The Library and Information Science Library, 1990s to 2009
by Susan E. Searing, LIS Librarian

[This recent history of the LIS Library supplements the historical essay by Patricia Stenstrom that appeared in *Ideals and Standards: The History of the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science, 1893-1993,* pp.68-80.]

Collections

The transformation of the collection from print to print-plus-electronic began in the early 'nineties. In 1992/93, the *ALCTS Network News*, an online newsletter, was the first digital publication to be cataloged for the LIS collection. Issues were downloaded and stored on floppy disks. In 1993/94, the pamphlet file was eliminated, and the pamphlets were either fully cataloged or discarded. Over time, more and more pamphlet series and reports were transformed to web-only publications. Although the library continued to distinguish itself by actively collecting "fugitive" materials, such as library annual reports, it struggled to keep pace with inflation in the cost of scholarly journals. A highlight of 1994/95 academic year was the acquisition of *Library & Information Science Abstracts (LISA)* on CD-ROM, a format that researchers found preferable to the printed issues. Five years later, the library licensed H.W. Wilson's *Library Literature & Information Science Full Text,* which provided digitized journal articles at a time when few of the journals themselves had converted to e-publishing. A milestone for the entire University Library was the implementation in 2005 of the Discover open URL linking service, which enabled users of an online index to connect to full text resources in other online products.

In 2002, the LIS Library purchased its first e-book through NetLibrary. Since then, dozens of NetLibrary books have been acquired. In 2009, the InfoSci-Books database was licensed, providing access to all books published by IGI-Global. LIS scholars also benefit from Library-wide licenses for information science and technology books through Safari and SpringerLink. In addition, since 2006 the Content Access Management unit has collaborated with the LIS Library to add more than a hundred open access web-based e-books to the online catalog.

During the 'nineties, many duplicate and out-dated volumes were weeded and transferred to the Central Book Stacks. Throughout this period, the number of monographic volumes in the LIS Library hovered around 25,000, but the collection swelled when the Stacks were declared full and a moratorium on transfers was imposed. When the Oak Street storage facility opened in 2004, more than a thousand volumes were selected for transfer to storage, based on their not having circulated recently. In 2008/09, prior to the closure of the library, another 37,649 low-circulation volumes from the LIS Library and the Central Stacks were deposited at Oak Street. Transfers from the Central Stacks to Oak Street freed up space for 24,258 volumes (the bulk of the collection) that were then transferred from the LIS Library

to the Central Stacks, leaving 571 volumes to be transferred into other active collections, including the Communications Library, the Education & Social Science Library, Grainger Engineering Library, the reference collection of the Rare Book & Manuscript Library, and the Undergraduate Library.

The LIS Library has benefitted greatly from gifts from individuals and other libraries. In 1997, the North Suburban Library System donated 1,500 books from its professional collection, and the library at the American Library Association headquarters in Chicago has frequently forwarded duplicate and older materials to us. In 1999, the library began to receive the books displayed at the LIS pavilion at the annual Frankfurt Book Fair. This arrangement, brokered through Northwestern University, has strengthened our holdings on Western European librarianship.

The Virtual New Books Shelf debuted in 1997, and it remains one of the library's most popular services. The need to continue a regular listing of relevant new books after the closure of the LIS Library prompted enhancements to the Voyager new book list program by the University Library IT staff.   Now researchers are able to identify new books not only by their location or classification number (both inadequate parameters for a field as interdisciplinary as LIS), but also by the Library fund code on which the books were purchased.

Facilities

The physical space of the library changed little over the years. Room 316, which had served as a conference room and group study space, was re-claimed by the University Library as office space in 1993/94; in 2008 it was transformed into a classroom for teaching with computers. Without a separate group study room, the large oak tables in room 306 became a gathering place for students to work together. While the library was a silent refuge on some days, on others it brimmed with discussion and laughter.

More than once, water leaks damaged the plaster and paint on the walls and ceilings, but the collections remained unscathed thanks to quick action by staff.   An unanticipated bequest in 2004 provided funds to replace underutilized individual study carrels with comfortable arm chairs and low tables, arranged on carpeted "reading islands." Although wireless access came to the LIS Library sooner than to other parts of the building, the lack of electrical outlets frustrated laptop users.

Services and Use

In the spring term of 1994, GSLIS relocated from David Kinley Hall to the former Acacia fraternity house. In her annual report, Pat Stenstrom wrote, "Although 501 East Daniel is only two blocks away, the increase in distance is enough to reduce the casual use of the

library." She attributed a sharp decline in course reserves circulation both to the move of the school and to a revision of the core curriculum. Nonetheless, the LIS Library continued to run its own course reserve operation for printed books and photocopied articles, and the need to consult materials on reserve was a primary motivation for students to visit the library. In spring 1999, prompted by the needs of the LEEP distance education program, the LIS Library became the first campus library to offer a full-fledged electronic reserves service, including copyrighted articles and chapters. For the first few years, LIS e-reserves were hosted on a GSLIS server, and GSLIS instructional technology staff designed and maintained web-based forms for faculty to submit reserve requests. In 2001/02, e-reserves were extended to all GSLIS classes, both on- and off-campus. Eventually, after a successful pilot program in the Undergraduate Library, e-reserves were adopted throughout the University Library, and the LIS Library no longer needed to maintain its own system.

