2000

Annual Report, 1999-2000

Bates College

Bates College Information and Library Services
Annual Report 1999-2000
July 29, 2000

This is a combined report for Information Services and the Library of Bates College. It summarizes the accomplishments of staff in the various departments that make up these services, including the Edmund S. Muskie Archives, the George and Helen Ladd Library, Infrastructure, Integrated Applications, and User Assistance. At this writing, we are in the process of integrating these departments, which together provide archives, computing, library, media and telecommunications services to the Bates community, into a single department which we are calling Information and Library Services. In a sense it is an anachronistic report, in that the organization it describes was not integrated throughout the reporting year and is just coming together as the 1999-2000 academic year closes. It is an attempt, however, to provide a framework for understanding the accomplishments, goals, and very significant challenges that face this new organization as we attempt to create a unified and user-oriented culture to serve the entire College community. These various services are very interdependent. This is abundantly clear to users when one service fails, whether it is a server, a network, or a staff member who is not available when needed. It is also increasingly clear to us, the staffs who provide these services, that we are dependent upon each other in ways we can not always predict.

The overall framework for our efforts is the *Strategic Plan for Information Technology and Library Services at Bates College,* completed in August 1999. This plan incorporates large and small goals, over a three year time frame, for all parts of the organization. We have made significant progress in achieving the goals set forward in this plan, and have achieved many of the budgetary objectives the plan set out (see attached summary). This report does not set out explicit goals for 2000-2001; we anticipate that our early efforts in unifying the administration of Information and Library Services will be aimed at developing the next set of short-term goals. As outlined in the Strategic Plan, we will work with campus constituencies to revise the goals and objectives of the plan, in order to chart a course that is true to both strategic goals of the College and short term needs. Expect to see 2000-2001 goals early in the fall.

Facilities, Equipment and Services

Much of the effort in 1999-2000 has been devoted to budgetary analysis required to implement the Strategic Plan, including budget for a desktop hardware replacement cycle, AV replacements, server technology needs, computing support for archives and special collections activities and classroom equipment upgrades. The budget for 2000-2001 incorporates the majority of these recommendations with recurring funding. These are some of the significant results for 1999-2000:

- Acquired Web for Faculty and the server to run Banner Web modules.
- Made some significant upgrades in AV equipment, with a 100 percent increase in budget for this activity in the coming year--a long term need.
- Completed planning for the renovation of Ladd Library, and secured funding for its completion.
- Identified and isolated the cause of consistent problems with humidity control in the Library building. Began work with Physical Plant to solve the problem. This needs attention next year.
- Began to move from cassette audio tape to CDs for assigned listening with new CD "burners" in Audio.
- Worked on improving loaner pool for computing equipment. This needs significant attention in the coming year.
- Planned the deployment of "information kiosks" for staff and student access to routine communications of the College. This is in response to a campuswide communications plan. Hardware was purchased at the end of the fiscal year, for deployment in the next few months.
- Analyzed replacement of dumb terminals within the Library. This will not be done in conjunction with the kiosk project.
- Did extensive preparation for Y2K. Encountered and solved the significant problems.
- Developed Citrix metaframe solution to provide Banner access from Macs.
- Developed and began to implement a strategy to move administrative offices to Windows machines with standard software packages on Microsoft Office. This is an integrated strategy that includes hardware, software and training.
- Acquired new software for the HelpDesk. Encountered significant problems with its implementation, including apparent bugs. It will take a major push in the coming year to decide what to do with this software.
- Planned and implemented very successful Back-to-School distribution program for computers. Goal to provide computers while parents of new students are on campus was achieved, with excellent results.
- Planned and began to implement campus network upgrade to gigabit ethernet capacity. Bond funding secured for project, and full implementation schedule over the next two years finalized.
- Planned and budgeted for expansion of campus Internet connection. An additional 3.5 mb of Internet access will be available by the fall, with the option of an additional 5 mb that can be added as needed.
- The inadequacy of Vines became apparent with the collapse of the Lane1 server. We developed a plan to change to NT, and began implementation for Fall 2000.
- Dial-in service. We did an analysis of options, and acquired new technology to replace existing connection to modem pool. We also developed plan to outsource modem pool to Bell Atlantic, for anticipated inauguration in coming year. Two obstacles are apparent. One is the capacity of the existing service in terms of the number of ports. There are certainly not enough ports. Second is the expectation of the user community that we will be able to provide reliable connections for old desktop equipment running outdated software. Rollout of new service will need to

address both these issues, and find a way to publicize realistic expectations. Also, we will need to provide proxy access to licensed materials to help users choose ISPs other than Bates.

