

**Report of
CSB/SJU Library Task Force
February 12, 2004**

Executive Summary

The College of St. Benedict and St. John's University are fortunate to have strong libraries staffed by talented people. At the same time, this level of quality is threatened by external forces and internal challenges.

From off campus comes the rapidly rising cost of materials, particularly serials. The adoption of electronic technologies has reduced costs in some ways, but nearly all anticipated savings have already taken place. The electronic future in American college libraries will cost more, not less. In addition, national college library trends indicate a growing recognition that changes in student learning patterns require that each college library today should also be a "learning commons," something that will require physical changes in both our library buildings.

Internally, the Libraries have been seriously constrained by budgets that have fallen farther and farther behind the cost of maintaining an appropriate collection. In addition, much needed changes in physical space have been studied but not yet addressed in reality. Physical space is a truly pressing need, particularly at Alcuin library, but both libraries are in need of reconfiguration to house the collection and meet the learning needs of students.

Staffing issues and relations with Information Technology Services require ongoing attention, but current procedures and plans in place are well designed to meet needs as they arise.

The members of the Task Force want to convey a sense of real urgency. Nearly all the issues described below have been identified repeatedly by library staff or special committees over the past fifteen years, and several times in the past four. There are few new findings here. The problems we face were predicted years ago. What appears here is a confirmation of what has already been presented to the administration. Decision and action, not further study, is needed.

The situation is described in the full report, but we include here the recommendations of the Task Force.

Collection Development Recommendations

Budget Increases

- We strongly recommend that the two institutions formally adopt and implement a policy that annually increases the materials budget (for both books and serials) to compensate for the rising costs of materials. For next year, this recommendation implies a minimum of \$30,000-\$50,000 additional funding. Ideally, to completely offset inflation, between \$50,000 and \$60,000 would be added each year. Failing to do so not only undercuts Presidential plans for improving our stature nationally but also threatens the stature we currently enjoy.

Serials

- If the additional funds requested to offset inflation are not forthcoming, or are not possible at the level needed, then we reluctantly recommend that the Libraries request departments to review their serials, and attempt to identify the reductions needed to maintain the appropriate balance between the book and serials collections. Because of the nature of the materials used in different disciplines, the percentage cuts will differ among the various departments.
- As we shift to electronic access, we should, whenever possible, maintain the guarantee of continued access to back copies. We recommend that paper copies of back issues now available electronically not be destroyed, but stored off-site.
- Review departmental acquisition allocations in light of curriculum development in the colleges. Faculty judgments here are critical in shaping library policy. This could be done either at the divisional level or by working with all of the departmental bibliographers.
- We recommend a survey of faculty, students, and library staff on a number of issues affecting serials. See Appendix A for details.

Books

- Preserve the importance of the traditional book to maintain browsing as a search option for the benefit of both faculty and students.
- Consult each department concerning a desired ratio of serials to books. Assist departments in assessing their options.
- Continue “weeding” of books with caution, and in close collaboration with the departments.

- Address immediate space problems related to the size of the collection by installing of high-density shelving.
- If necessary, as a last resort, continue to explore off-site storage of some volumes, again with the collaboration of the departments.

Bibliographers

- Assess the effectiveness of the current system of departmental bibliographers, surveying faculty and providing training in collection development for the bibliographers as appropriate.

Surveys

- The Libraries, with help from someone trained and experienced in survey design, should conduct surveys to address three separate groups – faculty, students, and library staff – in order to investigate a number of issues related to collection development identified above.

Staffing Recommendations:

- The Libraries should continue to review the skills that the staff currently has and identify any new skills needed.
- All job descriptions should be reviewed annually, and when there is an opening on the staff, careful thought should be given to the replacement position should and what skills are needed.

Library/IT Recommendations:

- The relationship between Libraries and IT Services should become more formal, as recommended above. (The anticipated retirement of the Director of the Libraries makes this step even more appropriate.) At the same time, this relationship has worked very well and there seems to be no need to make any significant changes.
- The Libraries and IT Services should continue planning for increased cooperation concerning faculty course software, digitization, and computer access within Alcuin library.

Space Recommendations:

- More space needs to be constructed at Alcuin, both for materials storage and collaborative student learning.
- Because such new space cannot be available as soon as needed, the administration should decide which of the two short-term alternatives for Alcuin cited in the report should be implemented.

- A Building Committee should be set up for Alcuin to work with architects on specific plans. The committee should build on the existing documents.
- A Building Committee should be set up for Clemens to make recommendations regarding reconfigurations of space for the various purposes identified here, and, for the possible need for addition space in the future.
- We recommend that the back runs of the periodical collections should be consolidated and that those periodicals for which the Libraries have permanent electronic access should be stored off-site at the Minnesota Access Center.
- One-quarter of the area in the current stack space at Clemens should be converted to high density storage.
- Priority should be given to handicapped access at both facilities and to bathroom access in Alcuin.

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Introduction

The CSB/SJU Library Task Force received its charge from Provost Henry Smorynski and held its first meeting in early October, 2003. The group met as a whole and in committees to assess current conditions and needs of our libraries in light of national trends.

This discussion has been enriched by reading a number of reports, some produced locally, others elsewhere: the *Alcuin Library Building Program* (August 1991), *Proposal for an Addition to Alcuin Library* (April, 2000), *Report to Dietrich Reinhart, O.S.B., President, St. John's University* (February 2002), *Library: Its Services and Resources* (March 2002), *Library Services and Resources* (March 2003), *Library Buildings and the Building of a Collaborative Research Collection at the Tri-College Library Consortium* (April 2003), and *Libraries Designed for Learning* (November 2003), among others. In addition, the Task Force relied on extensive financial data for our libraries and comparative data from other liberal arts colleges.

