From the University Librarian: 
A Five Year Perspective  
by Gwen Arthur, University Librarian

In anticipation of the University’s accreditation review come Fall 2005, I am in the process of preparing the Library section of the NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) self-study. Looking back over the past five years (almost six!) since I arrived here, I can see where we have made progress and where we still have challenges ahead of us. I’d like to take this opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

Communication: The Libraries have made a point of listening to users in a number of venues previously not pursued. In 2001, the University Librarian conducted the Libraries’ first major user survey of both faculty and students in order to better understand their service and collections needs. I have also worked more closely over the past few years with undergraduate student council presidents and representatives in an effort to make sure that the concerns of the students are heard. In particular, I thank Matt Olsen, Adam Freudberg, Mike Agnelli, Mike Staton, and Rose Sokol (from the Grad School) for their interest in library issues over the past few years.

Facilities: The Libraries have already made some much-needed progress in their facilities since 1999. The Prouty Seminar Room was renovated in 1999 and has proved to be a popular group study space for students. Part of the second floor Reference area in Goddard was converted to a computerized instruction room in 2001 and has been heavily used in new library instruction programs. In 2004, the 3rd floor student lounge was renovated with a gift (in memorium, Ronald Olsen, Jr.) from the ‘04 graduating class. Last but certainly not least, in Fall 2004 the first floor Goddard Library Gallery Space was reclaimed as a 24/7 study room for our students who wanted a late night study area—and with its new furniture, vending machines, and wireless connectivity, it has turned out to be a popular study space at all hours.

Nonetheless, campus consensus is that the Goddard Library is very much in need of a renovation—and perhaps even an expansion. The Provost has recently chaired a task force which is exploring these options for Goddard, and Perry Dean Rogers, an architectural firm specializing in library buildings, has been retained to explore options for renovating the Library. The vision for the renovated Goddard Library is one of an “intellectual commons” for our users: a campus learning and research center ancillary to classrooms. New spaces for group and individual study, expanded shelving, a new HVAC system and other infrastructure improvements are all included in the renovation’s priorities.

Collections: At the same time that we know that monographic acquisitions need to be increased (students have told us so), Goddard Library has steadily decreasing shelf space on which to put them. So, the University and Libraries are addressing shelving constraints via a number of approaches including planning for a renovation with increased basement shelving space; a new, ongoing de-selection program; additional security for older materials; and an aggressive move to electronic format and delivery options, particularly for serials. Space issues, e-formats, preservation, collections assessment, de-selection and other issues have become paramount for us during these past few years and will continue to be so.

Technology: Over the past five years, all major databases previously on CD-ROMs have become web-based providing 24/7 access to these online resources to students, faculty, and staff, both on campus and off. The Libraries have expanded database offerings to users, now providing a sizable variety of both aggregated and publisher full-text offerings. The most notable of these additions are the SciFinder Scholar from Chemical Abstracts, MathSciNet, the American Psychological Association’s PsycArticles, Oxford University Press journals, and expanded JSTOR online collections. We also now have wireless connectivity throughout the entire Goddard Library, and a laptop loaner program for students who want to do computer work on any floor in the building.

Instruction: With all these new online products, we have also spent additional time helping users with this complex hybrid (print and online) environment. Since 1999, we have seen steadily increasing numbers in both group instruction sessions and individual reference consultations service. We’ve added a full-time instruction/reference librarian to our staff, and she and other reference librarians have done considerable outreach with both

continued on back page
A View from the Reference Desk
by Mary Hartman, Associate Librarian of Public Services

It’s spring and the view from the window wall opposite the Reference Desk is of a Campus Green that is green again – finally! And beginning to be covered with blankets, students, frisbees and lacrosse sticks. Any spring, any year.

Inside the Library, the end of the semester is looming, the anxiety level among the students is rising, there is a note of panic in some of the questions and the building is buzzing with users. Any spring, any year.

Except, there are computers everywhere – upstairs, downstairs, work stations, laptops, wired, wireless, theirs, ours. Nearly everyone – students and staff are focused on a screen and/or rapidly keyboarding. Printers spit out articles, papers, assignments.

Students are doing what they have done for years and librarians are doing what we have done for longer than many of us want to admit. But the how has changed. All of us turn first to the machine and the electronic now. For the students who have used computers all their lives, it’s natural. For librarians, it’s been an evolution rather than a revolution - much less messy and much less noisy. We are certainly living in a hybrid world of print and electronic sources that complement and augment each other.

There is no doubt that students (and faculty and staff) have access to more information than ever before and everyone must evaluate this information carefully. Information now goes to the students rather than students having to go to the information. There are undoubtedly changes in store for all of us that we can only begin to imagine with all kinds of implications and ramifications. But in many ways, any spring, any year.

