

# ANNUAL REPORT

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FISCAL 2002-2003

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## VCU LIBRARIES

### Vision of the Library

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

### Mission of VCU Libraries

The VCU Libraries supports learning, teaching, research, health care, and public service at Virginia Commonwealth University by:

- Selecting, acquiring, organizing, and preserving information and recorded knowledge in a wide variety of formats;
- facilitating access to materials and information available at Virginia Commonwealth University and elsewhere;
- instructing and assisting users to identify, locate, and use its resources.

VCU Libraries strives for excellence in all of these endeavors, keeping uppermost in mind at all times the importance of the highest quality service to the students, faculty and staff of the university.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2002-2003

## VCU LIBRARIES

### Section I: Executive Summary

Following the framework established by the Operations Plan completed in September 2002 (based on the Strategic Plan completed in May 1999), the VCU Libraries

#### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

EXPERIENCED over 65 million accesses to the VCU Libraries' Web site ([www.library.vcu.edu](http://www.library.vcu.edu)) by 1.4 million visitors and 1.6 million visits to the home page.

ADDED over 40,000 titles and 51,915 volumes, bringing the total volumes in the collection to over 1.6 million.

EXPENDED nearly \$3.9 to enhance collections.

WELCOMED 1,169,528 visitors to the Libraries.

ANSWERED 44,801 reference/information requests.

CONDUCTED 634 instructional sessions and orientations and over 13,800 attendees.

CIRCULATED 170,295 items to the University community and provided over 50,000 electronic reserve accesses.

BORROWED 7484 items through our interlibrary loan program, and provided 27,711 items to other libraries.

DELIVERED over 2,390 documents/items to faculty and graduate students via the Libraries' document delivery services.

EXPANDED offerings of electronic materials by adding over 20,000 electronic books to the collections.

SUPPORTED the University's teaching and research with more than 13,700 electronic and print serials and access to over 14,000 other electronic serial titles.

EXPANDED outreach and development activities for the VCU and Richmond communities at 12 events attended by over 1090 individuals.

concluded an outstandingly productive year in fiscal 2002-2003 in the face of record budget reductions and staffing constraints. The VCU Libraries accomplished major goals that have reshaped the library system at VCU, including dramatic physical renovations of both library facilities; purchase and implementation of a new library management software system; an exemplary budget reduction process in which constituencies played a key role; and transforming success in collaborations across VCU, the Commonwealth, and the Southeast in which the VCU Libraries played a leadership role.

Leading the year's list of accomplishments is the completion of major renovations to both library buildings. Construction began in December 2001 after a year of planning, with the first phase of renovations coming online in September 2002. Phase one renovations included the Java901 café in James Branch Cabell Library, which opened for business on September 9, 2002. An extraordinary success story, Java901 has far exceeded

sales and income goals. In addition, Java901 has become an enormously popular gathering spot for the VCU community. Its design, location, and ease of access facilitates interaction between faculty and students and rivals commercial bookstores and coffee shops with its attractive, comfortable, and stylish space for academic work. Strong sales have rocketed Java901 to 1<sup>st</sup> place among similar operations in the region. Profits are shared between the VCU Libraries and VCU Dining Services, and all Java901 monies for the VCU Libraries are dedicated to purchasing books for undergraduate and graduate curriculum needs. In fiscal 2002-2003, Java901 generated over \$6,000 for acquiring books to expand the collections of the VCU Libraries.

The final phases of construction in both Cabell and Tompkins-McCaw Library were completed in November 2002 and dedicated in grand opening celebrations on November 6 highlighted by speeches from President Trani and Provost McDavis. The new facilities have drawn many very positive comments from students and faculty at both locations. In addition to the main renovations, further work on both buildings continued throughout spring 2003. The sprinkler system installation finally concluded in June 2003, although due to delays in hooking to city water supplies, the system was still not activated at the end of the fiscal year. The eagerly anticipated Skull & Beans coffee café in Tompkins-McCaw Library is slated to open in mid-July, 2003. The same partnership responsible for Java901 will operate this new service, and it anticipates a similarly dramatic success story. In Cabell Library, budget reductions led to the closing of the former periodicals reading room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and the transfer of its collections to the 1st floor. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor spaces subsequently were renovated to serve as a new group study facility, replacing and enlarging group study space previously available on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Cabell.

