

Virginia Commonwealth University  
University Library Services

# **Annual Report 1996/97**

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

University Library Service lives at the center of Virginia Commonwealth University. The James Branch Cabell Library on the Academic Campus and the Tompkins-McCaw Library on the Medical College of Virginia are bridges uniting a diverse university. The popularity of the libraries and the respect they have earned among the students and faculty are directly related to a focus on superior service and a cultivation of a dedicated staff. The library continues to re-invent itself in a variety of ways, most recently by drafting an exploratory document, "The Library of the Future at Virginia Commonwealth University." Through cooperation with the rest of the university community, University Library Services will continue to acquire and make available the scholarly resources faculty and students will need to work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

— Barbara J. Ford

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## SERVICES

- The Web has taken on increasing importance in the libraries, becoming a gateway to an abundance of electronic resources. The libraries' homepage has become one of the most frequently accessed on campus, with new Web pages in the areas of health sciences, academic disciplines, government information, and special collections. Netscape is now the in-house interface for all library resources, thereby requiring the user to learn only a single interface.
- ULS offers an increasingly large number of electronic resources, including over 1,500 electronic journals, subscriptions to current awareness and indexing services in many subject areas, and expanding collections of full-text materials. Academic departments have been asked to be involved in the evaluation and selection of materials.
- Librarians designed, created, and made accessible to the entire Internet community an electronic, Web-based index to the 1989 to 1997 issues of *Virginia Business*.
- Scarce acquisitions dollars have been leveraged by participation in cooperative state and regional projects, including VIVA and the ASERL Electronic Licensing Program. Some electronic products purchased by ULS were able to be discontinued because they are now being made available through VIVA. Work is proceeding on developing pilot projects for coordinated collection development statewide.
- New ways of requesting information from the libraries were pioneered. A variety of Web forms now makes it easy to ask a reference question, request an interlibrary loan, or reserve a video from one's home or office.
- Services to persons with disabilities were provided through reference consultations and photocopying services and enhanced by the installation of a new adapted workstation for persons with visual impairments in Cabell Library.
- Preparing for the roll-out of the IBM Digital Library, a scanning workstation was installed and the Virginia Black History Archives was expanded. Conversion of the Archives to the Digital Library is currently under way.
- In response to student requests and to make computing services more widely available, Cabell Library was opened an additional twenty hours per week, closing at 2:00 AM most evenings. The

- project was funded through the Provost's Office.
- A number of public education workshops were sponsored. Visitors could learn, among other things, about patents and trademarks and a variety of electronic products now available in the libraries.
  - Catalog records are being enhanced with direct links to electronic resources available via the Internet. An increasing number of government documents are now accessible remotely, and a special effort was begun to provide online catalog records for electronic serials available to VCU.
  - Responding to the challenge set out by the "We Are VCU" campaign, standards were developed for major circulation and reserve services functions, as well as general service guidelines at the TML Service Desk. Reserve processing procedures were also revised, resulting in improved preservation of photocopied materials. TML engaged focus groups to help it devise service improvements and chart the future.
  - New audio/video equipment was acquired to take advantage of capabilities offered by newer electronic technologies. A digital audio tape (DAT) player will provide additional recording/listening facilities for the increasing demand of this growing format. Also, four VCR/TV workstations with closed captioning capabilities have been installed.
  - Part of the acquisitions and cataloging process was outsourced by adopting pre-labeled "shelf-ready" books with computer records. This experiment has been evaluated during the course of the year with numerous adjustments to procedures and workflow. Approximately 12,000 shelf-ready titles have been added to the collection since the project began. In addition, 7,500 MARC records for U.S. government documents were loaded into the catalog in a continuation of an outsourcing project initiated in 1995. Provisional records were created for 13% of the Virginia state documents which previously had not been cataloged.
  - To improve service, the One Card office added a third cash-value station in Cabell Library and began offering free debit cards to loan to students who experience card and/or reader malfunction.
  - Progress was made on the processing of a large collection of art exhibition catalogs transferred from the School of the Arts. Approximately 3,500 items, or roughly half of the backlog, was cataloged for the collection.
  - The groundwork was laid for a major improvement to public printing in the libraries. The growth of full-text databases and Web-based services has lead to an accelerating demand for high quality printing services. ULS has responded by spearheading a task force to outsource public PC printing at VCU. By the summer, students can look forward to using their One Card to print from the library catalog, databases, and the Web. ULS is working collaboratively with the One Card Office and University Computing offices to adopt a campus-wide solution by July 1997.
  - The libraries sponsored five special events this year -- including the 1997 Cabell Lecture, which featured renowned author and VCU alum David Baldacci, and the annual Pastore lecture. An ongoing program of exhibitions helped to entertain and inform visitors to the libraries.
  - ULS agreed to participate in the City of Richmond's Summer Job Program for Youth by hiring inner city youth to work in our libraries.