- The demands for multimedia production reached new heights this year, and expanded beyond the traditional academic interests in Rhetoric and Art. We were able to provide some new and easy-to-use equipment to meet immediate demands, but the need to rationalize deployment of tools and equipment for media services, multimedia production, advanced computing and basic computing became apparent. This will be a focus of activity in the coming year.

- In the sweepstakes of questionable rankings, Bates was ranked third most wired among liberal arts Colleges by Yahoo. This survey does not measure student learning or quality of service. Our challenge is to make the quality of our service match the capacity of our technology.

Reference Services, Instruction and Outreach

We began the year with a planning effort to develop a coordinated approach to computing and library instruction and training. While this effort produced some understanding of shared goals and obstacles to effective training, it was not successful in meeting the objective of an integrated program. The HelpDesk was short-staffed for the entire year, as a search for two positions was able to bring in only one new staff person. The pressure of student demands to learn new technology continued, creating ever-increasing requests at the Library reference desk for instruction and help with basic as well as sophisticated technology questions. As the first full semester of online course registration hit in the fall, it became clear that basic instruction on hardware, software and the campus network are critical needs for success at Bates, blurring the distinction between "help" and "reference" questions in the early weeks of the term. A combined instructional and orientation program is a major objective for the coming year, to help us sort out the most effective places and ways to deliver services that are needed. Even though the knowledge of the average student in the ways of computing and the ways of the Web continues to grow, staff find that it is not safe to assume that all entering students have the knowledge to successfully navigate on the campus network in the first few days of the term.

In general, reference inquiries continue to grow, contrary to reports in other libraries of declining demand for reference services. Alumni and development inquiries in Special Collections also grow, a trend that will increase as College archival services begin in a formal way next year.

We continued to provide an expanded array of instructional offerings in library and information-seeking skills. This includes sessions for students and staff, as well as regular faculty updates. The program of one-on-one office visits continues to be one of the most effective ways to serve and identify the needs of faculty members. Staffing shortages in computing restricted instructional offerings in the fall.

Collection Development and Use

Use of Library materials in all formats continues to be very strong at Bates. Circulation has kept growing. Reserve use is still important, though there is some decline; perhaps this is related to the growing number of resources available in electronic formats, some of which are linked to the Library catalog and some of which are linked to faculty members' Web pages. Interlibrary lending is up, especially as CBB borrowing grows. Staff in circulation continue to improve the processing of CBB requests, and managed to cross a major hurdle this year by successfully coping with the sudden and unexpected disappearance of the firm that handled deliveries to the major Maine libraries.

We continue to anticipate, with some trepidation, the implementation of a patron-generated interlibrary lending system for Maine libraries. We prepare for this new service, currently called Maine Info Net, with the understanding that, like many Maine services, it will be implemented with limited staffing from the central site and considerable decentralized planning. Currently we understand that full implementation is scheduled for early 2001, though we have begun to arrange the library database to accommodate the InnReach software that will run this system.

We did not conduct a full serials review this year, anticipating that the major changes currently underway in the Library and in the industry for supply of electronic full-text journals will make it difficult to assess the options of access for many titles. During the coming year, we will acquire at least one additional electronic full-text journal collection, and conduct a more comprehensive review of the print equivalents in order to assess our next steps for the serial collections.

Muskie Archives and Special Collections staff drafted new combined collection development policies in anticipation of the merger of these organizations. We also identified immediate priorities for processing of College archives, with the goal of supporting the work required to write various pieces related to the history of the College, some for the sesquicentennial in 2005.