When Sue Searing assumed the position of LIS Librarian, the library was still doing its own original cataloging. Two years later, the central cataloging department re-absorbed that responsibility. In 2001, endowment funds supported a one-time project to create full analytic catalog records for 1,600-plus LIS dissertations on microfiche. These materials saw an immediate leap in use.

LIS Library staff were deeply involved in the consortial implementation of the DRA integrated library system, which replaced the 20-year-old LCS system in 1998. A massive bar-coding project in 1996 preceded the switch to DRA. In 2002, DRA was replaced with the Voyager system. Again, LIS Library staff played important roles on Library-wide committees and training teams.

As the LEEP program grew, the demand for new service approaches grew with it. The Academic Outreach division added the LIS Library as an extension on their toll-free phone line. Sue worked closely with the Academic Outreach Librarian, Pat Cardenas, to acquaint new LEEP students with the document delivery options available to them. Reference questions began arriving more often via email than by phone or in person. For the first few years of the LEEP program, off-campus students made intensive use of the physical library and its print collections during the mid-semester "LEEP weekends," when students are required to attend face-to-face class sessions on campus. Staff schedules were juggled to provide robust reference services during these times. As more LIS resources became available online, however, the on-site use declined, though LEEP weekends (which grew to be five days long) remained busy relative to other times of the semester.

The LIS Library's first website went live in 1996. A major re-design was initiated in 2005, mirroring a design that was developed and tested in the Education & Social Science Library. In spring 2009, Sue supervised two GSLIS students in independent study projects, with the goal of reconceptualizing the departmental library website as an information portal for the field of LIS. After a round of usability testing, the LIS Virtual Library site was launched in August 2009. In addition to enhanced informational content, the site features the LIS Easy

Search, a federated search of three LIS online article indexes, the online catalog, ebook databases, and other sources.

As visits to the LIS Library dropped off, outreach to users increased. In 2005 Sue initiated office hours at the LIS Building. After the closing of the library, Librarian's Office Hours increased significantly. The librarian or the library operations associate are "embedded" at GSLIS for a few hours each day, Monday through Friday. Weekend hours are added when LEEP students are on campus.

Library instruction, including tours for new students and in-class lectures, was always an important component of the LIS Library's services. The advent of the LEEP program, with its large cohorts of students in summer "boot camp" each July, necessitated the development and delivery of a new series of workshops. These workshops, backed up with web-based resource guides, condensed many important lessons in the organization and use of the disciplinary literature.

User education for information literacy grew steadily in the 21st century. In 2008/09, for example, the LIS Librarian and/or the Library Operations Associate led 41 instructional sessions (including tours, workshops, and guest appearances in classes) reaching 1,147 learners. Course-integrated classroom instruction is provided for the core courses in both their on-campus and LEEP manifestations. In addition, the LIS Librarian works with GSLIS faculty members to tailor in-class presentations and resource guides for advanced classes upon request. Since 2002, face-to-face library instruction has been supplemented by web-based resource guides, which are heavily used by students and frequently linked by faculty from their syllabi.

Communication with users grew more challenging as visits to the physical library dropped off. As an ongoing means of communicating with users, Sue launched an email announcement service in 1999: L4, Little LIS Library Lessons. After a decade, this service was transformed to a news column on the LIS Virtual Library home page, with an option for readers to establish an RSS feed.

Over the years, the LIS Library experimented with several current awareness services. Routed photocopies of journal tables of contents were never entirely abandoned, but they became less important as publishers and indexing databases added alert services. A subscription to the *Informed Librarian*, an aggregator for tables of contents in LIS, was instituted. Services developed in-house also kept users up-to-date. The LIS Library website hosts a bibliographic database of publications by Library faculty, and the librarian for several years maintained a call for papers web forum for Library faculty. From 2002 to 2006, the LIS Library and GSLIS jointly published a topical web guide to current literature, *UI Current LIS Clips,* aimed at alums and the profession at large*.*

Although the LIS Library never functioned as a true laboratory-library, over the years GSLIS students and faculty contributed to its operations and innovations in several important

ways. Faculty members were active in suggesting materials for purchase or licensing, especially in the areas of cataloging and preservation/conservation. As course projects, students developed a well-received online tutorial and evaluated the physical condition of older journal runs. The electronic reserves service owed its initial design and cost estimate to students completing a group project for a class. Occasional practicum students gained experience in collection development and maintenance. Salaried graduate assistants participated in many aspects of the library's management and service provision, from reference and instructional work to website design and updating. Over the years the LIS Librarian has directed independent reading courses, and, as part of the transition to a new service model, two GSLIS students enrolled in an independent study course to collaborate on the re-design and usability testing of the LIS Virtual Library website.

