

STATE OF THE UIUC LIBRARY

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Good morning. Thank you both for helping me celebrate my second anniversary here at UIUC and for your all help and support throughout the year. I hope we can continue to make this an annual event because I continue to think it's important for us to have a chance to step back from our day-to-day work, take a look at how things have gone over the last year, and focus on what's ahead. And, it's important for us to do this from a "Library with a capital L" perspective - to focus on what we've accomplished together, to emphasize the interconnectedness of our individual achievements, and to talk about our collective aspirations.

We have a lot to feel good about. And, of course, we have areas in which we still look forward to success. That includes getting a coffee service established outside of the Undergraduate Library! But we're making progress on that, and on much more.

Is there anyone who wasn't busy this year? The pace of life both within and outside the Library seems to continue to accelerate, doesn't it? Some things zoom by so quickly that we don't always have time to think about them, or plan for them. I confess to falling into this pattern from time-to-time, too. It's one that's not healthy either for us as individuals or for the Library as a whole. We really must be careful to choose what's most important to do, to set our priorities carefully, and to manage the entirety of our lives wisely.

I know I don't need to tell you that this is a very special library, with very special people and very special missions that include retaining the materials that record and represent our intellectual and cultural heritage. We've achieved levels of distinction and excellence that place us in the top ranks of the world's premiere libraries. Our challenge is to maintain and build on that excellence to rise to an even higher level of achievement for our users.

I think it was Pogo who said that if we don't change our direction we'll probably get where we're heading. Last year I articulated our collective aspirations, our direction if you will, and that's where we're still heading. Our vision encompasses our role as a critically important component of the University; focuses on our determination to maintain excellence and distinction in our collections, services, and staff; includes recognition of the library's leadership role in the state, the country, and the world; and highlights the values that we imbue. I think our values are worth reiterating, for they form the foundation of our commitment to excellence, our sense of direction, and the caring nature of our organization. We are a library that values service, quality, diversity, collaboration, and academic freedom, and we want to be known as a library distinguished for risk-taking, innovation, and entrepreneurship as well as for holding dear and conserving the values and riches of the present and the past.

But, I will say again, for the third year in a row, visions without actions are just hallucinations. Visions without actions are just hallucinations. So, I want to spend a little time talking about what we've accomplished through our actions this last year and focusing on what lies ahead for us.

In the past I've talked about connections and interconnectedness, I've talked about collaborations, and I've talked about vision and direction. Today I'm going to focus on the library as an organization that cares.

To me, we clearly are a library that cares. We certainly have long **cared about our users**. Our decentralized department library structure is just one important symbol of the care with which we develop our services and collections to meet the needs of our specialized constituencies. The potency of this system, however, has been weakened by the fragmentation of focus and energy the system's very nature imposes. One of our most significant achievements this year, filling the position of AUL for Services, is designed to reduce that fragmentation and strengthen the interconnectedness of all of our parts so we can bring our users better service than ever. Under Bob Burger's leadership we're making considerable progress in increasing our focus on service, coordinating and improving a number of policies, tackling thorny problem areas, and increasing the power of our current services while developing the new services our users expect and demand. The service attitude training now being planned is a tangible indicator of this new emphasis. I expect that progress will intensify as Bob continues his work and when we fill our new position of AUL for Library Information Technology Planning and Policy, which is designed to provide collateral power in coordinating our information technology efforts to improve the quality of service and access. Our challenge is to keep the vitality, strength, and individual character of our department libraries while strengthening the library as a whole.

Our success in developing a new model of service and in recruiting a BioTechnology Librarian - our first Faculty Excellence hire - to implement it will help us test new ways to provide services and collections that meet the needs of scholars whose work is heavily interdisciplinary in nature. This model will also help us test ways in which to serve faculty without libraries in the buildings in which they work, or faculty and students who use more than one library, as if there was one facility right outside their offices or labs. This innovative approach was developed jointly by the two science divisions, and I look forward to seeing it unfold.