This report is a consensus document that all agree with. It should be noted at the start that the members of the Task Force want to convey a sense of real urgency; nearly all the issues described below have been identified repeatedly by library staff or special committees over the past fifteen years, and particularly in the past three. There are few new findings. The problems we face were predicted years ago. What appears here is a confirmation of what has already been presented to the administration. Decision and action, not further study, is needed.

I. Collection Development

The heart of any library is its collection of books, serials, media acquisitions, and other materials. Finding resources to develop the collection and deciding how best to do so has never been easy within the constraints of time and money available at liberal arts colleges. Unfortunately, the situation has worsened considerably in recent years. The information presented in this report is not new; it has been examined in more detail in earlier reports that can be found as Appendices to this report. The reader should see, in particular, *Library: Its Services and Resources in 2002*, which appears as Appendix B, and *Library Services and Resources, March 2003*, Appendix C.

Overview of library materials budget

For fiscal year 2004 [FY04], the budget for new materials is roughly \$990,000. This figure includes books, serials, media, scores, recordings, etc. In 2003, 41% percent of this budget was devoted to books. Forty-eight percent went for serials, a category comprising periodicals (including electronic data bases), annuals, and items published at irregular intervals. Fifteen percent covered the cost of media and other acquisitions.

This \$990,000 budget is broken down roughly as follows:

- \$880,000 allocated to the undergraduate collection (split evenly between CSB and SJU).
- \$85,000 allocated specifically for the SJU School of Theology (100% paid by the School of Theology).
- \$25,000 from grants and other “off-budget” resources, currently including funds from the Abby Grant for Benedictina, the Korbelt Grant, Arca Artium, and the Phillips Grant. The total varies considerably from year to year, sometimes as high as \$150,000 in one year. The \$25,000 figure is a conservative estimate for the current year.

Although the library certainly does not want to turn away any such “soft” funds, contingency plans should be developed in case this additional funding decreases. Reductions in this funding would have a significant impact on some areas of the collection, most importantly affecting art, literature, and theology

The projected increase for the materials budget next year (tentatively set at \$30,000) will not offset the rise in costs, which would require between \$50,000 and \$60,000. The inflation rate for books is low; that for periodicals is not. The implications are alarming: We must either underwrite significantly larger budgets, or make substantial reductions in what we spend on books, periodicals, or both. There are no other options. There is currently no plan for increases after the next fiscal year.

The complexity of these budget issues has increased significantly with the advent of the many forms of electronic access now available, especially for periodicals. The uncertainty experienced in academic libraries across the country reflects the difficulty of deciding on an appropriate collections policy when the broader context for any one library’s collection is so hard to predict. To examine these issues, it is helpful to treat each of the relevant issues separately.

Serials

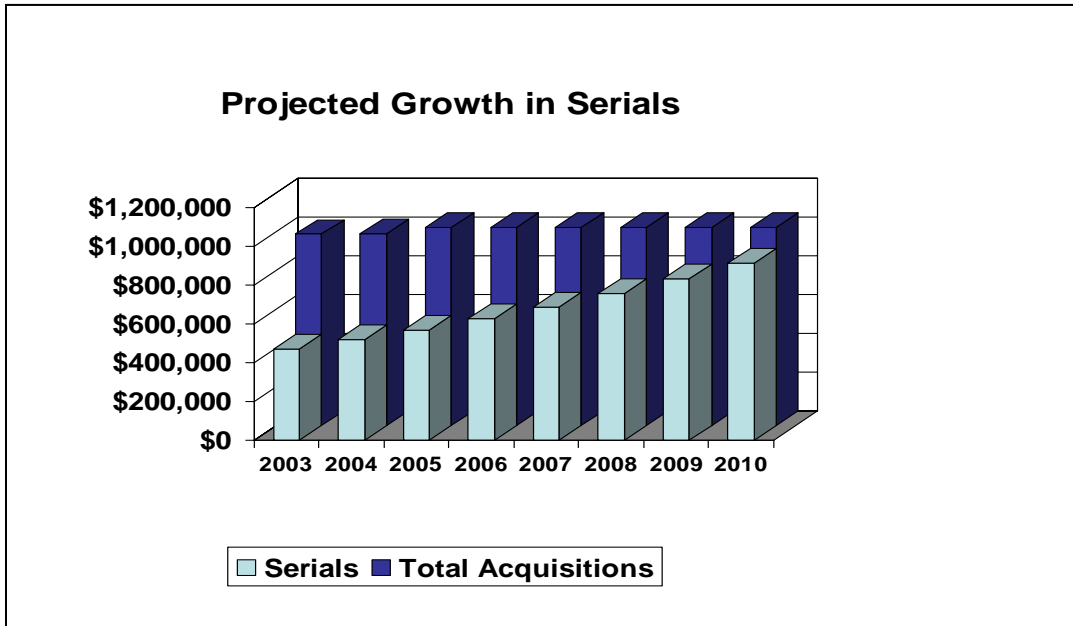
The dominant issues affecting serials are the strong trend towards electronic publication and the growing cost of periodicals. In recent years, the average annual inflation rate for books has been less than 3%; for serials it ranges from 10 - 13%.* As already noted, in dollars this inflationary increase amounts to a rise in the overall cost of periodicals of between \$50-60,000 per year, within a budget for the acquisition of all materials of approximately \$1,000,000.

As indicated, currently 48% of the materials budget goes to serials. If the overall materials budget is not increased, future cost increases in periodicals can come only at the expense of the book budget. For a number of years now, academic departments have been urged to re-evaluate their periodical subscriptions and have been told that any increases in the cost of their departmentally-related periodicals will be deducted from the financial resources available to that same department for book purchases. As a result of this shift of resources toward periodicals, at least one department this year has a zero dollar book budget and others will be in this situation soon.