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## COMPUTING IN THE LIBRARY

- The latest version of NOTIS, the VCU integrated library system, was installed, bringing not only a vastly superior circulation system to enhance staff efficiency, but user access to course reserve records. ULS was a beta site for the upcoming release, which will bring the system into Year 2000 compliance.
- A new, graphical version of Medline operating in a client-server environment was installed, giving users enhanced searching, printing, and save features, as well as a traditional text interface using the Z39.50 protocol. By the end of the year, brief holdings information had been added and a Web interface to this same database was being tested.
- The success of the Medline project was followed with a migration of the PAIS database from the mainframe to a client-server machine, with others being planned.
- With the installation of new public computers at TML, all public workstations have been shifted from the Banyan to the Novell operating system. Staff were shifted off the Banyan mail system to Eudora and Netscape in anticipation of a complete adoption of Novell within the libraries.
- Virtually all NOTIS terminals in the libraries have been replaced with microcomputers, and a number of staff have been upgraded to Pentiums. With some staff having computers for the first time, ULS now boasts some 450 computers under its stewardship.
- ULS also extended its computing capacity on the server side, with a number of new machines installed or brought online. Some of the networked CD drives were replaced with modern, high speed devices.
- Extensive computing infrastructure work was done, primarily within Cabell Library. The router was replaced with a much more robust model and the number of networked devices was expanded. Increasing demands on utilities forced the library to upgrade its power lines. A new server room was built, along with computer repair and storage facilities.
- The Ariel system was upgraded to the current version for improved document delivery and interlibrary lending services. A new patent and trademark computer workstation was also installed for improved research.

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## PEOPLE

- New faculty joined the ranks at ULS: Mike Burgmeier (Head of Media Resource Services), Chengren Hu (Head of Automation Services), Mona Thiss (Information Services Manager, Health Sciences User Services), Barbara Wright (Outreach Services Manager, Health Sciences User Services), Lorraine Sitler (AIDS Resource Librarian, Health Sciences User Services), and Shaw Yu (Systems Librarian).
- A supervisor assessment program for faculty and classified staff supervisors was initiated in a continuing effort to enrich the quality of management.
- ULS invited VCU Human Resources to conduct supervisor training in customer service. ULS is enrolling staff in the university's "We Are VCU" course.
- ULS co-sponsored with campus police a safety awareness workshop for staff of both libraries.
- Staff competency was enhanced through a vigorous program of in-house training on the use of various PC-oriented application software.

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## FACILITIES

- ULS responded quickly to roof leaks in Cabell Library in February. Long-term damage is uncertain, but swift efforts by library staff, campus officials, and a local disaster recovery company mitigated damages. The library took in over 3,000 gallons of water in the early hours of February 28th while the roof was being replaced.
- ULS hired a Facilities Coordinator in January. Efforts are being made to improve the aesthetics in the buildings, as well as their functionality.
- Additional money from the University has been allocated to modest renovations of the first floor of Cabell Library. A ULS task force is working with designers on a number of improvements that will greet returning students in the fall.
- Additional shelving has been added to both libraries to keep pace with expanding collections.

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## BUDGET AND ORGANIZATION

- Working with ULS's largest vendor of library materials, library staff initiated monthly loading of electronic invoice information directly into the acquisitions modules of NOTIS.
- The Business and Personnel office became a satellite center for Information Resources & Media, and is now responsible for fiscal and personnel oversight of Media Production Services, Media Support Services and Instructional Development Center.
- Nearly 100% of requisitioning is being done online as of March 1997.
- The pending privatization of the MCV Hospitals resulted in continuing talks of an appropriate level of reimbursement for library support.
- ULS was a test site for online time entry. ULS personnel staff helped troubleshoot and develop system. All ULS timekeepers were trained in March-May. ULS is fully online with payroll time entry as of June 1, 1997.
- Two new grants (Northern VA AIDS Outreach & Valuation Method Patron Benefit) were awarded this year, two were renewed (AHEC & AIDS) and one was continued (DIAL). A \$20,000 research grant from the Council on Library Resources was awarded to conduct a cost/benefit analysis of reference desk services.
- The Richmond Academic Library Consortium (RALC) privatized the interlibrary loan shuttle service between the nine participating libraries.
- The total number of VCU Friends of the Library (money donors) increased this year to 323, up from 309 last year, and up from 250 donors in 1993/94.
- Fund raising in the libraries is running about \$5,000 ahead of last year at \$38,600.
- ULS closed out E&G budgets within 1/10 of 1 percent of budget, with its acquisitions budget fully expended.
- Classroom support services previously provided at Media Resource Services have been transferred to Media Support Services.