## **Information Technology**

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Continuing a long-standing history of innovation, FY02-03 brought important advances and enhancements to library information systems used by the VCU community. The changes led off with the year-long implementation of Aleph, the new library management software from Ex Libris Inc. acquired by the VCU Libraries at the end of FY01-02. Affecting nearly every operation and service in the VCU Libraries, and with a purchase price of over \$400,000 spread over three fiscal years, this acquisition represents the largest single investment in information systems infrastructure for the VCU Libraries in 15 years. The implementation effort for the software stands out as an exemplary performance in bringing online such a major capital investment. The project met virtually every milestone, stayed on budget and on schedule, and succeeded in meeting the original changeover date. The outstanding success of staff in meeting very demanding deadlines ensured that this significant capital investment provided maximum value to VCU and the VCU Libraries. By adhering to schedule, the VCU Libraries was able to cancel maintenance on its existing library management software. The cancellation released for other purposes the substantial funds ordinarily required for a more typical change-over process that must operate two systems during a transition period.

The new library management software is the best state-of-the-art technology available. It provides new and powerful systems and tools that will extend the nationally recognized success of information systems development by the VCU Libraries, helping to keep the VCU Libraries at the leading edge of Web-enabled library services. Users have benefited immediately from this contemporary technology through the new catalog searching interface, which provides much more powerful tools for searching VCU Libraries' millions of titles, subscriptions, and documents. Other capabilities will come online throughout FY03-04, including enhanced versions of the nationally acclaimed personalization technologies MyLibrary, You've Got Books, and MyLibrary Record.

In addition to Aleph, the VCU Libraries implemented or extended several new technology-based services. An interactive tour of digital initiatives was made available to the VCU community at <http://www.library.vcu.edu/showcase>. Examples include:

- The ILLIAD interlibrary loan request and management system, brought online in summer 2002, was fully developed as a complete service during the fiscal year. With new processing efficiencies developed through ILLIAD, the VCU Libraries was able to reduce and reallocate staffing for ILL activities, making ILLIAD an important part of the VCU Libraries' response to the dramatic FY02-03 budget reductions.
- Led by the School of Graduate Studies and the VCU Libraries, the Electronic Theses and Dissertations project (ETD) brought support software and services fully online and completed a large pilot offering in FY02-03. About 10% of all theses and dissertations were submitted in digital form during the pilot, a much stronger participation than originally anticipated.
- The leadership of Tompkins-McCaw Library in the use of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) for a wide range of clinical, teaching, and learning activities continues to gain regional and national attention. Use of the PDA Web site for the VCU Medical Center increased 65% and attendance at user group meetings improved. A test of the NIH- developed PDA PubMed with campus PDA users was headed by TML's Head of Education Services in partnership with NIH Librarians. PDA infrared beaming stations providing network connectivity were installed in TML and in Sanger Hall.
- Wireless network capabilities expanded throughout both library buildings, with more access points and increased service bandwidth to access points. Exterior access points were added to the perimeter of Cabell Library, providing connectivity to students in adjacent buildings and in surrounding outdoor areas.