Into the Future

The shift from a mostly-print to mostly-digital library happened gradually over a decade. The decreasing foot traffic in the unit was counterbalanced by evidence of success on other fronts – growing demand for information literacy sessions; increased use of online instructional and reference materials; increased activity during office hours held at GSLIS; positive evaluations by LEEP students of the library's role in online learning.   These trends led to the decision, in 2008, to pursue a new model for library services to the community of LIS information seekers at the U of I.

The justification and vision for the new service model was described in a report by the implementation team:

> *One of the most useful concepts to emerge from current discussions of the future of academic libraries is the notion that libraries must be positioned "in the flow" of their users' information seeking and use. The ways in which GSLIS faculty and students and Library faculty and staff seek and use LIS information have changed dramatically since the advent of the Internet, and they continue to change in response to new technologies and new forms of scholarly and professional communication. The steady decrease in on-site use of the LIS Library, documented by hourly head counts, is the most observable sign of change, but it is not the only story. Other important developments include: the success and growth of LIS online distance education at Illinois, which engages students and faculty located around the world; the migration of major journals and reference tools to the web environment; the rise of open access e-journals and e-books in the discipline; and the Library's development of services, such as the Online Research Resources database, the Discover open URL linker, and the Easy Search federated search function, which enable information seekers to conduct the majority of their library research off-site. In the same time period, the GSLIS building has been remodeled and expanded to provide more classroom space, making it more self-contained as a locale for student learning; and the GSLIS curriculum has expanded far beyond its foundation in library science and practice.*

For the library to be in the "flow" of 21st century users of LIS information, a physical departmental library model is no longer the best option. Although there will continue to be a need for print collections (because some content is still published only in print, and because online access to some content cannot be relied upon over time), there is decreasing justification for collocating LIS materials in a single location, especially a location in the Main Library that is not convenient for many users.

In response to these realities, LIS Library services have been evolving. More and more electronic resources have been added to the collection steadily over the past decade. Reference service has increasingly been provided over email or on-site at GSLIS, rather than across the library desk. Like the archetypal Darwinian fish crawling onto land on its proto-legs, we are now poised to make a major, visible change, but we've been growing and flexing those legs for some time.

The new LIS library services will be centered on a robust and user-responsive virtual library. The Virtual LIS Library will bring together digital content, enhanced online discovery tools for both digital and non-digital content, and an increased virtual presence for subject specialist library faculty and staff in the spaces where the users work and study. Print resources will continue to be collected and preserved, reflecting the hybrid nature of scholarly communication in LIS, but will no longer be aggregated in one location. Befitting the highly interdisciplinary nature of LIS scholarship and teaching, new and existing print materials will be distributed among disciplinary collections and the Main Stacks.

GSLIS's experience with the LEEP program has taught us a vital lesson: the face-to-face, personal element is more important than ever in a predominantly online environment. Therefore, the LIS subject specialists will be "embedded" both at GSLIS and at the Main Library, the two places most frequented by their primary users.

The closure of the library is part of a much larger initiative to improve services in the University Library and to move from a 19th-century model centered on departmental libraries to a 21st-century model that is fluid, responsive, and aligned with contemporary patterns of learning and scholarship. The LIS Librarian and LIS Library Operations Associate are poised to build on the successful components of past services and collections and to let go of old models that no longer generate significant levels of use.

While the LIS Library closed its doors on May 15, 2009, it will take a year or longer to fully disperse the print collections, including uncataloged backlogs and materials with inadequate online records. Meanwhile, the LIS Virtual Library will be further developed and enriched, and the LIS Librarian will be increasingly present in the LIS Building.

How will LIS library services evolve? How will GSLIS students and faculty find and use disciplinary information in 5, 10, or 20 years? How will Library faculty identify and access

materials to inform their daily work as well as research? What roles will LIS subject specialists play in the future of LIS teaching, research and practice at UI? How will publishing practices in the field change? We cannot know the details of the future, but the prospects are exciting.

APPENDIX: *Personnel, 1993-2009*

Faculty librarians

Patrica Stenstrom, 1981-1997
Susan Searing, 1997-present

Civil service staff

Sandra Wolf, 1984-present
Melissa Malia, 1988-1995
Lonnie Clark, Jr., 1993-2003
Anna Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner, 1994-1995
Lori Carroll, 1996-2008
Patsy Inskip, 2009

Graduate assistants

Martin Russell
Abdinasir Omar
Mollie Freier
Anne Barnhart
Joanne Kaczmarek
Yan Xu
Daisy Porter
Eric Sizemore
Lauren McDermott
Karla Stover Lucht
Lucy Moynihan
Sarah Hjeltness
Alison Greenlee