

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL 2000-2001

VCU LIBRARIES

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VISION

The VCU Libraries is a vibrant community where ideas are generated, engaged, and shared. It is a dynamic center of culture and knowledge, serving as a conduit for recorded information in all its forms.

GOALS

CREATE a renewed sense of vitality and enterprise in the VCU Libraries that is visible throughout the Virginia Commonwealth University community

DESIGN and deliver programs and services that support an information literate population by committing to a service philosophy grounded in teaching, learning, and research.

DELIVER collections and services across the Internet using systems that are integrated, intuitive, and responsive to users, wherever those users are located.

INVIGORATE information services by developing a continuous process of service evaluation, redesign, implementation, and promoting.

DEVELOP a productive, motivated, and skilled workforce who participate in shared decision-making.

DEVELOP a comprehensive facilities plan that recognizes the value of the Library "as place" and that addresses individual campus, user, and staff needs, as well as programs and collections.

CREATE a funding and development program to position the Library as a dynamic social and intellectual force in the University.

Section I: Unit contributions to institutional goals and strategic plans

a. Status of assessment or institutional effectiveness activities

Many of the items identified as assessment and, in particular, institutional effectiveness activities (based on the SCHEV Reports on Institutional Effectiveness requirements) do not apply to the VCU Libraries, which is not yet specifically included in measures of student outcomes, surveys, and the like. The VCU Libraries did submit the following reports and assessments as part of outside assessment, re-accreditation, or maintenance of normal statistical profiles. The full reports are available on request. Elements of these reports are used to generate metrics required by the SCHEV ROIE, including both the SCHEV-mandated system-wide measure #9 ((Percentage of E&G spending on instruction and academic support), and the institutional-specific measure #1 (Association of Research Libraries ranking score for VCU) identified by VCU.

School of Education, School of Engineering, School of Nursing, and School of Pharmacy re-accreditation assessment: As part of the re-accreditation process for Education, Nursing, and Pharmacy, and initial accreditation for Engineering, accreditation teams assessed library resources supporting curriculum and research in the schools. The VCU Libraries reported to accreditation teams the relevant library holdings and services specifically applicable to each school. Each accreditation effort, except Pharmacy accreditation, included site visits to either Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences or to James Branch Cabell Library; the Pharmacy site visit will occur in fiscal 01-02. Each library report provides extensive document on library holdings and development plans for the disciplines represented by the schools. Full reports are available on demand.

AAHSL statistics: Association of Academic Health Science Libraries annual statistical profile, November 2000 (for fiscal 99-00; salary survey for 00-01). These capture library statistics applicable to health sciences libraries, such as budget, personnel, holdings, serial subscriptions, and the like. The Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences maintained a respectable standing in the AAHSL profiles, and remains the largest health sciences library in the Commonwealth.

ASERL statistics: Association of Southeastern Research Libraries annual statistical profile, February 2001 (for fiscal 1999-2000). These capture Association of Research Library (ARL) statistical measures for a group of 35 libraries in the Southeast, both ARL and non-ARL, that are considered research institutions. Metrics include budget, personnel, holdings, serial subscriptions, and the like. These data can directly generate the ARL index ranking for the VCU Libraries, a key measure of library development for VCU.

ACRL statistics: Association of College and Research Libraries annual statistical profile, February 2001 (for fiscal 1999-2000). These capture statistical measures for college and university libraries nationally, including most university libraries which are not members of the Association of Research Library (ARL). The library metrics include budget, personnel, holdings, serial subscriptions, and the like, but in many cases with different definitions of the metric from that of ARL/ASERL. It also includes many additional metrics not gathered by ARL. The VCU Libraries maintained a very respectable standing in all measures used by ACRL.

b. Retention efforts

Contributions of the VCU Libraries towards retention focus on improvements to academic and campus environment. They include

Physical facility upgrades: In fiscal 2000-2001, the VCU Libraries was the second campus facility to install wireless connectivity for users, with antennas and network infrastructure throughout both buildings on both campuses. Its installation is the only campus-wide service available to all university affiliates (the School of Pharmacy installation is used only for Pharmacy affiliates). Design and architecture work for planned renovations to both buildings was completed on schedule and provided for very significant improvements in comfort and convenience for students, including new restrooms, additional computers, and a coffee/refreshments bar in Cabell Library. The renovations redesign specifically targeted provision of 24-hour study space for users. Termination of funding in January 2001 temporarily halted construction. It is hoped that funding will be restored and construction resumed in fiscal 01-02.