### **Partnerships and collaborations**

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Partnerships and collaborations expanded significantly in FY02-03. The VCU Libraries continued an exceptionally high profile in local, regional, and national collaborations with libraries, information providers, and community services. Such partnerships

leverage the resources of participants for outcomes otherwise unattainable by any individual partner. Examples include:

- VCU Libraries staff led a ground-breaking initiative by the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) to create the nation's first regional Web-based reference help service. Using special software technologies among 10 participating libraries, the ASERL service is able to provide users at participating institutions with 84 hours of service per week while requiring only 8 hours of service from each participant.
- The Virginia Heritage Project, managed by the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA) with a major leadership role by VCU Libraries staff, was recognized by the Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET) with the Outstanding Library Program Award for 2003. The award highlights the project's efforts to make widely available the many priceless documents of American history, literature, and political thought that reside in the unique special collections of Virginia's academic libraries.
- The Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA) continues to benefit from extraordinary contributions by VCU Libraries staff. The Web home for VIVA is maintained by VCU, and VCU staff have led VIVA's extensive efforts to protect and extend its funding during the budget downturn. Because of this work, VIVA experienced only a modest budget reduction, and many Web-based journals and databases provided by VIVA and important for research at VCU were unaffected by budget cuts.
- Cooperative work with other VCU units expanded during the fiscal year. The library staff from each of the independent library operations at VCU – the Linen-Powell Resource Library, School of the Arts Visual Resource Center, Computer-Based Instruction Lab for Computer-Based Instruction, and the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center – were invited to participate in bi-monthly meetings of library faculty in the VCU Libraries. In addition, the VCU Libraries and the School of the Arts concluded an agreement to jointly manage the Visual Resource Center beginning in FY03-04.

A number of cooperative ventures grew from the work of the Community Health Education Center (CHEC), a collaboration of the VCU Health System, the MCV Hospitals Auxiliary, and the VCU Libraries. (Staffing and support is supplied by all three units.) Significant efforts include:

- Women's Health Network (WHN) ([www.vcuhealth.org/whn/](http://www.vcuhealth.org/whn/)): The Women's Health Network (WHN) for Consumer Health Outreach is funded through a National Library of Medicine contract with the VCU Institute for Women's Health. The Institute works collaboratively with VCU Libraries and CHEC, among others, to provide health education to women in ways that meet their cultural and linguistic needs.
- Urban League of Greater Richmond Diabetes Resource Center (<http://www.urbanleaguerichmond.org>): Through funding from the Center for

Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP), CHEC and the VCU Libraries serve as the diabetes library resource center for this program.

- SeniorNavigator Center (<http://www.seniornavigator.com/>): CHEC serves as one of several SeniorNavigator Centers across the Commonwealth. VCU Libraries faculty work closely with National Library of Medicine and SeniorNavigator staff to add local health care information to NLM's MedlinePlus consumer health information database.
- Central Virginia Care Connections Resource Center (<http://www.careconnections.vcu.edu/>): CHEC serves as the information resource center for the Central Virginia Care Connections for Children agency. Sponsored by the Virginia Department of Health, Care Connections is a statewide network of regional programs that provides health care services, community support, and resources to children with special health care needs.
- NLM Associate Fellowship Program Institutional Host (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/about/training/associate/nlmassocrfp.html>): The VCU Libraries will serve as a host institution for an NLM Associate Fellow from September 2003 – August 2004. The NLM Associate Fellowship program is a postgraduate training program for outstanding health sciences librarians early in their career. Second Year Fellows observe and practice at a host institution while sponsored by the Fellows program. Because of the talent and distinguished contributions of past Associate Fellows, competition for institutional residency is intense. The NLM provide salary and other financial support to the Fellow and the host institution.
- Project Export Resource Center (proposal submitted to NIH): CHEC will serve as the information resource center for Project Export if funding is awarded by the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD) to VCU.
- Community Outreach Information Network (COIN) (proposal submitted June 2003): The VCU Libraries, in partnership with with a broad coalition of community agencies include the VCU Health System (VCUHS) Clinical Enterprise Administration and the VCU Massey Cancer Center, has submitted a planning proposal to NIH to develop a Community Outreach Information Network (COIN). This effort will significantly expand access to highest quality health information to low income, underserved, multilingual and minority Virginia community populations in urban and rural areas.

