



**Saint Mary's**  
University

**PATRICK POWER LIBRARY**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**1997-98**

Rashid Tayyeb  
Acting University Librarian

## ***Introduction***

Academic Libraries have experienced fundamental changes over the last decade. Today's library must offer more advanced tools to the information-hungry user, including interfaces with CD-ROM collections, e-mail, the Internet, and electronic resources from remote sites, all while providing traditional research services in a people-friendly environment. Saint Mary's is no exception. Fewer individuals are coming to the Library. Why? Because we have taken the catalogue and a host of resources which students and faculty formerly consulted on paper and made them available electronically, campus-wide. Yet even on an average day in the academic year you can't find a seat in the building.

By diversifying our means of delivering service, the Patrick Power Library provides more and varied ways for its user community to access resources. With improved document delivery, we offset our diminished buying power for the number of books purchased per student. With increased and focused forms of instruction, we give students the tools to deal with multiple formats of information. Even though we may never see some of our patrons, we connect them to an information lifeline.

Last year, the Patrick Power Library positioned itself to take advantage of new developments in technology without compromising our traditional service to the University community. This goal was accomplished through collaboration, cooperation and innovation.

## ***Service to Our Users***

CD-ROM and database use statistics were compiled campus-wide for the first time this year. 23,254 database sessions were recorded, an 81% increase over last year's estimated usage. Of these sessions, 38.9% occurred within the Library. Our ability to provide access to bibliographic and full-text databases and to electronic journals is being recognized by intensive use.

**User Education** instructional activity, through workbooks, tutorials and classroom sessions, continues to cultivate skills in students who are, more than ever, awash in a sea of information possibilities. Over 2700 students participated in library

instructional activities. Faculty and staff workshops were also a priority this year.

The **Data Liberation Initiative** enabled the library to meet an increasing demand for Statistics Canada electronic raw data sources.

**Access Services** implemented several new features of the Novanet Advance system. Electronic mail notices, automated renewal requests, improved Novanet Express document delivery, and the ability to renew materials anywhere were welcomed by our patrons.

The **Ferguson Library for Print Handicapped Students** served 96 users filling 396 requests for audio and electronic material. 2980 pages of material was converted into electronic text.

**Interlibrary Loan/Document Delivery** remained a net supplier of resources to the library community, borrowing 815 items from and lending 1196 items to other libraries. Over 20% of borrowed material and 10% of lent material was transmitted electronically, dramatically improving turnaround times. Novanet Express (a resource sharing tool among most Nova Scotia universities) supplied a further 502 items to and borrowed 425 items from our university partners.

The enhancement of the Library's computer systems continues to be a major task. More than two thirds of the Library's PCs have been upgraded to Pentium level in anticipation of the introduction of a Windows 95 platform and to become fully Year 2000 compliant.

**Reference Desk** activity increased by 7% over 1996/97. A thorough analysis of reference statistics reveals that, over two decades, the average student is asking questions more often. In spite of the growing number of virtual users, face-to-face contact is still preferred by many.

In any library, the ability to integrate new material is crucial. Without the timely ordering and receipt of materials by the staff in **Acquisition Services** and the prompt and accurate cataloguing

of these items by the staff in **Cataloguing Systems and Database Management**, our public service areas could not provide the same high quality of service to the user community. These departments, rarely seen, make an essential contribution to the accomplishment of the Library's goals.

**Media Services** focused on providing state-of-the-art equipment in the new Sobey building.

### *Collection Issues:*

There is a growing tension between the demands placed on students in the classroom and the resources supplied by the University. Many of the new students are less and less willing to venture to other institutions to obtain material or to obtain the same material through document delivery. With increasing frequency, we hear "I'm a Saint Mary's student. I shouldn't have to go to the Mount for my material." The competition for the same collection dollar among new course offerings, old and established courses, traditional and newly-published journals and a growing array of electronic tools is causing difficulties in the delivery of material to our student community. The Library's continuously declining purchasing power within a static budget is barely able to sustain the minimum core of resources for the existing disciplines.

The book and non-print collection from the International Education Centre was transferred to and integrated into the Library collection, improving our resources for International Development Studies.

### *Staffing:*

After years of dedicated service, Christine MacGillivray (Administrative Assistant) and Margot Schenk (Acting University Librarian) retired. Rashid Tayyeb was appointed Acting University Librarian. Brenda Bentley became the new Administrative Assistant and Angela Dinaut joined as Secretary to the University Librarian. Cindy Boxall was hired to the position of Head of Instructional Development. Ron Houlihan, Resource Coordinator with the International Education Centre, was transferred to the Library when funding for the Centre was curtailed.



## *Training*

The Library is a learning organization, with an emphasis on education and instruction for staff. Upgrades to hardware and software necessitated employee re-orientation to such applications as Microsoft Office and Windows. In addition, the Library introduced several electronic databases which required training for both staff and students. Almost all library staff attended a series of computer training sessions offered by the University's Continuing Education Department and by the Coordinator of Systems and Training. For the first time, pre-registered workshops were given to faculty members who wished to learn more about online database searches and Internet applications. Co-sponsored by Continuing Education and by the Quality of Teaching Committee, these workshops helped us meet some of the pressing instructional needs of our faculty peers who are trying to incorporate the new information technologies into their instructional design.

## *The Growing Virtual Library:*

Realizing that change is constant and that resources are limited, the Patrick Power Library has actively created innovative strategies for achieving quality and a degree of excellence to meet our users' needs and expectations. A wide range of electronic resources can now be reached within the library, across campus, and beyond.

Of the more than 25 research databases available, several are now accessible through the library Web Page (<http://www.stmarys.ca/administration/library/>). Books can be renewed from any computer terminal. Reference questions can be asked online. Faculty, staff and students requiring research materials can request them electronically, either through Novanet Express or by e-mail. Delivery of material from the most remote Novanet sites within three days for a modest \$2.00 fee brings a wealth of resources to our community for less than the cost of return bus fare. In the future, given the resources, the Library will continue to provide expeditious service to our user community - including those who never enter our building.

|   | 1987/88<br>(10 years) | 1992/93<br>(5 years) | 1996/97<br>(1 year) | 1997/98  | % Change<br>1987/88 to<br>1997/98 | % Change<br>1996/97 to<br>1997/98 |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Questions at the Reference Desk                                       | 19,370                | 27,042               | 25,699              | 27,428   | +42                               | +6.7                              |
| Total Circulation   | 179,452               | 231,057              | 235,235             | 212,351  | +18                               | -10                               |
| Students taught in Library<br>Instruction Sessions                    | 1,032                 | 1,645                | 2,811               | 2,733    | +165                              | -3                                |
| Visits to the Library   | 455,056               | 585,771              | 551,785             | 471,653  | +4                                | -15                               |
| Monographs purchased  | 3,940                 | 5,119                | 3,316               | 2,842    | -28                               | -14                               |
| Volumes purchased per student   | .72                   | .65                  | .45                 | .39      | -46                               | -13                               |
| Average cost of a journal subscription                                | \$145.12              | \$212.17             | \$280.27            | \$315.41 | +117                              | +13                               |
| Journals as a percentage of total<br>acquisitions budget              | 51                    | 56                   | 51                  | 54       | +6                                | +6                                |
| Total titles added to Novanet,<br>including retrospective cataloguing | 6,857                 | 11,467               | 5,985               | 7,187    | +5                                | +20                               |