At the current rate, if these trends continue, by 2010, 90% of the total acquisitions budget would be devoted to serials. These projections are summarized in Table 1, and assume that serial costs increase by approximately 10% per year, that a one-time increase in the acquisitions budget of \$30,000 occurs in FY05, and that the budget will, on average, receive about \$50,000 per year from "off-budget" sources.

* Between 1995 and 2001 the average increase in serials was 9.32% with a range of 7.71% to 13.6%. (Source *Serial Prices 1993-1997* and *Serial Prices 1997-2001* both published by EBSCO.) The price estimate for 2002 was 10.2%. (Source *Library Journal* "Periodical Price Survey 2002")

Table 1



As Table 1 makes clear, this trend is not sustainable. The Libraries must either find more resources, suspend our subscriptions to various periodicals, or, in the not too distant future not, eliminate the book budget altogether. In short, this inflation creates a tremendous strain on the collection budget for the library as a whole as well as for individual departments.

The amount spent per student on acquisitions provides additional insight into these figures. Last year (FY 03), CSB/SJU spent \$245 per student on acquisitions. During the same year, the 70+ members of the Oberlin Group (of which CSB/SJU is a member) spent on average \$569 for materials, with a median (50th percentile) of \$518. The CSB/SJU Libraries fall well below the 25th percentile of \$361. Total library expenditures on acquisitions at CSB/SJU were \$986,751. The average for the Oberlin Group was \$1,116,643 with a median of \$1,026,280. Thus, the CSB/SJU Libraries fall at just below the 50th percentile. It should be noted that CSB/SJU have more than twice the student body of the average library in the survey.

These numbers should be interpreted with care. The amount spent per student for library acquisitions is closely correlated with en-

dowment per student, and many of these schools enjoy substantially larger endowments than we do. Similarly, per-student expenditures tend to overstate our problems since our combined student population is significantly larger than the 2000 student average for the Oberlin Group. Such per-student expenditures don't show the economies of scale the Libraries work hard to foster. At the same time, however, total expenditure figures tend to understate our problems, since we bear the costs of supporting two library facilities on two campuses. In any case, the efforts of our Presidents to raise the national stature of our institutions will require a movement up the ranks among quality liberal arts colleges such as those in the Oberlin Group.

There have already been significant reductions in the serials budget. In 1995, 25% was cut from all departments and the general library allocations. Before that, in 1991, there had already been a reduction in serials at CSB of 5%, compounded by the changes in 1995. There was also a reduction in the serials budget for the School of Theology of approximately 15%.

There is little doubt that serials, and especially periodicals and full text databases, are undergoing the greatest transformation in the electronic age. This situation presents budgetary opportunities and challenges. The Libraries have already creatively employed the use of a single electronic periodical subscription to provide access on both campuses, resulting in significant financial savings. But the prices of both electronic and paper periodicals are rising quickly. To make matters worse, publishers as a group have not figured out a business plan for how to function in the electronic environment in which we live. Many different approaches have been taken, but there currently is no consensus among publishers on pricing or on long-term access. This situation creates great uncertainty for libraries.

Most of the full text databases we receive are brokered through MINITEX, which obtains a greatly reduced price due to volume purchasing through the state of Minnesota. In addition, MINITEX subsidizes these already-reduced prices by providing many of our most widely used databases either free or for a very small sum.

In the current fiscal year, due to action of the Minnesota legislature, MINITEX has had to adjust to a budget cut of \$300,000. Fortunately, not all of the cuts in the MINITEX budget will come out of the electronic databases they provide. For next year, our primary additional cost—about \$8,500—will be for the Elsevier publications (discussed below). However, we have already been notified by MINITEX that next year the same issue will come up with CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature); the new pricing is not yet set. In addition, MINITEX is negotiating a new contract for ELM (Electronic Library of Minnesota) databases. It is unclear at this time if we will have to pay for

these databases, which we now receive free. At the same time all of our electronic databases continue to increase in cost at or close to double digit rates each year.

It is quite unlikely that we will ever be faced with a complete loss of services from MINITEX, but if we did, the replacement cost of the electronic databases that MINITEX currently provides for our campuses is between \$150,000 and \$200,000. The benefit is great, but so is our attendant vulnerability.

An additional complicating factor is the rapid consolidation of the journal publishing industry into a small number of commercial publishers. Several years ago, most scholarly journals were published by scholarly societies or by one of the many relatively small commercial publishers. In the last few years, Elsevier - the most famous and certainly the largest player in the publisher consolidation race - has purchased many of the small commercial publishers (Academic Press and Pergamon among them) and took over many of the scholarly societies' journal publications as well. As the result of this consolidation, they have created a near-monopoly for themselves in the journal publishing market. As with any monopoly, they are using their power to dictate pricing to the market. Implications for research libraries are severe — the University of Minnesota no longer subscribes to any print journals from Elsevier and has significantly cut their electronic subscriptions as well. At CSB/SJU, we expect our costs to rise from \$1,516 in FY 2003 to approximately \$10,000 in FY 2004 – for a smaller set of electronic journals. The Libraries will choose to pay the higher rate because that will be less expensive than projected increases in interlibrary loan costs if we drop these journals.

Beyond the financial considerations is the concern about permanent access to periodicals as we move to electronic availability. Some publishers have guaranteed permanent access to past issues for anyone who had originally subscribed to their journals. However, others are reluctant to offer such assurances. If for any reason—due to price increases or changed needs, for example—we dropped an electronic journal, we face the possibility of losing access to past as well as future issues. It may take some time for publishers and subscribers to reach a consensus on this issue.