## **Budget reductions**

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FY02-03 will long be remembered for Virginia's financial crisis that resulted in dramatic reductions in State allocations to public colleges universities. Acknowledging the core role of the VCU Libraries in VCU's academic life, the University held library system budget cuts to a smaller percentage than for most units. In addition, the University offset some library cuts in fiscal 02-03 with supplemental funds.

Nonetheless, substantial reductions in personnel, operations, and collections budgets for the library system were unavoidable.

The VCU Libraries responded to these cuts with an open budget reduction process that provided easily accessible budget data to the VCU community and sought input on budget decisions. A Web site detailing background and rationale for decisions was created in December 2002 and continually updated through the spring semester 2003. A series of publicity and outreach efforts (see below) promoted awareness of the Web site and solicited feedback on budget decisions. The VCU Libraries administration developed a strategic plan for implementing reductions and reviewed that plan with the VCU Libraries Advisory Committee (VLAC), its chief faculty advisory group. Specific reduction actions were reviewed at each monthly meeting of VLAC during spring 2003.

Services and staffing experienced significant cutbacks from the budget reductions. The hiring freeze implemented by the VCU Libraries in spring 2002 continued throughout the fiscal year. Normal attrition combined with the freeze raised vacancies to 20% of all staff positions by May 2003. To accommodate these staffing reductions, the VCU Libraries adjusted many services and fees. Among other actions, the VCU Libraries:

- Eliminated the dedicated periodicals service point in Cabell Library.
- Eliminated ILL service points and consolidated resource delivery services to accommodate staff attrition. The Web-based ILLIAD and Loansome Doc services were designated as the sole gateways for all ILL and document delivery requests.
- Reduced staffing and hours at remaining service points, resulting in longer waits at reference desks or longer queues for service at circulation and other service points.
- Reduced hours and services in Cabell Special Collections.
- Implemented new ILL fees: Beginning in January 2003, instituted a \$5.00 interlibrary loan borrowing fee for materials if the supplier of the item assessed charges for loans.
- Implemented increased theses and dissertations binding fees: Fees for processing and binding theses and dissertations were been raised to a level comparable to binding fees charged by peer institutions.

The VCU Libraries focused particular attention on disseminating information about reductions to collections, since these reductions required very significant cuts to scholarly journal subscriptions. In January 2003 an email was sent to the Provost, deans, library committee members, and all departmental liaisons announcing the new budget reduction Web site and summarizing reductions in services and collections to date. This was followed in March 2003 with an email to the same group alerting them to pending book and journal cancellations. On April 7 an email to all VCU faculty

requested feedback on the initial list of titles identified as candidates for cancellation. The list was made available on the budget reduction Web site and included a Web-based feedback mechanism so that faculty could easily comment on specific titles targeted for cancellation. The faculty comment period closed in early May, but the VCU Libraries continued to reply to comments and work with faculty through the end of the month. A final list of over 2,300 candidate title for cancellation was completed in early June. Fortunately, a last-minute infusion of funds from Facilities and Cost Recovery (FACR – research overhead) allowed reconsideration of many research-oriented titles on the list. Because of this funding, the list was undergoing revision at the end of the fiscal year. The revision will emphasize preservation of titles important to highly productive researchers at VCU.

### **Private funding and promotion**

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Development of private funding continued to grow significantly in FY02-03. Annual giving rose more than 50% from FY01-02. The Friends membership roll (and consequently, annual giving) grew significantly, with an average of 35 new members each month. Nonetheless, significant work remains in rebuilding and revitalizing the private giving program for the VCU Libraries. A chief goal for FY03-04 is a broad strengthening of development efforts, with particular emphasis on the upcoming capital campaign.

