

Annual Report

Annual

A N N U A L

PATRICK POWER LIBRARY

1990 - 1991

R E P O R T



Saint Mary's
University

As they work together to rationalize their limited resources, Nova Scotia's universities are following a pattern already set by their libraries. Resource sharing became a central theme in our interlibrary relations in the 1980s, and in the present decade we expect this trend to become dominant.

The six -- soon to the seven -- libraries of Novanet already share catalogues, acquisitions and cataloguing facilities, and a circulation system. Users now have simultaneous online access to most of our members' holdings. Our cataloguing staffs, working in concert, are rapidly creating a single, complete database of books and periodicals. A complementary book acquisitions module is now fully on stream, and our circulation departments are forging a single set of rules for student borrowers. We are looking beyond our libraries, to Novanet's further growth, to the use of systems like CaNet to access the records of a greater number of institutions, and to the development of a sophisticated document delivery network.

The library's tradition of resource-sharing began years ago with inter-library loans, a service in recent times enhanced by online access to others' catalogues. The metro universities' collections librarians, with projects already underway to rationalize our education, women's studies and maths collections, are working to reduce duplication and ensure the retention of materials we need to keep. For each Saint Mary's student served by the Ferguson Library for Print-Handicapped Students, we provided readings for three students from other universities.

Rationalization of our library services and collections is not meant to be an excuse for their limitation, of course, nor does it do away with the need for the resources (particularly human resources) needed to serve a growing number of more knowledgeable patrons. Not all needs can be met through cooperative ventures: each institution must continue to develop a healthy core collection. In this regard, the very limited growth of the Saint Mary's collection continues to be of considerable concern to us, and to the whole academic community. In 1990/91 the collections budget increased by only 5.7%, to \$556,000. Faced with average price increases of 16% for periodicals and 11% for books, we are maintaining our periodical subscriptions and standing orders only at a substantial cost to our book collection. Just \$239,742 was left to buy monographs for 27 academic and 4 library departments this year; we were unable to buy even one new book per student.

More students, with greater and more varied demands, are receiving the enriched service which has long been the basis of the Saint Mary's reputation. Virtually every annual comparison we gather and every departmental annual report we receive shows that the role of the Patrick Power Library, always one of the academic cornerstones of the university, grows year-by-year.

Information desk activity, for example, continues to run well ahead of the percentage increase in Saint Mary's enrolment, reflecting the greater emphasis many faculty are placing on library research. Nearly 26,000 reference questions were fielded in 1990/91, twenty percent more than last year. Despite these numbers student self-sufficiency has remained our goal, with library instruction classes, student library workbooks, and CD-Rom instruction sessions at the core of our reference activities. Each of these methods raises questions and problems of its own, producing new, often greater demands on our reference staff. In the past ten years, reference-assisted research has risen by 155%.

In 1990/91 we reached 2,189 students with library instruction sessions, a 75% increase in one year. The Ferguson Library's taped readings went from 337 to 500, and Circulation rose by 13.2%, for the first time breaking the 200,000 mark. The number of interlibrary loan transactions -- in and out -- came close to 2000. Three major grants were administered. This was the second year of a three-year SSHRC Latin America/Caribbean studies grant; we began to purchase criminal justice monographs from a \$20,000 Law Foundation of Nova Scotia grant; \$45,000 was awarded by the Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education to purchase technological and mechanical aids for the use of the disabled in the Library. In addition to automatic doors, braille signs and a new Kurzweil machine, this last grant enabled us to purchase a Novanet work station with magnification software, an audio screen reader, and a mouth/head control.

The last major pieces of the Novanet puzzle fell firmly into place during 1990/91, as the monographic and periodical payment functions of the acquisitions unit came online, and as the catalogue's Boolean (sets) search capabilities were made functional.

The acquisitions module has been one of the more challenging to implement. Complex in any case -- it combines material control with financial functions -- it was developed by GEAC much more recently than some of their other programmes, and so some portions of it were still being developed by the vendor even as we brought it online. In addition adding the payment functions, we spent much time this year broadening the acquisition staff's initial training in the module's operations, and (with the help of the university's Business Office) solving the mysteries of the GST as it applies to our "business".

Over the Christmas break all Novanet activity was combined on a single, more powerful mainframe, one of GEAC's 9000 series. This new computer supports a larger number of public and staff terminals, and with all parts of the system now on the same computer, data transfer between the modules is faster and absorbs less machine processing time.

The larger effects of the 9000's advent were the aforementioned Boolean catalogue searching, and a new cataloguing system, the Bibliographic Processing System (BPS). Boolean searching enables patrons to search for one or more keywords taken from anywhere in the author, title, or subject indexes, or from all of them in combination, exponentially increasing the power and flexibility of a patron's search strategy. It is now possible, as well, to limit a search to items of a certain language, format, or year of publication. Serial titles are now clearly designated.