This disquieting state of affairs has an additional impact on the issue of space in the Libraries, as it would be ideal to be able to discard old paper copies of journals when electronic versions are available. However, if access to back issues is not guaranteed, most experienced librarians recommend that libraries retain all old paper copies, even if back issues are available through electronic resources. Thus, electronic access does not necessarily save shelf space, unless off-site storage of back issues is employed.

Chemistry is a case in point. All chemistry journals published by the American Chemical Society [ACS] will soon be available only electronically. The ACS has openly proclaimed that there will not be continuing rights to back issues. In fact, the ACS requires that libraries subscribe to a separate back file database for back issues older than five years. In other words, even though a library maintains a current subscription for a long period of time to a set of titles, the Libraries could lose access to the back runs of ACS titles if they do not also subscribe to the back file database.

Such policies give vendors a great degree of market power in setting subscription prices, since few libraries would want lose access to the back issues.

And the issue gets more difficult. The primary chemistry journals are produced and marketed by the ACS, which also mandates that colleges must subscribe to these journals to maintain their ACS-accredited major. This dilemma is, fortunately, not yet occurring in other disciplines. And at this point, budgetary adjustments seem feasible. Nevertheless, it is possible that at some point, the high cost of subscriptions might leave our institutions facing a decision: either to give up our accreditation in chemistry, or to transfer resources from the acquisitions budgets of other departments where accreditation is not an issue to the chemistry library budget to cover the higher cost of chemistry periodicals. Few faculty members would have anticipated this form of interdisciplinary competition a decade ago. A similar issue can arise when only accreditation (without the problem of mandated journal holdings) is involved; see for example the discussion of the School of Theology, below.*

As already noted, this additional financial pressure comes on top of other recent reductions. There comes a point at which reductions in library budgets will adversely affect departmental majors, faculty research, or both. We do not know how to predict when we will arrive at this point, either for individual departments or for CSB/SJU as a whole. Nevertheless, our standing within the Oberlin Group should not be ignored.

Books

Although the financial situation concerning books is not as severe as that for periodicals, there is an important relationship between the two. As previously noted, the overall collection budget covers the cost of both books and serials. Not only are books rising in price due to inflation (2-3% per year), but the rising cost of periodicals has already cut

* The library is currently collecting examples where the accrediting agency requires a certain level of journal and/or book holdings, but no others are as specific as ACS. None has such direct ties to the accrediting agency, or requires such a high level of resources for an undergraduate program.

deeply into many book budgets. At present, the Psychology Department has no funds available for a book budget and Departments of Chemistry and Nursing are quickly approaching that state.

Additional demands are placed on the book budget as we add new majors and minors (Environmental Studies, East Asian Studies, Women's Studies, and so on). In addition, many established majors are broadening the scope of their studies, in the past primarily involving the US and Western Europe, to include East Asia, the Indian subcontinent, South America, and so on. History, English, and Modern Languages are obvious examples, but there are many other departments.

Removal of books and periodicals from the collection

Another important dimension of the collection development policy is the removal of books and periodicals from the collection, either through "weeding" of books (permanent disposal) that are no longer needed in the collection, or through off-site storage of less frequently used volumes. Space issues will be covered in more depth in the building issues section of this report. Here we are primarily concerned with implications for the Libraries' collections.

Done properly, weeding involves extensive consultation with affected faculty. Weeding the general book collection is thus very expensive in terms of both library staff and faculty time: it takes much longer to identify an old book to be discarded than it does to select a new one. This Task Force, as well as similar ones at other institutions, expressed grave concerns about any extensive weeding of the collection.*

A second issue deals with off-site storage of books and periodicals at a remote storage facility (where materials are accessible on a few days' notice). Such a facility exists at the University of Minnesota. Such storage prevents direct personal access and the ability to browse the collection. Browsing is highly valued by many students and faculty, as indicated in the Consortium report cited immediately above. Consequently, in the short term, high density storage is preferable. Any decisions regarding off-site storage should be made in close cooperation with the academic departments affected.

Electronic Books

By current estimates, the number of "e-books" (books available electronically) is about 280,000, counting all such books in existence, regardless of year published. There are currently approximately 2,800,000 books in print (i.e., available for purchase from a publisher), but there

* See the Report of Tri-College Library Consortium consisting of Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore Colleges, <http://www.clir.org/pubs/abstract/pub115abst.html>.

are tens of millions that have been published, so that even what appears to be a large number of e-books is only a very small fraction of the total number of books in existence.

Current e-book technology does not offer convenient software and hardware (an instrument for reading e-books) that comes close to the ease of use or affordability of a standard printed book. Thus it remains unlikely that reading in an electronic format will be popular until this situation changes. For now, e-books are most likely to be employed largely for reference works or for other uses where only a short section is needed.

The CSB/SJU Libraries currently have about 8,000 e-books catalogued in our online system. There are, of course, many more available on the web. The greatest impact over the near term for our libraries will be in Reference Collection, where some significant titles are no longer purchased in print form but are available only electronically. Under these circumstances, electronic books will not have a significant impact on library space or budgets for the foreseeable future.

Bibliographers

A critical part of any collections policy is the role of bibliographers in the selection of titles. At CSB/SJU, nearly every department has designated a faculty member as bibliographer, who coordinates purchase requests from department members and passes them on to the appropriate library staff person. Exceptions include the School of Theology, and the Departments of Theology and Music, for which library staff act as bibliographer because of their subject expertise and the complexity of these collections. Librarians also select titles in a handful of other departments, where the current bibliographer for one reason or another is not spending the departmental allocation.