Information Access and Web Development

This year marked the completion of the initial installation of Banner, with implementation of Human Resources module on July 1. This was a huge effort, which passed its first significant benchmark with successful in-house payroll in July. Implementation of Banner is a continual work in progress, as staff performed upgrades to five other Banner modules in the course of the year. The implementation of a new chart of accounts in the Finance module marked a major overhaul of the module that was to be installed. Expectations on the part of users regarding ease of use of Banner and full access to its data continue to be high, presenting some significant challenges to staff in Information Services and operating departments alike. The Banner Users Group continues to provide a mechanism to mediate and coordinate priorities for Banner enhancements, and has provided a regular forum for cross-fertilization of ideas among the departments

that are dependent on Banner. Staff conducted research in reporting tools for easier access to data, and began evaluation of Web Focus and Crystal Reports. We expect to make a selection and implement hardware and software in the coming year. We also implemented ODBC with Microsoft Access and Excel to meet some data access and reporting requirements.

At the end of the year, we prepared for the first audit of our administrative systems by the College's new auditor. The final results of this analysis are not complete, but we anticipate that we will need to develop a more explicit disaster recovery plan for administrative information. We also expect some advice on improving, standardizing, and providing more effective password administration. This will undoubtedly involve balancing ease of access with a high level of systems security. We expect to develop formal responses to the audit in the coming year.

We have had successes in linking a growing number of electronic resources to the Library catalog to improve the ability of users to get directly to full-text materials. As the number of electronic titles continues to grow, this is increasingly important. It is also very complicated, since national standards are not consistent, and the number of options for handling these materials is great. Many approaches require full cataloging of a virtually endless array of online materials, so we continue to look for cost effective and practical approaches to making links to these resources. We have begun efforts to identify materials on course reserve that are available electronically, as well as the most heavily used full text journals. We continue to investigate electronic reserves, which provides a way to increase the availability of assigned reading, though a full implementation will take more work in the coming year or two.

IS and Library leadership engaged in a four-month planning effort, with leadership from Academic Affairs, External Relations, Development and College Relations, to identify a common approach to management of Web services at the College. This has been identified by internal planning, external opinion and College leadership as a critical area in need of improvement in order to achieve the long term goals of the College. The results of this planning have been an outline of an effort to redesign the College Web site, with responsibility for implementation shared by Information and Library Services and College Relations. We are in the process of implementation of these ideas with College Relations. It will take considerable effort with other College offices to make the effort successful, since a redesign is likely to change the overall organization of the Web site, and will undoubtedly result in College-wide use of new design elements and Web tools. Undertaking the planned effort will be a major focus of activity in the coming year.

Library staff also successfully completed Web redesign of the Ladd Library site and moved administration of the site from an *ad hoc* group to an ongoing administrative assignment. We continued to refine the site, incorporating formal usability study as an assessment tool. Extending the library Web and developing a coordinated Information and Library Services Web presence will take much of next year.

Organization

This year was the first full year of activity for the Information Services Advisory Committee, many of whom served on the planning committee that developed the Strategic Plan in 1999. We have begun to develop routines of consultation, information sharing and priority setting that promise to help keep the computing, media and telecommunications services of the College on the right course, consistent with the needs of faculty, staff and students. We have begun to use the services of the Committee to assess the overall impact of a wide variety of proposals, and to function as a sounding board to help set priorities where resources are clearly limited. We anticipate that the evolution of this relationship will continue, as it serves a very critical need for formal feedback in the budgeting and planning process.

We also worked with the Finance department to develop a more refined approach to capital budgeting. We needed a process that coordinates capital planning in Physical Plant with that of Information Services, and brings in perspectives from throughout the campus as overall priorities are set. We used the results of our work with the Information Services Advisory Committee to good effect, and have begun the new year with a clear idea of the priorities and resources that are available for the coming year.

Following the retirement of Mary Atchison as Head of Cataloging, we began a reorganization of the acquisitions, cataloging, processing and preservation functions into a single Technical Services department in January 2000. In the first six months of this effort, the new department has developed unified goals and objectives, begun to bring in commercially prepared bibliographic records for new acquisitions, and begun to identify improvements in processing, internal communications and communications with the rest of the organization. This reorganization was accomplished with a net reduction of 1 full time position, making it possible to add a staff position in direct user support in Information and Library Services.

