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Library Profile / State University of New York at Plattsburgh

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Library Profile - SUNY-Plattsburgh

by **Jeanne H. Bennink** (Head of Resource Control, Technical Services)
and **Patricia W. Bentley** (Head of Technical Services)
Column Editor, **Barbara Dean** (Fairfax County Public Library)

Plattsburgh is located in the northeast corner of New York on Lake Champlain. We are an easy commute to both

the city of Montreal, Canada and the city of Burlington, Vermont. An hour's drive west brings us to the High Peaks Region of the Adirondack Mountains and the site of the '82 Winter Olympic Games, Lake Placid. The State University College at Plattsburgh is one of 34 state-supported campuses spread across New York to serve more than 400,000 students and comprising the State Uni-

versity of New York (SUNY) system.

The Plattsburgh campus is primarily a four-year undergraduate college offering almost 60 major fields of study. Our student population is about 5,500 full time undergraduates, most of whom are New York State residents. We offer five Master's degree programs, and have approximately 600 graduate students.

The Library

The Benjamin F. Feinberg Library is a bright, cheerful building (architecturally characterized as Post-Modern) located in the heart of the campus next to the college center. It is named after the state senator who proposed legislation establishing the SUNY system in 1948.

Additionally, the building houses the Rockwell Kent Collection of art and ephemera, an irony typifying the "inclusionary" nature of libraries since Kent was a pronounced radical, left of center while Feinberg was a prominent and influential Republican New York State senator.

The building was occupied in 1977 and while it has undergone many changes in the location and function of service areas within the building, we have yet to outgrow the space. Our collection consists of about 350,000 monographs and bound periodicals. We subscribe to 1,438 periodicals and have a seating capacity for 1,300 patrons. We are a New York State Document Research Depository and serve as a partial depository for selective

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The Staff

There are 35 full time staff members at Feinberg Library: thirteen librarians, three professionals and eighteen support staff.

Our thirteen librarians serve as "liaisons" to the faculty of the academic departments on campus serving as collection development bibliographers for that discipline and to provide the faculty with a contact for any business they may have with the library. Each librarian/liaison is responsible for one or more academic areas or programs. Faculty contacts range from book orders, requests for new periodical subscriptions, or inquiries about other library services. The librarian/liaison serves as the bibliographer for his/her particular academic area(s).

A modified cost/use formula is used to distribute the acquisition budget to each academic area. Liaisons are encouraged to consult frequently with members of their departments and programs and faculty suggestions are encouraged. Book lists, bibliographies and personal suggestions are, at the request of the librarian/liaison, routinely searched by Resource Control staff for library holdings, and in-print availability. Liaisons' activities in relation to collection development and agendas are coordinated by the Collection Management Coordinator.

The Budget

For the past few years, Feinberg Library has had a fairly steady acquisitions/access budget of about \$550,000. Because of the escalation of periodical costs experienced by all libraries we have made an effort to reserve a 40% share of the budget for monographs. Having gone through a major periodical review a couple of years ago that resulted in the cancellation of several hundred titles, we keep a watchful eye on the spiraling cost of serials and add only a judicious number of new titles as curriculum and use changes demand. We have, in this way managed to "protect" the book budget and maintain a 60/40 balance between serials and monographs.

The Process

While Feinberg Library has automated its cataloging and circulation processes with the MultiLis modules, the acquisitions system in use is BibBase and we use Faxon's MicroLinx system for serials control. OCLC is used for bibliographic control.

In Technical Services, our "acquisitions" department falls under the purview of a full-time professional staff member who supervises three classified staff under the rubric Resource Control. Resource Control is responsible, additionally, for the acquisition of media and sound recordings and the acquisition and control of serials. As of October 1, we also assumed check-in and maintenance for all government documents.

After a book request is forwarded to acquisitions by a liaison it is searched in both the online public catalog for holdings and in the OCLC database for the bibliographic record. If no duplication is found we use the OCLC export function to download the bibliographic information to the automated acquisitions system, BibBase.

BibBase provides us with a hardcopy order for the vendor of our choice. We currently use three major vendors. BibBase also provides a variety of fund accounting and order status reports that are used by acquisitions to keep librarian/liaisons informed of all activity on their accounts. One clerk is responsible for verifying orders, downloading from OCLC, and encumbering funds and placing orders with vendors identified by the Head of Resource Control. This person spends the balance of her time dealing with mending problems and gift processing.

A second clerk, (also responsible for receipt of all incoming mail for the library), processes the book orders as they arrive, checks over the shipment for damage, verifies the invoice prices, and expends the amounts in the appropriate funds on BibBase. She then types and submits a requisition for processing the invoice for payment. The requisition is then submitted to the Administrative unit and is forwarded for payment to the Campus Purchasing Dept. Finally, she supervises the ownership stamping and security taping of the material before forwarding it on to the Bibliographic Control (cataloging) Unit with its bibliographic/order record. It is also at this point that continuations, original cataloging and Library of Congress cataloging sorts are done.

Our college is a comprehensive, undergraduate institution with divisions of Arts and Sciences, Business and Economics, and Professional Studies. Thus we find ourselves purchasing primarily university press titles on a confirming order basis. We are required, as an agency of the State of New York, to deal with vendors according to state contract specifications and are accountable to the campus Purchasing Office for our library purchases.

What the Future Holds

At present approval plans are not part of our approach to acquisitions but we continue to investigate the possibility. Our contingency budgets for the past several years have precluded a commitment of any dollar amount that would make an approval plan worthwhile.

It is our expectation that the acquisition module of the MultiLis software will become available in the next few years. A decision to transfer our processing from BibBase will have to be carefully considered as we benefit now from a system that more than meets needs.

We have over fifteen years' experience with an established liaison program that has been successful in terms of both collection development and public relations. Over the years this liaison program has brought into focus the necessary interaction and overlapping of departmental boundaries in our library that has allowed us to improve services in quantity and quality. The overriding philosophy of the unit is to serve the needs of the liaison in terms of searching, order processing, notification, and budget accounting. Policy and strategic planning are coordinated through Collection Management and the Office of the Director. We also expect a serials module within two years which needs to accommodate holdings and locations, beyond the current capacity of the bibliographic database if we are to migrate from MicroLinx. ☞