Most liberal arts colleges do not use this process. Typically, faculty members are encouraged to submit suggestions, but the bibliographer for the department is a member of the library staff who has specialized knowledge in that discipline.

The experience of CSB/SJU library staff is that some department bibliographers are much more effective than others. Some take an active role in understanding the collection and making judgments about acquisitions proposed by department members before sending them on to the library; however, most seem simply to collect proposed acquisitions from faculty colleagues and pass them on without much or any judgment about the appropriateness of the acquisition. One issue about which the Task Force wishes to survey departments is faculty perception of the effectiveness of the departmental bibliographer system to see how it might be improved.

Department Allocations for Acquisitions

The Task Force has reviewed the Libraries' departmental budgets for library acquisitions. Although there are significant variations in resources available per department, it is not clear that any one formula for dividing resources would be adequate. Among the obvious variables here are the number of majors, number of minors, total number of students in courses, number of faculty, number of courses, and (most difficult to assess) the character of the discipline in relation to the need for books, periodicals, and AV resources. The Task Force recommends a survey of faculty to assess their level of satisfaction with current acquisitions.

The School of Theology

The presence of accredited graduate programs in the SJU School of Theology presents unique demands on the Alcuin library. Students and faculty in graduate programs tend, on average, to employ library collections more extensively. However, external accreditation is also an issue, exhibiting some pressures similar to those presented by the Chemistry Department discussed above.

At the time of the last accreditation visit of the Association of Theological Schools (1998), the library holdings in theology were applauded while recent trends in freezing acquisitions budgets in the discipline were criticized as unsustainable over the long term. In the words of the ATS report, "serious attention needs to be given to the acquisition budget of the theology collection, so that serious gaps do not develop in its holdings, and that efforts be made to recoup the losses incurred by the budget freeze over the past seven years." The visiting committee listed this freeze as a formal "area of deficiency" in its report to ATS.

In response to the ATS report, the School of Theology raised its contribution to the library in increments from \$60,000 to \$100,000 in FY01. This amount was reduced to \$85,000 in FY04 because of financial constraints in the School of Theology. It is imperative that this contribution not continue to erode at the same time as purchasing power continues to decrease.

The ATS warning about frozen acquisitions budgets is well founded, and it could be extended to most departmental holdings on our campuses. It is nonetheless worth noting that through accreditation, some professional organizations can exert an influence on some departmental library allocations while other disciplines, with perhaps equally pressing needs but less disciplinary organization at the national level, cannot bring this sort of off-campus influence to bear. A careful assessment of acquisition needs is required in every case.

Collection Development Recommendations

Much is being done right, but budgetary increases are absolutely necessary. The recommendations listed here have been cited in a number of previous reports, because the problems we face have long histories.

Budget Increases

- We strongly recommend that the two institutions formally adopt and implement a policy that annually increases the materials budget (for both books and serials) to compensate for the rising costs of materials. For next year, this recommendation implies a minimum of \$30,000-\$50,000 additional funding. Ideally, to completely offset inflation, between \$50,000 and \$60,000 would be added each year. Failing to do so not only undercuts Presidential plans for improving our stature nationally but also threatens the stature we currently enjoy.

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- The Libraries, with help from someone trained and experienced in survey design, should conduct surveys to address three separate groups – faculty, students, and library staff – in order to investigate a number of issues related to collection development identified above.

II. Staffing

Second only in importance to the quality of a library’s holdings is the quality of its staff. It is clear to the Task Force that the Libraries are well managed by a knowledgeable staff, who have presented to the administration nearly all of the issues identified in this report.

It is critical that the Libraries provide significant staff development opportunities for existing staff and to carefully analyze where we lack expertise when considering new hires. The Libraries address staff development in several ways. Needs are identified as part of the annual review and through the work of the Staff Development and Continuing Education Committee. In addition, a cooperative effort between Macalester, Gustavus Adolphus, St. Olaf, Carleton and CSB/SJU for a joint staff development program is just completing its first year. Although this is a new program, it appears to be very successful. By bringing together the library staffs from the six institutions, there is greater expertise available in many more areas than any one institution would have. It also makes it possible to bring experts and staff development programs to Minnesota so that more staff can have access to the experience than would be possible if attendance at a distant site were required.

For the most part, staff development is in the hands of the staff. They identify what opportunities are appropriate and take them. If a particular needed skill is not available in the existing staff then a staff person with an interest in the area is identified and funds are provided to attend the appropriate classes, conferences, or workshops.

When there is a vacancy on the staff, a careful review of the position is done to identify the skill set needed for the job as well as additional skills needed in the Libraries. Over the past few years, a number of new paraprofessional staff have been hired and reference desk hours have been added to their job descriptions. This has provided more flexibility for librarians to be out of the building to meet with classes and faculty. An extensive training is required for these new staff, based on a program developed by Norma Dickau and others called CORE MORE. It has been used throughout Minnesota to enhance the skills of reference staff. As the Libraries look to the future, they will need to add staff with training and/or strong interest in cataloging special collections, assessment, and the use and management of electronic resources.

Staffing Recommendations:

- The Libraries should continue to review the skills that the staff currently has and identify any new skills needed.
- All job descriptions should be reviewed annually, but when there is an opening on the staff, very careful thought should be given to the replacement position and what skills are needed.

III. The Libraries and IT Services

There are major differences in the ways colleges and universities have designed the relationship between libraries and computing centers, an issue that has received extensive attention since about since the mid-1980's.* Some have appointed a Chief Information Officer [CIO] in charge of both areas. At others, the Computing Center Director runs the library or the Library Director runs the computing center. There have been a number of attempts at complete merger, but these have met with mixed results at best. Among other things, administrators whose professional competence extends to both areas are rare indeed.