The BPS cataloguing setup is a complex process, one bearing little resemblance to its predecessor. After a difficult start-up -- GEAC had not adapted a multi-agency network such as Novanet to its 9000 model, and many functions we expected in January were not consistently available until mid-February -- the inevitable staff training, procedures development and problem solving phases began, processes we were just finishing as the year ended.

1990/91 saw the completion of what has been a five-year project to join the nearly 30,000 Dewey decimal-catalogued books with our Library of Congress collection. In 1985 we began by recataloguing the Dewey books which had been signed out over the previous few years. Over the following three years we gradually reduced that collection, and in 1989 we discarded a number of volumes which had no real place in our collection. Finally, this summer past we completed the merging of the remaining 10,000. Between these Dewey additions, the cataloguing of new books, and ongoing conversion of other older books into machine readable records, we now have three-quarters of our books accessible through our machine-readable catalogue.

In addition to the ongoing retrospective conversion (recon) of the remaining Dewey books and of books signed out which had not reached the database, and the processing of material newly purchased, our chief cataloguing initiatives centred on original cataloguing. In this work, cataloguing from scratch those books for which no other source of bibliographic information can be found (eg. Saint Mary's theses), our production jumped 65%, from 665 titles in 1989/90 to 1094 in 1990/91.

While our student population continues to grow, our study space is finite. The Reference room and much of the second and third floor are filled with students, most weekdays, from before noon until late in the evening. The Reserve Reading room, traditionally a silent study area, had by last year become so crowded that maintaining a quiet atmosphere was impossible. The installation of 45 new study carrels in the fall meant that the room could be used by many more students and was much quieter than before; a similar installation on levels two and three would have an equally positive result.

Reference services to the physically disabled have traditionally been integrated into the sometimes hectic routine of the Information desk. Responding to many of these students' need for more individualized service and our undivided attention, Special Services this year began a programme of scheduled reference consultation.

First introduced three years ago, our facsimile transmission facility turned out to be far busier than we could have anticipated, and for a time came to dominate the work of our administrative secretarial staff. This year its use has plateaued; the number of pages transmitted and received went up only 2% over 1989/90. This is due to the increased number of FAX machines on campus, eight at last count. That there is any growth at all is due to this service's still-developing popularity among students.

The highlight of Media Services' year was an unexpected bonus from our satellite dish: we received the Hubble Telescope photos even before NASA received theirs, leading to more than a thousand data requests a week, for a short period, from computer users all across North America. Even NASA turned to us for the photos we received, giving the university increased positive media exposure. As usual, Media Services renewed our facilities in a number of areas. Chief among these were major innovations in the residence and student centre cafeterias, and a complete rewiring of our television system. New equipment included projection screens, and new television sets in the Language Lab and the Theatre Auditorium.

After unexpected delays, non-professional library staff have all had up-to-date job descriptions prepared, and are well through the university's job evaluation process. Knowing that a qualified and experienced (and properly compensated) library staff must be in place to effect the next stages in the evolution of libraries and their cooperation, we are optimistic about the findings of the job evaluation process. And, as most of our staff are women, we are looking even further ahead, to the results of the university's Pay Equity initiative.

The University Librarian, Ron Lewis, has been on administrative leave since January 1, 1991. His responsibilities have been taken up by Chris MacGillivray, Margot Schenk, and Rashid Tayyeb. As Chief Administrative Officer, Chris has been responsible for the library's day-to-day operations, and has been a member of Senate and of Senior Administrators. The Head of Public Services, Margot, assumed additional responsibilities as a member of the Novanet Management Committee, Senate Library Committee, Committee of Metro University Librarians and the Council of Nova Scotia University Librarians. Rashid, our Head of Technical Services, added the Association of Atlantic Universities Librarians Committee, the Computer Policy Committee and the Academic Planning Committee to his usual responsibilities.

These managers, in turn, have been ably supported by the staff who report to them. Even at the very busiest of times, our staff has maintained a high level of performance, providing patrons with service perhaps unequalled at any other university in the region. Our staff, and the library they serve, remain one of Saint Mary's greatest natural resources.

The following, extracted from our annual statistics, indicate recent trends in selected library activities:

	<u>1985/86</u>	<u>1989/90</u>	<u>1990/91</u>	% change 1989/90- <u>1990/91</u>	% change 1985/86- <u>1990/91</u>
Books and Bound Periodical Collection	242,828	271,792	279,305	+ 2.8	+ 15.0
Periodical Subscriptions	1,973	2,008	2,042	+ 1.7	+ 3.5
Reference Questions	16,765	21,491	25,942	+ 20.7	+ 54.7
Circulation	163,521	182,385	206,538	+ 13.2	+ 26.3
Library Visits	455,164	526,963	206,538	- 2.0	+ 13.5

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