Library Patrons Abuzz over new Full-Text Options
by Ed McDermott, Systems Librarian

This past year Clark scholars saw a significant increase in the online availability of scholarly literature. Last summer the libraries began a subscription to two more JSTOR collections: JSTOR Arts and Humanities Collections III and IV. JSTOR III strengthens the electronic full-text humanities collection, especially in music, art, and literature with titles such as 19th Century Music, American Music, The Art Bulletin, Art Journal, and PMLA. The JSTOR IV collection brings a social sciences slant. Subject areas like management, law, and education are well represented by titles like The Academy of Management Journal, The American Journal of Comparative Law, and the American Journal of Education. Both of these collections will contain more than 100 titles apiece by the end of 2006.

For a number of years, Clark has subscribed to the Johns Hopkins University Press subset of Project Muse. This past January we began a subscription to the Full Collection of Project Muse which adds almost 200 more titles to our collection. These scholarly journals are from over 40 publishers and will bring electronic access to valuable resources in the fields of literature, history, the visual and performing arts, and political science to name just a few. Sample titles include: Early American Literature, American Literary History, American Jewish History, Cinema Journal, Film and History, Journal of Democracy, and World Politics.

All these new resources are linked through our link resolver Clink to provide easy access to the full-text from any of our databases.

Adventures in Teaching
by Rachael Shea, Bibliographic Instruction Librarian

Sitting around on the couches by the circulation desk is a group of students that have come to the library for a class. I join them to listen as they talk and then I introduce myself and ask for them to explain their assignment. Through this interaction, I can tell if their understanding matches mine, since I have already begun my research (armed in advance with the syllabus).

As we wait for the last few stragglers, I like to begin with a story. These stories help to relax the students but its hidden charm, however, is to open up their creative side. This ancient tool for communicating complex issues reminds their brains that there is more than one way to view an issue. When we are before the computers, and beginning our research, I expect the students to apply this same concept to access creative and thoughtful search strategies and to do the sample searches with me. I have always used the student’s assignment and topics while doing this. My new approach maintains the focus on the student’s topics but now I allow the students to begin the process. “Where would I find a good scholarly book on how alcohol was viewed in 19th century America? What terms might I use? What works? What doesn’t work?” Then I might make suggestions of other terms which would give different results.

Information has a social life; it has a structure. My goal is to get the students to recognize this and become independently information literate. This does not happen all at once. All students have some very solid understanding of aspects of research as well as gaps. I ferret out the gaps, and I fill in the empty spaces. Nowadays I ask them first to tell me where things are. If they can’t do it, then they know they need to learn.
Changes in the Carlson Science Library
by Guiyun Wang, Science Librarian

Carlson Science Library, which is one of the branch libraries of Goddard Library, is located on the 3rd floor (top floor) of the Sackler Sciences Center and primarily serves the faculty, staff members and students in the Departments of Chemistry, Physics, and Biology. Due to the escalation of scientific journal costs, library budget cuts, and more demand for research databases and other digital access, we have been seeking more creative, cost-effective ways to stretch our dollars to ensure that the core content for our science faculty and students can be sustained and delivered. Listed below are significant changes that have recently taken place in the Library.

* Successful implementation of the SciFinder Scholar graphical software on Clark campus. SciFinderScholar, which contains mostly literature relevant to chemistry, has turned out to be one of the most popular databases that meets the extensive research and information needs of our scientists.

* Purchase of the IoP (Institute of Physics) Historical Archive which provides permanent access to the entire collection of all IoP journals (not just to our current subscribed titles) from 1874 to 1993. The archive is entirely online, searchable, and downloadable.

* Subscription to the BioMed Central to support the open access model in the scholarly community.

* Successful implementation of a more cost-effective pay-per-view (PPV) access mechanism to meet our scientists’ time-sensitive information needs. This was intended to compensate for the loss of accessibility to a selected number of high-cost/low-use science journals that were canceled in 2004.


* Science Library instruction sessions have significantly increased as a result of collaboration between the Science Librarian and the science faculty. These instructions range from general library orientations to class sessions designed for specific courses and assignments.
students and faculty. Since 2001 we’ve had a dedicated space in Goddard in which we provide hands-on searching experience—in an instructional setting—on computerized bibliographic and full-text databases.

What Lies Ahead?

Without a doubt, in the next five years we will continue to acquire an increasing number of electronic journals and books. While it is essential that we build our electronic resources and access, it is also important that our print acquisitions have space on our shelves. So, in addition to planning more shelf space, we also will be reviewing our print collections in order to de-select older, out-of-date, or physically damaged materials. This review will be labor-intensive and will involve extensive collaboration between the librarians and faculty. We want to assure that the materials which represent Clark’s legacy collections—older print resources that are rare or unique or represent the history of research and teaching in Clark’s key disciplinary areas—remain both safe and accessible to researchers.

Congratulation
to the
Class of 2005!

The Library staff wishes you all the best with your future endeavors.

Reminder: Friends of the Library memberships paid through the University Clark Fund must indicate that the gift goes to the Friends by writing "The Friends of the Library" on the gift card or envelope.

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