

STANDARD VII: LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

The mission of The University of Vermont Libraries is to further the creation, application, and dissemination of knowledge by providing access to information resources and education in their use. The Libraries are a vital component of the University's commitment to excellence in instruction, innovation in research and scholarship, and dedication in public service. They are a unique resource for the state of Vermont and its people.

Four libraries provide services to UVM students, staff, and faculty. First, the Bailey/Howe Library collects in all disciplines except chemistry, medicine, and physics. Bailey/Howe also houses the Curriculum Materials Center, Government Documents & Maps, Media Resources, and Special Collections. The others are located in separate facilities: the Dana Medical Library at the Given Medical Building, the Chemistry and Physics Library in the Cook Physical Sciences Building, and the Library Research Annex in a building off East Avenue. The Annex houses older materials as well as the University Archives.

All holdings are indexed in LUIS, the Libraries' online catalog, which will be upgraded to a new system in May 1999. SAGE, the Libraries' Information Gateway, provides access to online scholarly resources maintained on-site and delivered from across the Internet.

The UVM Libraries are central to the quality of educational programs at the undergraduate and graduate level, and to the support of faculty research and scholarship. Together, the four library facilities house over 1,500,000 volumes. During a typical week in the fall semester, library faculty and staff provide an array of educational services to approximately 31,000 users physically entering the Libraries. These visitors, primarily students, consult over 20,000 items within the Libraries and check out over 7,000 items for use outside the Libraries. Students, faculty, and staff can also access over 150 databases through the UVM SAGE online gateway. LUIS, the online catalog, and SAGE are consulted roughly 15,000 times a week. Library faculty and staff provide extensive instructional programs to help patrons use printed and online information effectively, teaching research skills within a formal classroom setting, through individual sessions, and remotely to distance education students around the state. During FY98, in Bailey/Howe Library alone, 300 classes (nearly 6,000 students, faculty and staff) received instruction in the use of information resources.

As the UVM Libraries approach the beginning of the twenty-first century, they are in a period of significant transition. Changes in higher education, information technology, teaching methods, learning styles, community needs and the international information environment all impact the ways in which library and information services are planned, perceived, and delivered. The challenge of providing a full range of services in two settings, one with traditional print-based collections and another taking full advantage of digitized information resources, has fully extended the Libraries' capacity for innovation and change. The creative tension between vision and current reality holds true meaning on a daily basis for all those engaged in providing library and information services on this campus. During this period of transformation, the work of the UVM Libraries is characterized by:

- An increasing emphasis on networked access to information resources, within the broader context of the emerging virtual library
- An expanding role for library faculty and staff in teaching users how to identify, select, evaluate, retrieve, and interpret information resources relevant to their needs
- An enhanced capacity for the library to create, organize, and disseminate select sets of electronic information (e.g., gateways to Internet resources)
- A renewed focus on development of core collections, print and electronic, to support university curricular programs and research needs within the constraints of publication proliferation and price inflation
- A growing responsibility, in alliance with Computing & Information Technology, to provide a network infrastructure to support academic programs
- A central role in transforming and supporting classrooms to best utilize new teaching and information technologies
- A continuing reassessment of services which may be strengthened or diminished according to changing user needs, or streamlined or consolidated to improve organizational productivity
- A flexible library faculty and staff, continually developing new skills.

The development of a shared vision for the UVM Libraries in this changing information landscape is an ongoing challenge. Experimentation with new modes of information delivery has yielded important tools such as SAGE, which are central features of UVM's information environment for students, faculty, and staff. Library instruction has expanded to encompass not only information retrieval and evaluation skills but also full-scale informatics capabilities. Classroom support includes collaborative efforts with faculty to promote technology-based teaching and learning activities. At the same time, the demand for traditional library collections and programs has increased, creating pressure on staff, facilities, and resources.

Continuing communication with users, assessment of effectiveness, and examination of priorities are necessary in order for the Libraries to respond to the changing needs of the university community and provide leadership in the new learning environment. In 1994, the Libraries Needs Assessment Task Force was established to gather information systematically on user needs, utilizing major annual surveys, focus groups, and examination of areas receiving less than positive ratings. Findings from these assessments are used to revise programs and set priorities. The University Libraries Advisory Committee, made up of faculty, students, and staff, also provides important feedback for library planning.

