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Department of Technical Services Annual Report, 1995-1996

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DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT, 1995-1996

This was a watershed year for the department on a number of fronts. Michael Vocino, resigned as Chair when he was appointed to the new position of Associate Dean and Director of Libraries in January 1996. At that point, Prof. William O'Malley was appointed as the acting chair for the remainder of the academic year [at which time he was selected as the chairman, for a three year term]. Prof Vocino served as the Chairman of the Department since 1987; years which were filled with incredible accomplishments for the department. His ten year leadership included the grant supported retrospective conversion project with OCLC, the creation of the HELIN OPAC, the migration of HELIN from CLSI to III, the automation of serials, including Faxon's SC10 system, and the migration from Faxon to Ebsco and the III serials control module. The department prospered under Prof Vocino's leadership and guidance.

1. Task Forces Recommendations. Vice Provost Michalak appointed a number of Task Forces to make focused recommendations. The Task Force on Bibliographic Access and Control, Order and Materials Processing focused directly on the procedures of the technical services, but the other task forces also made specific recommendations impinging on the department. Most of the recommendations were subsequently approved by the Vice Provost and the Director, and the department began preparing for their implementation. These recommendations included outsourcing [major microforms, marcives, new acquisitions, serials holdings statements, and others], reducing OCLC annual expenditures by 40% [searching, exporting, maintenance contracts, dedicated lines], review of backlog priorities, and streamlining of internal processes. Work began immediately on implementing these recommendations, with progress already achieved by the end of the academic year. Recommendations from the other task forces included : procedures for acquiring, cataloging and processing electronic journals, and non book media, reorganization of the department within a flatter administrative structure, greater emphasis on interdepartmental communications, and other items which affected all units within the Library. Immediate attention was given to developing test cases for purchased and free electronic journals. We expect to have a working procedure by the end of the Fall'96 semester.

There was library-wide attention given to all of the Task Forces. There was full participation by all staff in creating the recommendations, full discussion of all of the reports, and good will in the follow-up to these reports. It is the intention of the Chair to make every attempt in the coming months to continue to focus on the unfinished recommendations.

2. Personnel: Since my appointment as chairman in January the department has lost three staff members: 2 to retirement [Bartlett and Johnson], and one to transfer to another unit [Macdonald]. This is merely a continuance of a longer and troublesome trend which began 5-6 years ago with the continuing loss of personnel in the department. This trend coincided with a drop in overall library support for new acquisitions, so that the pressure of acquiring, cataloging and processing an ever increasing number of new books, was lessened. On a more positive note, during that same time period, the tools of the trade, III, OCLC, electronic ordering, have dramatically and substantially improved in both the quality of the services available, and the time required to use these tools. We have, therefore, been able to become more productive with fewer staff because of the improvement in our tools and the technology that delivers the tools. The continuing raid on Technical Services personnel by the Library Administration to meet the demands within other units in the library [Vocino to Director, Barrett to Systems, Devin to Reference], and the retirement of senior staff, is bound to adversely affect the Department in the very near future.

3. Acquisitions Unit Highlights: The Acquisitions Unit, under the able direction of Martha Kellogg, had an interesting and productive year. In spite of the severe cutback in the library materials budget, a number

of projects were developed during the year. Two of the most interesting and productive were the electronic ordering to selected vendors via III, and the acquisitions of "review copies" from Strand Book Store in New York. Electronic ordering streamlines and improves our procedures substantially, resulting in more efficient workflow in the ordering process and a resultant shortening of the time between ordering and receipt. The modifications developed to handle the Strand shipments [both in the 'fast cat' aspects, and the creating of order records after cataloging] were interesting and innovative.

Within the Serials area, we conducted, alas, yet another major cancellation of some current serials [again high priced titles in the ref, and sci-tech areas], reducing our subscription list by about 100 titles [reducing expenditures by about $175,000]. This is a time consuming and disruptive project, which was handled efficiently within the unit. In addition, Serials introduced the electronic invoice load of Ebsco data into III.. Apart from the utility of this project within the fiscal operation of the unit, the development of this project had a major impact on Collection Development. For the first time, the Library could produce accurate and up-to-date reports for subject selectors of titles and expenditures for serials by department [or subject]. In years past, all data such as this had to be pieced together from various [sometimes conflicting] vendor reports of questionable accuracy. Prof. Kellogg has worked expertly and diligently to produce and improve upon these III reports.

