

**Report of Library Council for 1998-1999**

**To: University Senate**  
**From: Jane Case-Smith, Library Council**  
**Date: November 5, 1999**

The University Libraries has been in transition 1998-1999, as the Director of 22 years, Dr. William Studer, stepped down and a new Director, Joseph Branin was appointed. Despite this pending transition in leadership, the University Libraries have continued to move forward by enhancing their electronic resources and online services, offering new educational programs, and increasing their acquisitions. The Ohio State University libraries maintain a position of national leadership in services and resources provided to faculty, staff, and students.

**Renovation of the Main Library**

A primary emphasis of the *Library Task Force Report*, presented to the Provost and Vice Provost in June 1998, was a recommendation to renovate and restore the Main Library. During 1998-1999, students and faculty bodies voiced enthusiastic support for the renovation of the Main Library. President Kirwan, in this year's State of the University Address, stated his strong desire to complete the library renovation during his tenure. A total of \$500,000 has been approved to conduct feasibility studies in 2001-2002. It is currently estimated that the renovation will cost \$65 - \$66 million, half of which is to be raised privately. Although planning for this project is not yet underway, an earlier study determined that renovation of the current structure is a preferred solution to demolition and building a new library. Constituents of the Main Library have voiced a desire to keep the library in the same location (central campus) and to maintain the existing building as an important historical landmark of the university. This project will undoubtedly be a priority of the incoming director.

**New Director of the Libraries: Joseph Branin**

Mr. Joseph Branin will begin as Director of the OSU Libraries in January 2000. Branin comes to us from SUNY at Stony Brook, where he has served as Dean and Director of libraries for the past 4 years. Prior to his position at SUNY, he was Associate Librarian for the University of Minnesota. During his tenure at SUNY, he succeeded in gaining support for collaborative efforts between the university's technology services and the library. He has been instrumental in increasing SUNY's technology services and electronic resources. While interested in further development of the electronic services available through the libraries, he is also concerned with the library as a "place" with physical space conducive to studying, researching, and meeting. Therefore his interests and experience are a good match to the libraries' current goals for expanding technology, while preserving and upgrading our physical facilities.

## **Electronic Resources**

The electronic resources of the University's Libraries continue to expand. Usage of OhioLINK has been tremendous. OhioLINK's Electronic Journal Center gives OSU faculty, staff, and students access to 1,900 journals, primarily from Elsevier Science, Academic Press, and Project MUSE and 150 databases. Through this source OSU has gained access to over 300 titles that were not previously available on campus.

During the past year, over 93,000 articles have been downloaded by OSU faculty, staff, and students. The electronic journal center gives faculty and students immediate access to journal articles that previously required two weeks or more to be delivered through interlibrary loan. By the year 2000, the Electronic Journal Center will include over 2500 titles.

OhioLINK has also established a Digital Media Center. This site allows searching, viewing, downloading, and printing of digitized art and architecture images. At present, the Digital Media Center contains 3,000 images and by the end of the year should have an additional 50,000 images. The initial 3,000 images are keyed to the standard texts used in introductory art courses.

OhioLINK is also planning to provide for a collection of electronic dissertations for its members into a database which can be searched using a variety of parameters. It is anticipated that a pilot database containing dissertations for four Ohio institutions will be made available during the current academic year.

## **User Education**

The educational programs offered by the Libraries have had two primary thrusts. One focus was the creation and implementation of new Web-based library assignment given to all university freshmen and transfer sophomores. The second focus was the ongoing development of net.TUTOR.

During Fall Quarter, a new interactive online library assignment was implemented in all University college general survey classes. The assignment emphasized online searching of materials available remotely. The Libraries' user education program reached 28,000 students in 1998 through 867 course-related presentations.

Use of net.TUTOR has been high and evaluations of the online course have been positive. Net.TUTOR now includes 14 tutorials on using Internet tools, searching, and research skills. Many web sites across the university link to net.TUTOR and 26 courses include it as a required or optional assignment. *The Gateway to Information* has also been well used (19,000 users in a four month period last year). This resource provides 1,400 librarian-recommended print, online, and Web research materials on 84 general subjects.

## **Acquisition Index**

The Library Materials Index remains in place as essential funding that allows the Library to maintain its purchasing power for library materials from year to year. These Index funds counteract inflation in the publishing industry and allow the Libraries to continue to maintain their serial collections despite the spiraling costs (especially the cost of journals). For most journals, the Libraries continue to acquire both print and electronic versions; therefore the Acquisition Index remains very important to maintaining serial collections. The Council strongly recommends that the Acquisitions Index be retained if the OSU Libraries are to maintain their current status among peer publicly-supported research libraries.

## **Library Faculty and Staff**

Although restructuring and reorganizing efforts have allowed the library to continue to provide excellence in service, a shortage of staff has reduced the Libraries' ability to meet the needs of faculty and students. The *Library Task Force Report* documented that Ohio State Libraries had the highest undergraduate-to-faculty ratio of any of the benchmark institutions. The shortages in staff will become one of the issues that influence the future of the Libraries and is an issue that the University Senate and administration should not lose sight of when opportunities for growth are presented.