It's been a year for other risky innovative ventures, too. Several other piloted services - e-reserves, Ask A Librarian, and the Welcome Desk, to name just three - are proving to be so successful as to be expected by our users as regular services. This pattern of reaching out to find new ways to deliver traditional services is really important for our future success, and discussions about a whole host of new services and ways of playing out the library's traditional role in new ways continue both within the library and with other parts of campus. Grants from external agencies that support projects in metadata harvesting, the Illinois Digitization Institute, teaching with digital content, cataloging and preserving Illinois newspapers, reconning serials, and extending Mortenson Center activities to South Africa

are strong indicators of the level of innovation, the extension of our knowledge into new areas, and the transfer of that knowledge in which this library engages, and it's important that we continue to innovate and experiment.

But, how do we measure the extent of our successes and failures of both traditional and new services? Well, that's still a work in progress. I'm not sure that we can say that our participation in the national LibQual+ pilot program was entirely successful, although it did yield scores above the mean in the three overall service areas that were measured (that's good) and it identified a number of problem areas (that's not so good). LibQual+ is being refined and extended to other institutions and it should provide us some solid baseline data with which we can better assess our services. We're going to give it a go again this year and then decide if we want to continue or take another approach.

We didn't need the LibQual+ survey to tell us that we need to improve intellectual access to our collections. We well know our challenges, and this year we must intensify efforts to unlock the secrets of our collections for our users. Some cataloging backlogs have already been reduced, and we anticipate that all backlogs should be eliminated within reasonable time periods. We must work hard to ensure that such backlogs don't accumulate again. New work flows in Technical Services, the new Millenium system, and other improvements must continue so we can keep up with making current acquisitions accessible while improving access to materials represented poorly in the online catalog, or not represented at all. Hopefully, our new online library system, which we and ILC SO expect to implement next summer, will facilitate our users' ability to find and get what they seek. But, just cataloging traditional materials isn't enough. We know that the lack of access to all of our records in the online catalog is a major deterrent to good service, and we must return to this issue expeditiously, assessing the dimensions of the challenge carefully, and stepping up our efforts to gain external funding to accelerate the process. And we know that we own millions of items for which traditional MARC cataloging is impractical and that we make links to many online sources that can't be found easily from one place. The Access Task Force is hard at work developing additional solutions and approaches to the many challenges of providing access, to unlocking the treasures of our collections.

We can't provide excellent service without excellent facilities. I think we've made some important progress in improving our facilities, although we still have a long long way to go. Most library units have been visited and their spaces assessed, some painting and refurbishing has taken place, and lots of ergonomically correct staff equipment has been purchased. Our most notable accomplishment has been the opening of the ACES Library, which I guess took place technically in the current fiscal year but which involved so much planning and coordinating in the last year that it's really a last-year accomplishment. Do note, however, that the building is incised with the date 2002 AD. Do you suppose that counts as inventing the past or the future? At any rate, it's a wonderful and wonderfully up-to-date building to which our users are flocking, and it provides us with a teaching facility with more than 30 computers. Those of you who work in the Main Library building could only but cheer to see - or rather to hear -- the reconfiguration project finally begin. And the Oak Street Facility, long delayed by haggling over land easements, is finally about to start in earnest. Honest.

But as notable as these accomplishments are - and they are notable - they're only a drop in the bucket of our needs. Many of us will be working hard to try to improve all of our facilities, in both small and big ways.

I want to say a few words about "public engagement." As a land grant institution we have an obligation to transfer our knowledge and make our resources accessible to people not connected formally to the University. This library has a long-term commitment and a stellar and caring record in this regard; I've heard our new Chancellor brag about our open access policies. This year we strengthened this commitment in several ways, from our new IMLS grant to our Mortenson Mellon grant, to new Mortenson partnerships, to our leadership of the Illinois Digitization Institute, to the Forum on the Future and more we excelled in taking the very best of who and what we are and extending it to the world.

When people think about the University of Illinois library they think about our collections, for this library has also long **cared about building its collections**. As most of you know, those who developed this university understood the value of a strong library collection in attracting the very best faculty possible to this institution in the corn and soy fields of the prairie. Our predecessors and you have developed some of the finest library collections in the world, and we must remain committed to continuing our collection building in all formats. Our collections extend well beyond the 9+ million volumes we, the teaching faculty, and the university administration brag about. We count nearly 22 million items, but we know that we provide access to much much more than that. As we begin to tackle the myriad of issues relating to collecting high quality digital content and selecting and maintaining access to digital contents for which we pay no money and over which we have little or no control, we must confront and resolve both the underlying philosophical bases for our decisions about the roles of print and digital publications and the operational details that will facilitate our selection, acquisition or licensing, intellectual access, maintenance, and long-term access to all digital resources. Our mission to archive materials compels us to purposely lag behind the curve, with a growing gap between us and other libraries that more easily replace print with digital materials. But, this doesn't mean that we'll never be at a point where we don't do this too, when digital archival standards and practices are so solid as to be truly archival.