Cultural programs continued to raise the profile of the VCU Libraries among the donor community in FY02-03. The VCU Libraries' cultural and activities programs reached a new high point in their visibility and attendance. Both the annual Brown-Lyons Lecture and the annual Cabell Lecture attracted their largest-ever audiences, with standing-room-only crowds at the Brown-Lyons Lecture and a record-breaking Cabell Lecture. Especially noteworthy was *Separate But Not Equal*, a special panel discussion program on February 27 developed in recognition of the upcoming 2004 anniversary of the Brown decision by the Supreme Court. The program brought together key players in the Prince Edward County school closings and opposition to Massive Resistance in Virginia. Despite a heavy snowstorm, over 200 people attended and participated in lively discussion with the panelists.

The success of cultural programs contributed to a wide variety of media recognition. The VCU Libraries has enjoyed 23 appearances in mainstream media since 2001, including major stories during FY02-03 in national news media ranging from the Chronicle of Higher Education to Better Homes and Gardens to the Richmond Times-Dispatch. A National Public Radio news feature focusing on the Java901 coffee bar in Cabell Library was developed by NPR correspondents and will air in fall 2003. Media appearances highlighting the VCU Libraries promote awareness of VCU in general and contribute substantively to VCU's reputation for scholarly excellence and a vibrant campus life.

## Faculty activity

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VCU Libraries faculty continued their leadership role in librarianship during FY02-03 through publications, society activity, and outreach activities at a level exceeding that of many much larger research libraries. Since 2001, VCU Libraries faculty have published two books and 34 journal articles, and have developed and delivered 148 presentations at regional, national, and international conferences. Faculty in FY02-03 held a number of elected and appointed positions of leadership in national organizations relevant to the VCU Libraries and research library community, including positions in the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL), Southern Library Network Inc. (SOLINET), Association of American Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL), Medical Library Association (MLA), American Library Association (ALA), and American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIST). Finally, VCU Libraries faculty maintained active teaching and consultation outreach throughout the Southeast and nation. In particular, faculty in preservation and instruction enjoy a national profile and were frequently called upon in FY02-03 to conduct workshops and instruct librarians in the latest techniques for teaching Web-based information resources.

## Section II: Assessment of Outcomes

The VCU Libraries operates each fiscal year under two coordinated plans. The Strategic Plan describes the longer-term vision and framework for initiatives each year. The Operations Plan is a detailed plan containing objectives and tasks supportive of the Strategic Plan.

The Operations Plan details objectives and tasks, and units or persons within the VCU Libraries responsible for them. The entire plan is completed at the beginning of the fiscal year and is not prioritized with respect to funding and assets. Instead, responsible units and persons agree that assigned tasks can be accomplished with funding and assets either in place at the beginning of the fiscal year or explicitly assigned to specific tasks as part of the Plan. Consequently there is a commitment to complete every task in the Plan during the fiscal year. At the end of the fiscal year, the VCU Libraries assesses progress towards each task. Tasks not wholly accomplished may be restated for the new fiscal year. An assessment is made to determine why an unfinished task was not completed; this assessment sometimes results in related findings for individual performance evaluations.

The full Operations Plan for FY02-03 appears in Attachment 1. As of July 31, 2003, the annual performance assessment for the Operations Plan was still underway. A completed assessment document will be available by August 31, 2003.

The existing planning and assessment process has been in place over four years. While it has served the VCU Libraries well, it lacks focus in assessment and performance areas, and over time it has lost some of its original motivational character. Without question, overall productivity and creativity can be improved by a renewed planning framework for commitment of fiscal and human resources. In addition, the unprecedented FY02-03 budget challenges, and the sweeping changes required to meet them, provide an unusual window of opportunity for the revitalization offered by a new planning process.

The VCU Libraries initiated a new strategic planning process in June 2003 that will conclude by December 31, 2003. The planning initiative will create a new mission statement; a vision statement; and a statement of principles or values by which the VCU Libraries operates. After the developing these statements, the VCU Libraries will carry out an accelerated strategic planning methodology. The strategic planning effort will create a new, near-horizon (2-3 year) strategic plan based on the renewed mission-vision-values statements. By the end of the planning cycle, the VCU Libraries will possess a new strategic plan, and will have a powerful mission-vision-values statement that promotes a values-centered and performance-driven enterprise.