In Processing/Binding, we saw a substantial increase in productivity in both numbers of volumes bound [from 6,193 in 94-95, to 6,950 in 95-96] and in volumes mended [from 1,393 in 94-95, to 2,523 in 95-96]. Most other production statistics are up as well. Modifications in processing due to computer produced labeling within the Catalog Unit will reduce some of the time-consuming routines in this area.

4. Catalog Unit Highlights: Prof. Amar Lahiri continues his able leadership of this unit.
In spite of ever decreasing staff, the productivity of the unit continues to increase. Overall statistics are up, new projects have begun, and some projects backlogs have been eliminated. Of the projects completed, the most important one was the barcoding of the Reference Collection which required the restoration of 4,623 titles which had been wiped out in the tapeload, and the correcting of 4,000 titles with access problems in III. Other projects which were completed in 95-96 was the correcting of 70,000 item records in HELIN which had no call number in the item record. These titles where inaccessible to our patrons, but that has been corrected. The backlogs in cataloging of the Cookbook Collection and the Media collection were eliminated. The barcoding project [bib record in HELIN, but no barcode in books] was launched with a significant accomplishment of handling over 47,000 volumes in the first year. Cataloging of The Eichenberg Collection was substantially completed during the year, with some odds and ends remaining for this year [chiefly the processing of added copies].

Progress was made in other areas as well. We can still devote some attention to the reclassification [and retrospective conversion] of our Dewey Collection because new receipts continued to drop. Cataloging of about 9,000 titles will finally complete this project. Professors Johnson and Baer checked parts of our science collections for accuracy of representation in HELIN. Some follow up will be needed in order to actually declare missing those titles that were not located in this project.

New interesting initiates inaugurated by Prof. Lahiri during the year included the 'fast cat' procedure for the review copies [i.e. all volumes received in the Strand shipment are cataloged immediately before all else], and the purchase of the first 'major microfilms' cataloging records from OCLC [1,700 titles in the American Periodicals Series].

5. Other Projects: For the first time in 15 years, the Library has begun to actually declare items missing from our collections and is actively removing the titles from the HELIN OPAC. In late Spring, John Osterhout, the Coordinator of Access Services and Amar Lahiri developed a procedure for the Circulation

Unit to declare items missing and to utilize the create a list function in HELIN to notify the Catalog Unit to remove the records from the OPAC. By year's end over 500 titles had been removed, and the procedure is in place to process this material on a regular and systematic schedule.

With the help of James Barrett and John Osterhout, we created a weekly current awareness list of newly cataloged titles to be placed on the Library's Home Page. Faculty have been requesting such a list for many years, but the labor intensive nature of creating such a service kept us from accomplishing it. By utilizing the III create a list function, along with the marvels of Home Pages we are now able to provide this service in a timely manner. Time will tell if these lists are used with any frequency by the university community.

6. Summary: A summary of the statistics which we regularly keep follows. It is apparent that there is a devastating impact on our acquisitions rate due to the precipitous drop in our library materials budget. Our continuing inability to replace staff who leave, transfer, retire, etc., has also had an impact on our ability to keep our services current. In spite of these factors, new projects have begun, backlogs are in decline [or not growing], and other long term problems have been solved. Obviously, this is the work of a dedicated staff. Their hard work and good will is truly remarkable.

Statistical Summary

	1994-1995	1995-1996
Serials		
Titles added	378	363
Vol. added	9,325	8,629
-checklist	3,132	1,704
-binding	6,193	6,925
Vol. processed	27,756	25,731
Vol. mended	1,393	2,523
Monographs		
ord. searched	4,711	2,557
titles ordered	4,476	1,396
Vol. received	8,364	7,120
-f.o.	3,312	1,731
-s.o.	392	369
-gifts	1,384	1,981
-approvals	3,276	3,039
Cataloging		
Titles cataloged	18,427	21,153
Original cat.	2,614	882
Withdraw	1,550	504
HELIN Corrections	28,259	46,917
added copies	490	636
added volumes	202	546