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# GOALS 1997/98

## **Knowledge Resources**

- Aggressively pursue the acquisition of relevant digital materials in all disciplines.
- Develop preservation strategies, including consortia-based planning, which will ensure future access to recorded information.
- Plan for the coordinated expansion and strengthening of ULS's collections by participation in consortia-based relationships including The Virtual Library of Virginia, The Richmond Area Library Cooperative, the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries, the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, and others.
- Redefine librarians' roles based on the challenges and opportunities presented by selecting and servicing networked information resources.
- Develop the libraries' resources as a balanced response to the University's changing information needs.
- Develop budgeting processes which give the libraries sufficient flexibility and adequate support to meet the changing needs and expectations of users.

## **Organization of Knowledge**

- Continue to develop the online library catalog as the preeminent resource for providing access to the collections.
- Integrate retrieval tools into a comprehensive system for exploiting collections.
- Develop consistent user interfaces for disparate databases.
- Increase the scope and depth of objects under bibliographic control.
- Develop technologies for managing digital collections.

## **Service to the University Community**

- Anticipate the information needs of the University community.
- Meet the scholarly information requirements of the University community by providing a range of resources and services which are cohesive, integrated, flexible and responsive to user needs.
- Enable users to become more information-literate and self-sufficient in the knowledge environment of the 21st century.

## **Funding & Development**

- Manage funds so as to support the transition to digital resources while maintaining core traditional collections and meeting the varied and changing information needs of a growing University community.
- Develop strategies to acquire funding to support major new academic initiatives in the institution.
- Leverage finite resources to best support the mission of the University.
- Acquire supplemental funding through campus collaboration, external partnerships, grants, and gifts.

### **Worker of the Future**

- Cultivate a diverse workforce with the skills, knowledge and experience to manage the library of the future.
- Create an environment conducive to learning, creativity and productivity for all employees.
- Ensure a workforce committed and empowered to implement change in response to user needs.

### **Leadership and Organizational Change**

- Create a seamless, coherent organization positioned to identify and deliver relevant resources and services to users in a networked environment which is also coherent and can be navigated with efficiency.
- Establish a workplace where people are at ease collaborating and where the work and knowledge of various groups and individuals overlap to add quality and efficiency.
- Encourage leadership and responsibility for planning and implementing change at all levels.
- Develop broad-based strategies which assist in defining the contexts for decision-making.
- Enhance ULS's working relationships with university divisions, departments, and administrators so that the libraries mission and goals are understood and supported.

### **[goals submitted by units with annual report]**

- Continuing to train staff in customer services, implementing service standards, and use of technology.
- Aggressively develop ULS collections of digital materials in all disciplines.
- Work with VCU administrators and other University bodies to increase the library's materials budget to levels recommended by the State Council for Higher Education.
- Develop criteria for selecting and evaluating electronic resources.
- Implement Year 2000 version of NOTIS
- Provide telephone renewal services to eligible library borrowers.
- Offer GIS mapping service for the VCU faculty, staff, and students to enable library users to create thematic maps from census data.
- Review MRS collections and space to more closely reflect faculty and student needs.
- Review media collections to identify material that would be appropriate for digitalization and providing remote access.
- Complete conversion of Keyfile materials to Digital Library.
- Increase solicitation of Black History Archives materials, using collaborative efforts with Virginia Union University and Virginia State University.
- Continue to enhance access to unique, special collections via the World Wide Web.
- Implement a networked laser printing system for the public.
- Implement Web-based catalog and database search engine.
- Authenticate off-campus users for access to Web databases.
- Continue move to client/server architecture, including transfer of databases from mainframe.
- Complete LAN migration from Banyan Vines to Novell Netware.
- Implement on-line ordering from major book vendors.
- Enhance staff and public computing environment through workstation upgrades.
- Migrate to OCLC's Passport for Windows and incorporate improved editing capabilities and ability to export directly from desktops into catalogers' workstations.
- Assess outsourcing approval books and revise workflow, as appropriate.
- Streamline binding systems for improved productivity.
- Expand catalog access to materials that are accessible electronically.
- Review cataloging priorities to identify specific cataloging and catalog maintenance projects that are most essential and that can be managed with a reduced staff.
- Begin a retrospective conversion project to load bibliographic records for pre-1994 federal documents into NOTIS.
- Issue an RFP and award a contract for an outside vendor to perform authority work on an ongoing basis
- Plan for centennial of TML.
- Enhance access to information resources through targeted outreach to University programs and departments, publicity, and expanding ULS Web guides to resources.
- Increase the total amount of funds raised and the number of individuals who join the VCU Friends of the Library.