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VCU WEAVEonline  
Assessment Summary Report

SUMMARY COMMENTS ON STRENGTHS CONFIRMED THROUGH ASSESSMENT

Major initiative success in the face of unprecedented resource constraints demonstrate a consistently productive and creative staff. Particularly demanding successes: implementing a new library management software system and new interlibrary loan management software; carrying out cuts in scholarly journal subscriptions; completing and bringing online major building renovations; establishing an electronic theses and dissertations option. Efficient operations were made more so during the fiscal year through major reorganizations and introduction of new information systems. Expanded consortial partnerships such as KUDZU for interlibrary loan enriched the library resources available to VCU. Strong education and outreach initiatives were coupled with well-designed assessment of these initiatives. Overall, the VCU Libraries is poised for the most effective possible use of additional funding in the future.

SUMMARY COMMENTS ON ASSESSED AREAS THAT NEED ATTENTION

Service assessment and service quality remain a concern. Budget reductions created a 20% classified staff vacancy rate in FY02-03, leading to reductions at service points and consequent reductions in service hours and quality, particularly services to undergraduates. Service assessment included focus group initiatives, better complaint tracking and response, and stronger quantitative profiling of service activity, but more needs to be done. Focus group initiatives will continue in FY03-04.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS IN RECENT YEARS WITH KEY REASONS FOR CHANGE

Education and outreach: strategic emphasis and managerial commitment to new cultural programs, community health programs, and educational outreach has strengthened both number of offerings and successes. Much improved quantitative assessment of these programs as well as service programs stem from stronger management focus on assessment. Improved private giving directly results from development officer recruited in FY01-02, strengthened in FY02-03 with a publications coordinator. More efficiencies from creative reorganization of staffing and operations. Focus on information systems development for user community has led to impressive gains in personalization technologies and Web-based services.

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**Section III: Objectives and outcomes**

As reported in Section II, the VCU Libraries operates each year under an Operations Plan that details objectives and tasks, and units or persons within the VCU Libraries responsible for them. The full Operations Plan for FY02-03 appears in Attachment 1. As of July 31, 2003, the

complete assessment of performance on the Operations Plan was still underway. A completed assessment document will be available by August 31, 2003.

In addition to the Operations Plan, the VCU Libraries fully participates in the WEAVE process. The WEAVE detailed assessment report for FY02-03 appears in Attachment 2.

#### **Section IV: Special Contributions**

Provost Roderick McDavis invited the VCU Libraries to make a presentation to the Academic Affairs Committee of the VCU Board of Visitors on May 15, 2003. This invitation was a rarely-extended and high-profile opportunity to bring both the accomplishments and the challenges of the VCU Libraries to the Board. The VCU Libraries last provided information on VCU's library system to the Board of Visitors in 1999 in an abbreviated report as part of a larger presentation on information technology. The last substantive report to the Board on the library system was in 1994, so an entire decade had passed since the Board last heard directly from the University Librarian. In the meantime, the rapid growth of Web-based digital collections and services had revolutionized the world of libraries. The new presentation allowed the University Librarian to highlight for the Board the many accomplishments and contributions of the VCU Libraries in creating innovative digital collections and services. In addition, it provided an unprecedented opportunity to describe directly to University leadership the dramatic increases in the costs of research library materials, and the significant challenge of maintaining a research library system in the face of such costs. Most importantly, the presentation outlined for the first time to the Board of Visitors the goal of top-100 standing for the VCU Libraries among academic research libraries. With an understanding of the importance of this goal for VCU, and how VCU might reach it, the Board is now in a position to address resource needs for that goal that might come to their attention. The entire report is attached in Attachment 3.