Digital outreach: The VCU Libraries expanded its digital Web-based offerings substantially during the fiscal year. The most important offerings for retention goals were: a significantly upgraded MyLibrary service; the You've Got Books! new book alert service; the new My Library Record service which began testing during the year; an completely redesigned Web site; electronic course reserves; and the provision of renewals and other circulation-related services via the Web. In addition, the VCU Libraries

introduced netLibrary in spring 2001, providing over 14,000 book titles via the Web to all students, including the immensely popular complete text of all Cliff Notes. A pilot program to provide interactive Web-based reference help to students via specially-designed conferencing software was also initiated during the fiscal year. These new Web-based initiatives provide resources and direct support to students in dorms, apartments, and indeed around the world, significantly enhancing the Student Computing Initiative effort and enriching student experience of the Web at VCU.

Service redesign: The VCU Libraries reorganized service in both library buildings during the fiscal year to eliminate some service points and provide more one-stop service for users. Redesign also focused on creating new services, particularly Web-based services.

Training and instruction: VCU Libraries faculty were lead teachers for specific modules in the new bioinformatics course offered during academic year 2000-2001. In addition, faculty had prominent roles in orientations, Open House events, graduate student orientations, and information technology instruction, and taught at least 26 off-campus classes for VCU programs along with internal orientation and Internet training classes registering thousands of users.

Coordination and cross-training: the VCU Libraries strengthened coordinated service offerings between the Academic and MCV Campus libraries during 2000-2001. Coordinated offerings provide a full range of services to all VCU affiliates from both library locations, including undergraduate students.

c. Strategic plan and IPA goals

The VCU Libraries operated under a revised Operations Plan for fiscal 2000-2001 (Attachment 1). Assessment of performance against the plan was still underway at the writing of this document. Major accomplishments are summarized in Section II and include most of the Operations Plan goals.

The VCU Libraries' Institutional Performance Agreement contained commitments and initiatives that required funding resources to realize. Nevertheless, some progress was made in each of the activities embraced by the IPA:

Preserve strengths in journal and book collections in order to advance an expanded research enterprise: Because of aggressive negotiating and careful management of resources, the VCU Libraries was not forced to reduce journal subscriptions during the fiscal year. However, a stagnant budget will force subscription cuts beginning in fiscal 01-02, since library materials cost, particularly subscriptions for scientific journals, have experienced a steady increase significant greater than the consumer price index, while the VCU Libraries' materials budget is unchanged. In a major advance for the research community, the VCU Libraries worked jointly with other doctoral institutions in Virginia to negotiate access via the Web to the full text of the entire corpus of Elsevier Scientific journals.

Expand Web-based digital collections and services: New initiatives during the fiscal year included significant new online exhibits from Special Collections, one of which generated significant press attention; the You've Got Books! new book alert services, which also received high-profile press attention from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*; a pilot project to place dental pathology slides online for classes as a permanent library collection; and a pilot project offering Web-based interactive reference services. Although contributing to the IPA goals, all were also included as part of the Operations Plan goals.

Enrollment growth and excellence in undergraduate experience: The VCU Libraries maintained longer hours and expanded security coverage during the fiscal year. A task force charged

to review extended hours developed several recommendations for improved security and longer hours, which will be implemented in upcoming years, beginning in fiscal 01-02, as resources permit.

Distance education: The VCU Libraries provided full library support, including delivery of materials via Federal Express and full support of electronic reserve, to several off-campus programs during the fiscal year, including those in Social Work and Allied Health. The program was designed to track carefully all costs in order to model the expenditures required for anticipated expansion of such programs at VCU. The initial assessment of data at the end of the fiscal year revealed both significant new costs for the VCU Libraries as well as expanding demand for distance education services.

d. Other institutional goals

Goals for the VCU Libraries are articulated in the Operations Plan (Attachment 1). Accomplishment of those goals is described in Section II.

Section II Major Activities of the Unit

Following the framework established by the Operations Plan completed in September 2000 (based on the Strategic Plan completed in May 1999), the VCU Libraries significantly expanded services and collections during fiscal 2000-2001. Implementation of the plan emphasized innovative new digital collections as well as development of new Web-based service initiatives, collectively focused to advance university goals in retention, recruitment, US News & World Report rankings, and expanded research activities. In addition, the VCU Libraries continued to refine its internal management processes, organization, and procedures to realize budget savings and improved services. Structural budget challenges, information systems, staffing profiles, and construction all benefited from focused attention throughout the VCU Libraries.

Internal reorganization and a realignment of budget priorities allowed the VCU Libraries to initiate recruitment for seven professional faculty positions during the fiscal year. Several of these positions had been on hold, unfunded, for as long as three years, including the position of chief budget officer. Recruitment of these positions was expected to conclude in the first half of fiscal 01-02. In addition to recruitment, the VCU Libraries consolidated some units to create more effective service delivery and gain efficiencies in staffing. The new Library Development Officer was established, led by the newly appointed Development and Community Relations Officer, a faculty-level development position. In addition, the library assistant reclassification effort initiated in FY99-00 was completed and implemented during the fiscal year. The new Director of Tompkins-McCaw Library, Jean Shipman, began work on August 1, 2000, following a successful recruitment in the previous fiscal year.