Typically, such mergers at other institutions have been in response to specific local conditions, often when either IT or the library is not performing optimally, or in response to other highly specific local circumstances. This Task Force does not believe such conditions exist here; we have a system that works very well. At Saint John's University and

* For more information, see *Books, Bytes and Bridges: Libraries and Computer Centers in Academic Institutions*, edited by Larry Hardesty, American Library Association, Chicago, 2000.

the College of Saint Benedict, we are fortunate to have both an IT department and libraries that are notably competent, effective, and well-run. Both serve their constituencies well, and the libraries and IT Services have worked very well together.

At CSB/SJU, IT Services and the libraries serve very different functions. IT Services is primarily concerned with computer hardware, software, and their incorporation into a network. The libraries are primarily concerned with books, journals, and related materials (increasingly in electronic as well as print format), and with the physical and electronic infrastructures for making such materials available. There is little overlap in training, skills, or responsibilities between the groups. To be sure, librarians make increasingly heavy use of computers and network resources, but so do most academic and academic support departments; there is no argument for merger or joint management here.

Staff members of both IT Services and Media Services provide assistance and education in the use and distribution of projection equipment, digital cameras, laptop computers, and portable projection equipment; we are currently working on a better distinction of responsibilities between media and IT Services.

The organizational relationship between libraries and computing centers should reflect the needs of the community served. At CSB/SJU, IT Services and the Libraries serve very different needs, and to some extent, constituencies. The Libraries serve primarily the CSB/SJU academic community. By contrast, IT Services serves and must meet the needs of a far wider and more diverse community. At St. John's, that community is corporation-wide, and includes the Abbey, Prep School, Liturgical Press, HMML, and the various administrative departments, as well as the academic programs of the university. It also serves needs of the College of St. Benedict – both academic and administrative. This diversity adds a significant level of complexity.

In structure, as well as in areas of expertise, there is little existing overlap in responsibilities between the Libraries and IT Services. As a result, we believe the current structure – augmented by the existing practice of regular meetings and discussions between the two directors regarding plans, existing challenges, and how to divide up responsibilities that could fall in either department – is sufficient to coordinate the activities of the two areas.

Current Relationship

The operating arrangement between the Libraries and IT Services has developed over the last ten years. In general, IT Services provides the network infrastructure for the colleges and the Libraries provide the information/research databases, library web pages, and support needed

for faculty and students to use the information resources available. The Libraries also use external providers for some of their computing needs. For example, the University of Minnesota provides the Libraries' Open URL Resolver, and St. Cloud State University will provide the server needed for library web management software. The Libraries use other providers when they can provide service at less cost to the institution, or when collaboration helps provide a better product. When IT Services can do something less expensively or has expertise needed, their services are used. Recently the Libraries moved the proxy server from MnSCU to CSB/SJU because IT Services was able to provide a more user-friendly solution. The Libraries and IT Services work closely in all cases to assure that user or network problems are not created. The Libraries rely heavily on the expertise of IT Services staff in making any decisions regarding software, hardware, or the network.

Future Relationship

The relationship between IT Services and the Libraries has been informal. One staff member from the library serves ex officio on the Committee on Academic Computing. The two directors get together a number of times each semester to discuss issues of common concern. To formalize this relationship, a decision has been made to hold a formal meeting at least twice a year with the Directors of the Libraries, IT Services, and HMML, and other staff members as appropriate, to discuss plans and review existing projects. The Directors of the Libraries and of IT Services will meet to explore the future relationship between Media and IT Services. As more projection classrooms are implemented, the responsibilities of each area may need to be redefined.

Areas of Possible Future Cooperation

There are several areas where greater cooperation between the Libraries and IT Services could be beneficial.

The first is faculty use of course software. IT Services currently has one staff person available to train and advise faculty in developing academic web sites and course pages. This work can be time-consuming, and librarians could have a role in helping faculty collect, organize, and post course and departmental resources.

The second area for possible cooperation is the creation of digital objects from prints, books, slides, microfilm, etc. These projects will arise out of many areas, including HMML, Arca Artium and Archives. We are developing a method of archiving significant amounts of digital information. The HMML collection alone in digital form would be vast. Librarians will be needed to guide and/or provide metadata (description or cataloging) of the digital objects. The plan is to establish a single platform for

indexing, retrieving, and delivering digital images. It will be necessary to have a coordinator for digital resources to manage the software, work with faculty and staff in developing digital collections, and supervise a digital imaging studio. The studio to capture images would probably be located in HMML but would serve the academic communities on both campuses. A good working relationship exists between IT Services, HMML, and the Libraries, and the three areas are in the process of establishing a framework for the future.

Finally, there has been considerable discussion about the possibility of providing an attractive space for public computer access in Alcuin Library, similar to what has been done in Clemens Library. The surveys done by the CAC confirm this need. Serious consideration should be given to providing such a space in any expansion of the existing facility. It would also be appropriate to consider such a space in Alcuin Library prior to any major building project.

Library/IT Recommendations:

- The relationship between Libraries and IT Services should become more formal, as recommended above. (The anticipated retirement of the Director of the Libraries makes this step even more appropriate.) At the same time, this relationship has worked very well and there seems to be no need to make any significant changes.
- The Libraries and IT Services should continue planning for increased cooperation concerning faculty course software, digitization, and computer access within Alcuin library.

IV. Physical Space

Our review of library space has identified three major issues: the need to reconfigure our current library seating to foster collaborative learning; the space demands of growing collections, and access and hospitality.