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VCU WEAVEonline™  
Report on Special Contributions

#### HIGHLIGHTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Response to budget reductions: reorganization of staffing and services to accommodate staff reductions; implementation of inclusive, transparent process for cuts to scholarly journal subscriptions that provided complete information to the VCU community and involved faculty in cancellation decisions. Purchase and implementation of new library management software (with accompanying major re-engineering of all internal operations) as well as new interlibrary loan system and Web enhancements. Stronger education programs, outreach, and collaboration on both campuses. Community partnerships established and grant funding obtained for Community Health Education Center (CHEC). Completing and bringing online major renovations in both libraries. Opening of the enormously successful Java901 coffee service in Cabell Library and Skull&Beans service in Tompkins-McCaw. Implementation of electronic theses and dissertations project in partnership with Graduate School. Significantly greater profile and success in outreach, community programs, and fund-raising.

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#### **Section V: Important Challenges**

The principal challenge for the VCU Libraries remains unchanged from previous years: achieving a funding profile commensurate with a top-75 NSF-rank research institution and comparable to focus peers identified by VCU. With such a funding profile, the VCU Libraries

can provide collections and services appropriate for a major Carnegie Research Extensive university.

There is positive news. Funding did not experience as significant a decline in FY02-03 as originally anticipated. Although the VCU Libraries experienced budget reductions in FY02-03, the University held those cuts to much smaller amounts than for many other units. In addition, a new off-campus student library fee was approved to compensate the library system for delivery of books, journals, and instruction to off-campus programs. Increases in other fees, documented earlier in this report, also will help cover growing costs for interlibrary loan, binding of theses and dissertations, and the like. Finally, a one-time allocation from Facilities and Cost Recovery (FCR – research overhead) in June 2003, largely in response to journal cuts, brought FACR contributions in FY02-03 to a higher total than in any previous year.

Even with these encouraging budget results, funding remains below FY00-01 levels. The VCU Libraries continues to lag far behind both ARL institutions and focus peer institutions in every assessment metric, including staffing size, collections expenditures, physical space for students and collections, and operations budgets. The VCU Libraries' ARL quantitative profile for ARL benchmarks in FY01-02, the latest available data and predating the significant budget reductions of FY02-03, places it substantially below the profiles for libraries having top 100 standing in these measures.

|                              | Volumes   | Volumes added | Current subscriptions | Total staff | Total expenditures |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| VCU LIBRARIES                | 1,509,582 | 73,512        | 13,886                | 126         | 9,544,324          |
| Virginia doctoral (average)* | 2,537,942 | 66,769        | 25,678                | 160         | 15,409,912         |
| Focus peers(average)**       | 2,533,389 | 59,746        | 23,050                | 164         | 15,660,560         |
| All peers (average)          | 3,224,788 | 75,743        | 27,931                | 210         | 19,133,244         |

\*Virginia doctorals: University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, George Mason, William & Mary. Comparable data for Old Dominion not available.

\*\*Focus peers: Identified by VCU's Office of the Provost as University of Alabama-Birmingham, University of Cincinnati, Temple University, and Wayne State University

NOTE: All data provided by ARL and ASERL (Association of Southeastern Research Libraries) statistical reports (ASERL uses the same data as ARL, but includes a somewhat broader set of institutions.) Total expenditures do not include personnel benefits.

Even within Virginia, funding for the VCU Libraries ranks at near the very bottom in terms of percent of institution E&G investment in libraries. According to data from the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia (presented below), VCU is next-to-last in percent of E&G funding for libraries; only Norfolk State invests less.

Virginia institutional expenditures on library resources  
Fiscal 2001-2002

| Institution | %E&G on library system |
|-------------|------------------------|
| CWM         | 8.6%                   |
| UVA         | 7.1%                   |
| CNU         | 7.1%                   |
| JMU         | 7.1%                   |
| LU          | 6.9%                   |
| GMU         | 6.5%                   |
| MWC         | 5.9%                   |
| VSU         | 5.4%                   |
| UVAW        | 5.3%                   |
| VMI         | 5.0%                   |
| RBC         | 4.7%                   |
| RU          | 4.6%                   |
| ODU         | 4.4%                   |
| VT          | 4.1%                   |
| VCU         | 3.6%                   |
| NSU         | 2.6%                   |

