted support mechanism for teaching and scholarship.

We also hosted a series of events in the Library that are intended to build connections between the Library and the user community. The Freeman/Carson event helped us celebrate a major gift and get the word out as to its usefulness. A very successful and well-attended series of poetry readings in the winter continued our connections with this creative community.

- Develop close connections with users. Direct instructional efforts to what students need as individuals. Find ways to connect with academic advisors. Get early connections to thesis writers. Develop mechanisms for organized consultation with users. Develop feedback mechanisms for users to comment on the Library.

Library staff will try anything to get close to users. We have worked intensively with First Year Seminar instructors to try new approaches to support this critical early Bates experience for students. We conduct multiple events, some with IS staff, to help thesis students understand the beginning, middle, and end of the thesis-writing process. The planning effort provided multiple forums for faculty and staff members to describe what they expect from Library and Information Services programs, though our efforts to get direct feedback from students were not so fruitful. See also comments below regarding assessment.

- World Wide Web. Install new web site. Provide needed level of staff support.

This was done. The result of the review that created a new Web group was a basic realization that the Library needs to understand that the Web is part of all its work. We will need to continue to review work assignments and balance responsibilities in order to make the human resources available to build this now-basic service.

- Strengthen collaborative work with CBB. Collaboration with others is essential to the future of the College and the Library. Review CBB strategic plan and objectives to make needed changes, and assertively proceed as outlined. Use this as an opportunity to learn how to do collaborative work.

CBB activities are detailed on the CBB Web site. We have implemented the most tangible aspects of the CBB projects, with the virtual catalog and direct patron borrowing in place, and with videoconferencing becoming operational at the end of the summer. The major focus of next year will be the User Education activities, which are less tangible in result, but of critical long term importance in building a sense of collaboration in the three Colleges. We hope to

extend the concept of strategic planning for CBB to include information services and information technology organizations as well as the libraries.

- Gifts and materials not purchased. Develop and implement a policy for selection, acquisition and processing of materials (physical and electronic) that are available to the Library but not purchased. Attempt to clarify the preferred mode of access (catalog or some other Web link) for electronic materials of various types. Develop procedures that enable smooth implementation of these policies, and provide for change over time as electronic access possibilities change.

We made significant progress in developing guidelines for electronic materials of all kinds. We still need to refine our policies and procedures for gifts-in-kind.

- Staff development and recruitment. Work on strengthening efforts to attract and retain a diverse staff. Work to integrate new staff into the organization. Continue to emphasize staff development opportunities for all staff, and to foster a sense of shared commitment to each other's success.

We continue to provide opportunities for staff at all levels of the organization to improve their work, and to take advantage of learning opportunities of short- and long-term benefit to their own professional growth. With no increases in budget support this year, we had to choose carefully which travel opportunities made the most sense for the Library.

- History and culture of Bates. Plan for the archival needs of the College, working with other appropriate offices on campus. Support and promote projects and programs designed to use existing materials and/or create or acquire additional materials that document the history and culture of the College.

This has been the primary goal behind the joint Library/Muskie Archives planning effort, which was completed in May. We seek to underscore that the mission of the Library is more than just providing books, or increasingly just providing full-text electronic materials. We support and promote use of all kinds of original materials and seek to help students learn to deal with unsythesized data, original texts and documents, and to gain the knowledge and sense of wonder that comes with handling original documentation.

- Information services/information technology plan. Work with Information Services, faculty, and staff groups to develop a strategic plan for information and information technology support for the College. This should be a long-term plan, developed with users and driven by user needs, including training, hardware, software, networking and content.

This plan should be complete by mid-summer.

- Assessment. Pay attention to the need for assessment as a normal part of everyday work.

This is an increasingly important part of our work. The Statistics Task Force completed its work this year, which has revised all the basic statistics-gathering procedures for the Library and put

the definitions we use in harmony with IPEDS and Oberlin Group definitions. New base line figures have been established using machine counts rather than hand counts, which should make future statistics reporting more accurate and easier to compile. A major recommendation of the Web review was to build "usability" studies into the work of the group in order to get immediate user feedback on how the site works and use the information to build a better site. We also incorporate user assessment tools in instructional programs.

Goals for 1999/2000

- Implement recommendations of the Information Services and Library Strategic Plan.

- Implement Archives and Special Collections recommendations if approved. Includes changes in mission, organizational structure and service delivery, and changes in staffing for processing activities.

- Continue to strengthen management of the Library.

- Move to implementation phase in making changes in processing in Acquisitions and Cataloging to take greatest advantage of services vendors can provide.

- Complete planning for building project (furniture, networking, archives and special collections) and establish time line for project completion. Complete planning for off-site storage.

- Complete CBB Mellon II activities, including user education, documentation, training, and project support. Develop policy for support of off-campus programs.

- Design and begin CBB initiative on serials/electronic resources/catalog coordination.

- Prepare first version of CBB collection development plan by June 2000.

- Work with IS staff on new IS/Library instruction initiatives.

- Complete Web site analysis and implement new structure and design.

- Assess and revise methods for judging serials use and cancellation, including options for additional full text access.

- Revise copyright compliance policies to include media and internet resources and electronic reserves.

- Work with new Systems Librarian to integrate him into the organization and support his work.

- Continue to strengthen staff development programs and activities.

- Continue to emphasize assessment, including looking at new standards such as ACRL Standards For College Libraries.