As will be clear below, in both libraries the need for additional stacks to hold the collections is squeezing out the space for people. In sum, space and design restrictions have meant that the libraries have been developing on a trajectory divergent from that of our academic and residential programs.

Collaborative Learning.

The Council on Libraries and Information Resources commissioned a study to identify to what extent recent library building projects have been driven by an understanding of how students learn and faculty teach. Scott Bennett, Librarian Emeritus at Yale, did an extensive study

of the motivations and planning for library renovation and construction projects undertaken between 1992 and 2001. Among his findings is that “while most of the projects are serving users well, they have rarely been informed by a systematic assessment of how students learn and faculty teach. The author suggests that planning based on such an assessment could equip the library to serve an even more vital function as a space for teaching and learning.”*

The CSB/SJU Task Force judges that, in addition to the budgetary and simple space needs for the growing collection, the biggest imperative facing the Libraries is space for what Bennett calls a “learning commons.” We all know that our students have been engaged in collaborative learning for a long time and it appears clear that this will continue. As Bennett notes, we must recognize there is a social dimension to learning and that libraries should “focus on facilitating the social exchanges through which information is transformed into knowledge.”† We know that this kind of learning has been fostered in our classrooms for some time, but both libraries were designed before this kind of learning became prevalent.

The focus on quiet, solo study space in the libraries reflects the student housing of an earlier era, when nearly all students were required to share rooms. Although students on our campuses now more typically have private living spaces, the majority of the seating at both libraries remains designed for students working alone. There are limited spaces for students to study together or in groups of six or more. The dividers on the tables and the very large number of individual carrels simply do not meet the needs of today’s students.

In addition, there are a number of classes that would benefit from being located in the library. The seminar rooms that once existed and which were intended for group use in both libraries have been reconfigured as sites for access to technology or for staff work space.

Each library needs to be evaluated for its potential as a learning commons. This will necessitate significant redesign of existing spaces and perhaps additional space. This challenge should be undertaken by a task force whose charge is to write a building program for each library. This task is beyond the scope and time constraints of the existing Task Force. For Alcuin, there are a number of documents that already exist on which the new committee can build. We are confident that an appropriate solution can be found for each facility which will maintain the architectural integrity of each.

* Taken from the summary of the report at <http://www.clir.org/pubs/abstract/pub122abst.html>, where a link to the full report (*Libraries Designed for Learning*, by Scott Bennett, Council on Library and Information Resources, Washington, D.C., November 2003) can also be found.

† *Libraries Designed for Learning*, by Scott Bennett, p. 4.

Space for Books and Other Library Materials

Both Facilities

In each facility we have immediate needs for stack space that will have to be addressed in the next two to three years. The library staff is in the process of doing what can be done to make more space available in the short run. They are consolidating back runs of periodicals so that we only have one set between the two facilities. This will save approximately 1000 linear feet of shelf space, split about evenly between the two facilities. In addition, they are planning on moving the back runs of periodicals, indexes, and abstracts for which we have permanent electronic access to the Minnesota Access Center. This will save approximately 900 linear feet, all of it in Alcuin. This has already been done at Clemens. Both libraries have handicapped access issues, especially in the reference and periodical collections, that should be addressed as soon as possible. In addition, each library has its own unique set of problems and alternatives that need to be addressed.

Clemens

Clemens library was completed in 1986 and designed for 20 years' growth. As 2006 approaches, those projections have proven to be accurate. In the summer of 2001, approximately 116 seats, two seminar rooms, two group study rooms, and the special collections area were eliminated in order to create a computing public access area. This change has restricted our alternatives for constructing more conventional stacks in the facility. The immediate need is for additional stack space. Although the building was supposed to have been designed to allow for a second tier of stacks, that does not appear to be possible. The side ceilings are too low to allow for this without reducing the height of the existing stacks. An elevator would also need to be added to the building if a second tier were installed.

A library is defined as full when it has 15% of its shelf space still open – this is defined as working capacity. Once there is less than 15% open as new books come in, it becomes necessary to move many ranges of books to make room. When this happened at Alcuin in the early 70's before we put in the stacks in the basement it was necessary to move every book in the circulating collection each summer in order to redistribute the available space, an expensive operation. If we do not use the top shelf of the stacks, we have between 5–6% of the total shelf space left. If we use the top shelf, we have between 17-18% of the shelf space left.

It appears that the best alternatives are to put stacks where the existing Computing Access Center is located, put stacks in the existing

media area – a space that might better be used as a learning commons, or to begin the process of putting high density stacks in the back stack area. The first option is inadvisable because the current use of the space is currently highly valued by students. The second option would prevent the use of the current media space as a learning commons. As a result, we recommend that one quarter of the existing stack area be converted to high density stacks. A fourth alternative would be to expand the existing building, but we recommend waiting on that decision until a task force has examined the learning commons idea further and makes a recommendation.

Since the CSB Archives are under the direction of the Director of Libraries and are in a less than desirable location the question of the location of the archives should be revisited by any Task Force that looks at a building program. The CSB Archives were included in the original discussion when Clemens was being designed, but at that time it was thought that the College Archives could be housed with the monastery archives. Due to space limitations in the monastery archives the college had to find other space for their archives.