One of the key recommendations of the Information Technology and Library Services Strategic Plan was to improve management within the organizations that provide these services and to improve the way these services are integrated into the overall decision making structure of the College. After studying this issue for about six months, Vice President Reich decided to create a single administrative position with responsibility for Information Services and the College Library, a position that would report to her as an Associate Vice President, and serve as a part of the President's Senior Staff. She asked me to take this assignment beginning in April. There are few results to show for this combination in 1999-2000, other than to begin the process of looking at the functions of the entire organization as it relates to College needs. In the first months of 2000-2001 I will begin to put new administrative and communication structures in place that answer some of the needs identified in the planning process.

We completed the planning for the integration of the Edmund S. Muskie Archives and the Special Collections department of the Library. This will provide a way to assure adequate

staffing for each of these functions in a single facility, and to begin to create a College archives. Plans include a single service point in the Muskie building, a closed storage facility in the Ladd Library building, and an enhanced effort to acquire, process and make available the official records of the College. During this year, the Director of the Muskie Archives began to report to the Library and has been incorporated into the management of the Library. We will inaugurate the new service in the fall.

During the course of the year, we made an effort to make administrative information more widely available within IS and the Library by adopting the mode common in the Library to make agendas and minutes of administrative meetings available to the entire staff. We also began a review of the key interdepartmental meetings and other forms of communication throughout the organizations. The skeleton Library intranet was improved with a staff-accessible menu and Web accessible forms. Making communications expectations and methods consistent throughout the Information and Library Services organization will be a significant challenge for the coming year.

We also began to use some staff meeting times to inaugurate a staff development series within the Library. The basic goal of this effort was to provide all staff members with a complete perspective on the work of each department and some of the new initiatives that are being undertaken. This was a successful way to bring staff together around common concerns, while providing a method to orient new staff. In the coming year, we should extend this concept to provide complete orientation to Information and Library Service staff about the functions of the entire department.

Summary

One of the key outcomes of the planning effort undertaken in 1998-1999 was a clear understanding on the part of Information Services and Library staff that their services to the College are valued and needed. The response of the College in the year since this plan was adopted has also been supportive, as we have achieved many of the organizational and budgetary objectives set out in the Plan. We clearly have the resources, and the commitment of the College, to provide major improvements in service and facilities. We also have an outstanding staff that is dedicated to the mission of the College. In the coming year, our challenge will be to put this together in a way that makes a difference both to the immediate services needed by the College and to the long term health of the institution.

Respectfully submitted,

Eugene L. Wiemers
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs,
 Director of Information Services and Librarian

Attachments: Bates College Information Services and Library Plan, Highlights of 1999-2000 Accomplishments

Bates College Information Services and Library Plan
Highlights of 1999-2000 Accomplishments
May 26, 2000

- Web management. Conducted analysis of short-term and strategic options with College Relations, External Relations, Academic Affairs and Development leadership. Assigned responsibility for leadership of Web redesign. Identified key personnel needs. In process of implementation.

- Web hardware and software. Purchased Banner Web "faculty" module. In implementation phase for late 2000 or early 2001.

- Desktop equipment replacement program. Prepared analysis and budget projection. Secured recurring funding. In process of implementation for Fall 2000.

- Banner improvements. Implementation of Human Resources module on schedule for July. Analysis of better way to get management data out of Banner is progressing well, for 2000-2001 implementation.

- AV equipment and classroom upgrades. Secured recurring funding for routine classroom equipment replacement program. Identified classrooms for upgrade with computer and audio-visual equipment in next phase (outside Pettengill).

- Network upgrade. Bond funding secured for upgrade to gigabit/second bandwidth on campus. Upgrade of internet connection to 5 megabit/second scheduled for fall. Experienced saturation of internet connection during last few weeks of the Winter semester (exclusive of Napster).

- Dial-in service. Identified option for expanded outsourced modem pool. Should be available for fall 2000.

- Training program. Not much progress in expanding this program or its effectiveness in general. Key issues identified, and will be focus of organizational effort over the summer for the fall.

- Improve print and electronic collections. Major progress in addition of electronic materials, especially journals. Funding secured for addition of one major electronic journals service for 2000-2001.

- Develop College archives.   Plan in place for implementation over the summer.

- Complete Library renovation. Plan for Ladd complete for summer 2000 schedule. Plan for reading room and work areas of Muskie will be done after move.

- Improve communication and management of IS and Library. Analyzed options and identified new organizational model for leadership. In process of integration of organizations.