We acquired some significant collection materials this year; here's a sampling: 6 original Proust letters, Shana Alexander's papers, an extensive collection of reproductions of Western art on microfiche, a gift of more than 1000 volumes of Chinese language materials, two Spanish Civil War collections, the national archives of the Association of College Honor Societies, access to online Mergers & Acquisitions through a joint investment with the College of Commerce and Business Administration, a gift of 454 titles of labor newspapers, and joint licenses with UIC for ScienceDirect, IEEE IEL, MDConsult, Ageline, and 4 cell press journals.

But collecting is not just a one-way inbound street. Our content holds great value to scholars around the globe and we need to be alert to opportunities, and to create opportunities, to make some of our content useable in new ways. To that end, we have made some progress. We've undertaken a collaborative venture with the University of Illinois

Press to digitize and publish the contents of some of our holdings. Both IRIS and ABSEES increased their subscriber bases this year. The ACES Library assumed responsibility for corn and soybean resources in AgNic (Agriculture Network Information Center, run by the National Agriculture Library) and agreed to accept a future gift of the Agricultural Communications Documentation Center, along with the commitment to keep it current. We also made progress in helping to develop the tools necessary to find and control content in such activities as development of metadata harvesting tools, resolution of important issues in the CrossRef effort, advancement of the Open Archives Initiative, and the like. Our collaborative approaches to addressing these thorny issues, through organizations such as the Digital Library Federation and our own Digital Library Testbed are productive and exciting, and I look forward to seeing many more useful and important developments emerging soon.

This year the Library Allocation Steering Committee made a number of important recommendations to me and the Provost including increasing the library's funding level and improving the ways in which the library allocates collection funds. The Provost has already agreed to match our proffered investment in the recommended opportunity fund and we'll be working this year to model the impact of the Committee's recommendations for reallocation and redistribution of funds; we are committed to the campus to determining how to handle budget allocations next year well before the end of this fiscal year.

Well, we've collected and collected and we're continuing to collect. But neither the library nor the university has lived up to its responsibilities to ensure that what we collect will be here to be used by those who follow us. This is not to say that we've totally ignored preservation, but rather to say that our investments and our efforts haven't been up to the task. With a collection valued conservatively at \$1.5 billion, with its immeasurable value well in excess of that to its current and potential users, and with our expected increased activity in creating and acquiring digital content, we must turn considerable attention to **caaring about preserving our collections** in all formats. On its surface, this is a "no-brainer," but it will take substantial effort, investment, and a change in our awareness of everything we do: handling materials, keeping alert to problems in our physical plant, considering reformatting alternatives, and working closely with others on campus, from O&M to the Chancellor, to effect important changes both in the ways in which problems such as leaks and floods are handled and in funding priorities.

I think we've made some progress this year in building a foundation from which to create a preservation program that permeates all of our activities. We've hired a preservation librarian and a conservation librarian, both of whom will arrive to begin work later this month. We participated in the Climate Notebook program of the Image Permanence Institute, undertook several microfilming projects, and re-integrated the Microform Services office back into the Library from Printing Services. And we engaged Michael Trinkley of the Chicora Foundation to assess our physical environment and some of our basic storage and handling techniques. As a direct result of Trinkley's work Jack Dempsey, the Director of O&M, and I have established a small joint committee that meets regularly to discuss the physical well-being of library facilities.

And planning for the Oak Street facility has led to at least two important types of preservation activities, designing plans for a preservation lab there and identifying materials that will be moved to that or other locations with equivalent acceptable preservation environments. Finally, we've been invited to compete for a sizeable grant that will increase the level of ongoing funding for preservation through matching fund-raising on our part. This is a natural, because preservation will be one of the areas of importance in our upcoming capital campaign.