Engagement with the university community expanded with new and renewed appointments to the VCU Libraries Advisory Committee, visits with campus student organizations, and significant roles both in standing university committees and in new high-profile initiatives, such as the Intellectual Property Task Force. The profile of the VCU Libraries was enhanced by faculty activity on and contributions to professional and civic organizations in a variety of influential and highly visible positions. (Ray Bonis; Ronke; others)

A persistent and focused effort to draw the attention of university administration to structural handicaps in the library system's budget began to bear fruit with partial redress of photocopy revenue declines. The university also began a review of FACR funding formulas, critical to the VCU Libraries' ability to support VCU's expanded research enterprise and research ambitions. Small increases in both the Higher Education Equipment Trust Fund and the

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

EXPERIENCED over 22.6 million accesses to the VCU Libraries' site on the Web (www.library.vcu.edu), with 4.3 million separate visits and over 1.3 million visits to the homepage.

ADDED 32,501 titles and 47,810 volumes, bringing the total volumes in the collection to over 1.67 million

EXPENDED nearly \$5 million to enhance the collections

WELCOMED over 1.58 million visitors to the Library

ANSWERED 76,813 reference questions and conducted 656 instructional sessions

LOANED over 207,709 items to the University community

BORROWED 9,860 items through our interlibrary loan program, and provided 10,292 items to other libraries

DELIVERED over 770 documents to faculty and graduate students through the new RaPDS (Rapid Article Delivery Service) and over 1,900 documents through the Loansome Doc service managed by the National Library of Medicine.

EXPANDED offerings of electronic materials by adding over 15,000 electronic books to the collections.

PROVIDED ACCESS to more than 12,000 electronic and print journals as well as over 10,000 other electronic journal titles.

publication. LiveHelp, a new Web-based reference providing access to reference librarians from anywhere on the Internet, made its debut in January 2001. Finally, library administration create a funding strategy and identified funding resources to support acquisition of new

Student Technology Fee allocations helped modernize public access workstations and provide server capacity for new Web-based services. An allocation of \$100,000 from the Life Sciences Initiative to the VCU Libraries was offset by a \$105,000 reduction in FY00-01 budget, so that overall, the permanent E&G budget remained almost unchanged from 99-00. A static budget means that continuing inflation in the cost of scholarly journals and other materials will require ongoing subscription and service reductions. During fiscal 00-01, new subscriptions were only possible through elimination of low-priority journals and savings from contract negotiations for digital materials.

Special focus during the FY00-01 fell on new information system initiatives. First and foremost, the VCU Libraries designed and implemented a new Web presence. The new Web site employs innovative tabbed and menu functionality, and has been widely recognized for the way in which it combines comprehensive access with ease of use. The new site reserves much of its home screen for communicating with users: notification of new acquisitions, alerts regarding services, promotional messages, and the like. In addition, the VCU Libraries implemented its sophisticated new book notification service, "You've Got Books!", in spring 2001. The innovative service name and its ease of use caught the attention of editors at the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, who highlighted the service in the April 2001 digital and the June 2001 print editions of the

integrated library system software to replace the aging NOTIS system, which is no longer being developed by its provider. The acquisition will take place in FY01-02.

Significantly expanded access to journals and books marked advances in collections during FY00-01. The VCU Libraries added Web-based access to the entire catalog of all 1,500 scientific and medical journals provided by leading scientific publisher Elsevier. This achievement was accomplished by working jointly with other doctoral and research institutions in the Commonwealth to negotiate favorable contract arrangements for all the participating institutions. Access to NetLibrary, a set of 14,000 core subject area digital books, also was added to collection through an agreement brokered together with a large number of libraries in the Southeast.

The staff of the VCU Libraries continued their long history of outstanding contributions and high profile in the profession. Ray Bonis, a library practitioner in Cabell Special Collections, was awarded the annual Presidential Award for Community Multicultural Awareness (PACME) for 1999-2000 by President Trani in a special ceremony on April 12, 2001. Mr. Bonis is the first VCU Libraries employee so recognized. The PACME awards "honor individuals who have made significant contributions toward enhancing VCU's commitment to diversity." It is a honored recognition by VCU of very special contributors to the strength of its diverse community, and standards for selection are very stringent. Ibironke Lawal, engineering and science librarian in collection management, was selected in a highly competitive process to participate in the Association of Research Library's Leadership and Career Development Program in FY01-02. The VCU Libraries committed to support fully her work with the Program, which will run throughout FY01-02.