Source: "Condition of Higher Education Funding in Virginia", SCHEV, May 21, 2003

These data do not take into account the demands on the VCU Libraries arising from enrollment growth at VCU. Most Web-based library materials are priced according to the number of FTE they serve, so as enrollment increases, so do costs for these materials. These new costs have not been funded in the budget. In addition, the university has not funded an increase in staff for the VCU Libraries since at least 1989. With the large enrollment growth over the subsequent 15 years, this means that the ratio of students to librarians has now declined far below national norms, standards for educational quality, and related benchmarks for staffing. Finally, VCU continues to create new degree programs, including new Ph.D. programs. These programs bring with them requirements for new journal subscriptions and other resources, for which the VCU Libraries is not funded.

These data indicate that VCU faces a significant challenge just to meet basic library needs at existing enrollment levels and academic program activity, even without considering planned growth in enrollment and new academic programs. The recent decline in journal subscriptions – over 4,000 subscriptions have been cancelled since FY99-00 – is the most dramatic indicator of stress. In the absence of a strengthened funding profile, reductions will continue every year at the rate of at least 400-700 journal cancellations per year for the indefinite future. The prospects for meeting minimal service metrics – for example, providing reference services to undergraduates past 8pm – also are dim without a change in the funding profile.

The overall goal of ARL-competitive metrics continues to provide an excellent benchmark by which to assess progress towards achieving a research library system of national standing that VCU requires for its strategic goals. Achieving these metrics will require a focused investment in the base budget for the VCU Libraries by the University. In turn, the VCU Libraries must create

and demonstrate outstanding value from this strengthened investment. In particular, the library system's strengths in digital collections and technologies must become an even greater focus, along with improving the library's visibility as a destination for students and researchers seeking the very best physical setting for academic work.

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VCU WEAVEonline™  
Report on Important Challenges

IMPORTANT CHALLENGES

Two principle challenges: improving the resource base for collections and staffing; assessing and improving services to all users regardless of location. Resource base: According to data from the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University allocated 3.6% of E&G income in library services in FY01-02. This places VCU second to last in percent of E&G expenditures on library services -- only Norfolk State University allocated less of its E&G funds on libraries. VCU stands at a turning point: what kind of library system does it want and need? A viable research library system requires significant enhancement of budgets over the next 5 years, including a higher percentage of E&G and FACR income, among other resources. Assessing and improving services: There is evidence that service quality is inconsistent. In addition, service offerings -- reference librarians, service desk and building hours, implementation of Web-based services, and the like -- are greatly diminished due to staffing reductions. A higher resource base will allow a ratio of expenditures normally found in a research university library system: 45% collections, 55% operations. (In FY02-03, the VCU ratio was 53% collections, 47% operations.) This will provide resources for services, but service assessment must be strengthened and services improved for responsible stewardship of new operations funds, especially for undergraduate services and off-site users.

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| <b>Section VI: Objectives for FY03-04</b> |
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A new strategic planning process (see section II) will create a renewed framework to focusing the activities of VCU Libraries in the 04-06 biennium. Since this plan will not be completed until December 2003, the VCU Libraries also will create a new Operations Plan to guide work for much of FY03-04. That plan will be finished in September 2003 and will be transmitted as a supplement to this report.

Developing new funding resources is a key goal for FY03-04. Chief among these new resources is significant strengthened private funding. The University Librarian and development staff have pledged to increase private giving by 100% over FY02-03 during FY03-04. Strategies to reach that goal include explicit participation in the University's capital campaign, a first for the VCU Libraries; expanded fund-raising events; and aggressive cultivation of major donor prospects. Staffing for development operations has been strengthened to ensure that goals are met. Other funding goals include an increase in Facilities and Cost Recovery (FACR -- research overhead) funding, funding from non-resident tuition income, and funding from tuition increases.