I hope I've been clear about how important it is to change our actions regarding preservation. It must imbue everything we do. In the coming months I expect that we're all going to learn a lot about how to handle, shelve, and store materials properly, how to look for potential problems and how to alert and engage the people who can help resolve them, and how to educate our users to handle materials properly. We need to have serious philosophical discussions about what we save and how we save it. And we'll all realize that although we can never do enough to protect the materials with which we've been entrusted, and that we've lost precious decades in the fight against time and the elements, we must elevate our awareness and activities in this area. You'll be hearing from me about preservation again - and again -- in the coming months and years.

Last year we affirmed the importance of being known as a good place to work, about **caring for one another**. Although we made some improvements last year, we have much much more to do.

This year we've all done a lot of talking and listening. We held our first staff retreat early in the academic year and our first all-employee retreat towards the end of the academic year. Although there may have been more talking than listening, we began to get to know and work with colleagues we had perhaps never seen before, and that's really important. And we had our first staff awards program, a program I hope will grow in importance in the coming years. Just to recap, the winners were: Betsy Kruger, Central Circulation (faculty); R. Bates Allen, Commerce (staff), Christopher Pawlicki, Music (staff); and Systems Assessment Task Force (group).

Listening and caring are vital. So is reacting constructively to what we hear. Although we undertook several new staff training and development programs, from basic Windows training in Tech Services to the completion of three ARL professional development seminars, we didn't do nearly enough. Although it appears as if this next year will be crammed with training for our new system, we must take care not to neglect our other training needs.

Training and development opportunities come from many sources. In addition to formal training classes and development programs, involvement in collaborative projects, such as those that are emerging from the Digital Library Federation, are critically important both to our progress as a library and to the individuals who participate.

You can't listen if there aren't good systems of communications, and this year we continued to look for ways to improve them. The LibStaff-L listserv was created and presumably it's

being used effectively (I'm not eligible to participate in it so I don't know first-hand). Our other listserves seem to be effective, too. I'm not sure that LON remains important in its current format, but that's something we'll need to talk about. And I think that the new budget request process made what previously seemed mysterious more open and understandable. We'll continue to work on improving the way we develop budget requests and determine priorities. But if these channels, coupled with our annual retreats and your division and unit staff meetings and other library meetings and forums aren't working, you need to communicate that, too. Let me, or someone else who can do something about it, know.

We've had a wonderfully successful year recruiting new employees. The faculty has focused much thought and discussion on ways to improve recruiting processes, and although we can crow about our successes, our processes still need a lot more refinement and we need to do a much better job of diversifying our staff and faculty - and I mean diversification in its broadest sense. But as you know, recruiting is only a part of the key to our success; retention is another critically important goal. And we won't retain good employees if we don't care about each other more.

I've worked in four research university libraries, and I've been disturbed by the general environment in all of them. Rumors and gossip seem to take on a life on their own, and certain folks often seem to be the targets of behind-their-backs negative talk, which then escalates beyond all reason. I think that the accelerating pace of life only contributes to this general sense of selective negativism. A bad experience that one person has with another is often blown so out of proportion that it seems as if the target is evil incarnate. I wish I could snap my fingers and make it go away. But since I'm not queen of the world, I can't. I hope that by bringing it up in this forum I'll raise awareness about how debilitating the practice is. I certainly don't expect that we should all act as Pollyannas, but I would hope that we could be a bit more forgiving of one another. Instead of backstabbing, let's try to identify real problems and solve them together. That way we can make significant progress in fulfilling our aspiration to be a caring organization in all ways, including being a premiere library distinguished as much for our caring culture as we are by our services and collections.

Finally, I want to say a few words about resources. Clearly, neither the university nor the state can provide all the resources we need to fulfill our collective aspirations. As most of you know, the Library will soon embark on a capital campaign. This one will work differently than the last. We'll be partnering with colleges and departments to identify their highest priorities for the libraries that serve them and to identify and call on potential donors. The campaign itself will focus on books and preservation, facilities, and endowed positions - all part of the theme I've spoken about today - the things we care about. We need to think creatively about other ways in which to garner resources, too. This could include collaborating with other campus units, seeking contracts and grants, and developing additional revenue-generating sources. I ask for your help by letting me know your ideas and by being available to meet with potential donors and others.

All that we've done this year confirms that our collective aspirations, our visions, are not at all hallucinations but tangible contributions to the University's teaching, learning, and research endeavors, to the state, and to the world of scholarship. This is a great library, and I'm very glad and very proud to be a part of it.