Currently, the Libraries keep periodic track of library use and patron satisfaction through the Needs Assessment Surveys, now completing their fifth benchmark year. These surveys indicate that 58.2 percent of UVM's first year students make regular use of the Bailey/Howe Library. 84 percent of teaching faculty completing a 1996 survey require their students to make use of UVM's library system; 94.7 percent believe the present level of library instruction meets student needs. Although faculty are encouraged to make use of library instruction programs, 57.7 percent of teaching faculty are not requesting library instruction classes for their students. There is a continuing commitment to focus on how best to provide informational services to library users, continually and successfully identifying ways to exceed student and faculty expectations, networking information sources to assure maximum use both on and off campus.

Library Resources

Librarians at The University of Vermont have faculty status (non-tenure-track) with multi-year appointments varying according to rank. They comprise one of the four academic faculties, the others being teaching faculty, research faculty, and extension faculty. They are governed by rules and promotion guidelines outlined in section 600 of the UVM *Officers' Handbook*. The library faculty is currently comprised of twenty-one members in the Bailey/Howe Library, eight members in the Dana Medical Library, and three members in Library Administration. Many library faculty also hold secondary faculty appointments in academic departments. 78 support staff are part of the University's classified staff system. Student assistants comprise an important part of the workforce, totaling 58 full-time equivalent positions.

The following table summarizes expenditures for the UVM Libraries for FY97, FY98, and as budgeted for FY99. High inflation in serials prices continues to be a major force in budget for library acquisitions, affecting particularly high-cost titles in science, technology and medicine. In FY98, serials prices rose an average of 8.5 percent. In addition, as UVM Libraries expand electronic access to information, and as other services become available through the Internet, more of the acquisitions budget is being used to provide these new services to the UVM community.

The University of Vermont is at a critical juncture in the development of campus resources: that of planning a major library expansion. The changing demands on the University now require a library that combines the strengths of traditional functions with new roles in teaching, learning, and technology. To reflect this shifting paradigm, a new vision for a wing of the Bailey/Howe Library is being developed as a center for teaching and learning, as a campus focal point for information technology, and as a place supporting people, their interaction, and their inquiry. Planning includes flexibility to provide for ongoing responsiveness to a changing environment, as well as an enhanced role in the learning community. A commitment to the ubiquitous delivery of information regardless of format or medium, to collaboration in the support of students and faculty engaged in academic endeavors, and to the encouragement of intellectual interaction for all members of the university community is guiding the development effort. Plans for the Health Sciences Education Building include similar considerations for a new medical library. The realization of these new libraries will require substantial investment in technology and facilities, the redefinition of library faculty and staff roles, and the assignment of new human resources to support the transformed enterprise.

Campus Network

The University of Vermont maintains a sophisticated electronic infrastructure using modern, mainstream information technology for voice, video, and data communications. This production infrastructure is continuously being extended and advanced while emerging technologies are explored and evaluated. The campus network, which is based upon a switched FDDI 100 megabit backbone with 10baseT Ethernet using mostly telephone twisted pair to the workstations, reaches every building, office, and residence hall room on campus.

Ethernet connections are provided for all residence hall rooms, most of which most have a connection per resident. As of the fall of 1998, the project to wire "a port per pillow" has been completed. Although the network is based primarily upon TCP/IP, other protocols such as Appletalk and Novell IPX are also currently supported throughout the network. The primary uses of the data network include Web applications, electronic mail, host and print/file server access, newsgroups, and file transfer. A cable network that presently reaches most academic buildings and residence halls is being upgraded this year to include connections to each residence hall room. Virtually all students, faculty, and staff employ network facilities on a daily basis for instruction, research, communications, business transactions, and special applications, such as visualization and geographic information systems.

Through a partnership with a Vermont service provider, all UVM affiliates are able to connect to the campus network via PPP dial-up for a modest monthly fee. Although a few off-campus sites have direct connections to the campus network, most must rely upon dial-up connections. UVM's Internet II application is under review.

Computing

Computing & Information Technology supports two major computer facilities available to all students and faculty. These two areas, in the Waterman building and the Bailey/Howe Library, include two teaching rooms, an experimental advanced resource facility, and two large open public areas. These facilities include approximately 240 contemporary Pentiums, Macs, X-windows stations, high-end multimedia equipment, scanners, OCR equipment, and laser printers; they are generally available with trained staff 95 hours per week. In addition, most colleges and schools support dedicated computer facilities for their students; those with highly developed centers include the College of Engineering and Mathematics, the School of Business Administration, and the School of Natural Resources.

A single-system-image cluster of powerful Unix computers makes e-mail and Web-site facilities available to all students, faculty and staff. This system also provides a research computing resource, including software for statistical, mathematical, and genetics analysis, geographic information systems, and a variety of programming environments. Other host processors provide for the University's operational needs, such as library automation, online registration and student records, admissions, financial aid, financial records and human resource systems.