Alcuin

Alcuin library is severely short of space. The problems with Alcuin were outlined quite clearly in *Alcuin Library Building Program* (August 1991) Appendix D, *Proposal for an Addition to Alcuin Library* (April, 2000) Appendix E, and *Report to Dietrich Reinhart, O.S.B., President, St. John's University* (February 2002) Appendix F. The 1991 study was done because we realized that we could not house our growing collection. Shortly after that study, 70 seats and their accompanying tables were removed from the lower level of Alcuin and stacks were put in to hold approximately 50,000 volumes. That bought ten years of growth, but it is now ten years later. In addition to the space and other issues from the 1991 study that were incorporated into the 2002 study, the issue of how to house our growing special collections and accommodate their users was also addressed. Those documents are attached as Appendices D and E. It is the best estimate of the librarians that a secure area large enough to hold approximately 10,000 volumes will be needed to consolidate special collection materials that are currently scattered in various small spaces around campus, to hold the existing overflow in the rare book rooms and to provide growth space for both special collections and the archives.

The Task Force judges that reducing the seating even further is an inappropriate method for increasing stack space. In an era when student learning has become more dependent on group work, the library has actually moved in the opposite direction, having removed even those seminar rooms originally part of the building's design.

The amount of space left in the circulating stacks is approximately 8% above working capacity. This translates into approximately 20,000 books after taking into consideration the number of books in circulation. This represents four years' growth, but does not provide any space for special collections. The extra space that would be recovered by consolidating the back runs of periodicals and moving the JSTOR titles to remote storage would be close to enough space to house up to 10,000 volumes for special collections.

There are two alternatives to solve the stack space issue in the short term. One would be to move out all the periodicals and then shift all of the books in the circulating collection, so that the current high-density stacks in the northwest corner of the library basement are available for special collections. The earliest this could be done is the summer of 2005. It would be possible to construct a temporary wall with fire exit access to close off this collection. Locks could be put on the stacks to further protect the collection. This would give SJU until about June of 2008 or 2009 before there is a need to move the Ecumenical Institute scholars' offices out of the library and install more high density stacks in their place. In order to do this there would need to be two moves of the complete circulating collection – an expensive proposition. The second alternative is to move the Ecumenical scholars' offices out of the library the summer of 05 and put high density stacks on the whole west side of the basement. It is clear to the Task Force that there will need to be a major addition or a new library building at SJU in the next five to ten years.

The 1991 and 2002 building task forces' reports addressed most of the space needs for Alcuin. The current Task Force feels that although the needed square footage estimated in the 2002 report may have been inaccurate, the basic issues facing the library were correctly identified. This Task Force recommends that a building committee be appointed to review the 1991 and 2002 documents, as well as the Bennett paper, to make recommendations on the redesign of existing space and the necessity for new spaces.

Access and Hospitality

The current situation for handicapped access to Alcuin Library is unconscionable and should be addressed as soon as possible. Moving to shorter stacks in reference could be addressed now or delayed until the broader space issues are taken up.

In addition, the awkward access to restrooms is inhospitable to patrons. A relative easy solution is possible: Construct security doors that block access to the Lower Level from the main entrance in Alcuin. When the library is open, these doors would be locked, and the large double doors on the lower level of library would be open to allow library

patrons easy access to the restrooms. When the library is closed, the double doors would be locked and the security doors open, allowing access to the lower level without entering the library proper, as is the case now. The primary cost would be the extra distance one would need to walk to get to the two AV rooms when the library is open, as one would have to walk up the stairs, enter the library proper, and then descend one level, exiting through the double doors.

Space Recommendations:

- More space needs to be constructed at Alcuin, both for materials storage and collaborative student learning.
- Because such new space cannot be available as soon as needed, the administration should decide which of the two short-term alternatives for Alcuin cited above should be implemented.
- A Building Committee should be set up for both Alcuin to work with architects on specific plans. The committee should build on the existing documents.
- A Building Committee should be set up for Clemens to make recommendations regarding reconfigurations of space for the various purposes identified here, and, for the possible need for addition space in the future.
- We recommend that the back runs of the periodical collections should be consolidated and that those periodicals for which the Libraries have permanent electronic access should be stored off-site at the Minnesota Access Center
- One-quarter of the area in the current stack space at Clemens should be converted to high density storage.
- Priority should be given to handicapped access at both facilities and to bathroom access in Alcuin.

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Appendix A

Recommendations for Surveying Faculty Students, and Library Staff

1. Faculty

- a. Is your departmental library allocation for books and serials sufficient?
- b. Are the right materials being purchased? Do you give input for material to be purchased?
- c. How important are paper copies of serials/books in your discipline? Would electronic sources suffice for you?
- d. How time sensitive are the materials in your discipline? Would off-site storage and retrieval of rarely used materials suffice for you? Would off-site photocopies of journal articles suffice for you?
- e. How many times in the average semester do you “browse” the library shelves, whether as an explicit search technique or more casually? How important do you rate browsing for students?
- f. Have changes in availability of services been a problem for you? (e.g., termination of contract for Books in Print on line)
- g. Do you receive appropriate information about library holdings/collections in your discipline? Do you use the library website for similar information?
- h. Does the current department bibliographer system work for you or would you prefer relying solely on a designated library staff bibliographer?
- i. What do you suggest for improving library collection development?
- j. How much do you demand that the students use the library?
- k. Have you experienced any problems with the availability of professional librarians when you need them?

2. Students

1. Student use of materials and services. Distinguish various student uses of the library and ask for a response on a scale from low to high frequency: On line services, paper journals, books, visits to the library, etc.
2. Rate services--?? Are the libraries able to provide materials to meet your assignment needs or personal research?
3. How do you get information about library resources? Are faculty or library staff sufficiently helpful?
4. How many times in the average semester do you “browse” the library shelves, whether as an explicit search technique or more casually?

3. Library Staff

- a. Are you satisfied with the way the collection is developing in the disciplines with which you work?
- b. What evidence of student use of the library do you see? Do courses seem to call for use of the library?
- c. What level of research do you see?
- d. What suggestions would you make to faculty in terms of the collections' development? Of the students' use of available materials?