

LIBRARY COMMITTEE PROPOSAL

A Report Assessing the Needs of Reese Library

November 15, 2001

This report is submitted to identify the needs of Reese Library. Support for the Reese Library is vital to advance the academic mission of Augusta State University. Research and access to information are essential parts of the academic mission of Augusta State University. Students must be able to find accurate, up-to-date resources as they conduct research for their classes. To help support the mission of the Library and the University, the report examines the budgetary needs of the Library in the context of historical fiscal trends and identifies areas of students' satisfaction and concern.

The Library Committee and Reese Library have engaged in development of a Student Survey and a Faculty Survey of satisfaction with the Library and its services. The Student Survey was administered in the Spring 2001. The survey was submitted to 22 classes containing 490 potential respondents. Unfortunately, only 256 responses were received. Given the lower than expected N, it became impossible to perform meaningful sub-analyses on topics such as satisfaction as a function of academic major. A summary of the major findings as determined by the committee is outlined in Attachment 1.

One area of particular concern is students' dissatisfaction with the quality of journal, magazine, and book holdings. While 23% of students find the library unable to meet their needs in this area, it should be noted that 20% of students have not used this resource of the library. The large number of students reporting that they haven't used these holdings as part of their coursework is likely due to most of the survey participants being freshman (47.3%). Thus, the committee believes the percentage of students dissatisfied with the libraries holding would increase as a function of academic rank (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior). This hypothesis was supported by the strong positive correlation between academic rank and level of dissatisfaction, $r^2=.77$. These results are consistent with the findings from an April 1999 faculty survey that found 29% of responding faculty reported no to the question "Does the library make available sufficient information for the needs of your department?"

The Committee has begun to work on modification of the instrument for use as a Faculty Survey. Results from this survey, once available, should provide an additional basis for the thorough annual review of the library.

In order that the Library has the support it needs, the Library Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. Change the current re-directed (one-time) annual funding for periodicals (currently \$11,123) to permanent funding, adding it to the regular annual funding for the Reese Library.

Should this re-directed, one-time annual funding be discontinued, the Reese Library would fall even further short of being able to meet increased costs of books and serials. Moving this amount to the regular funding would provide opportunities for more accurate planning for expenditures by the library. This is a particularly significant time

for such an adjustment since the state will be eliminating one of the two online periodical databases from Galileo. This will almost assuredly force departments to make some major revisions toward their purchases of online and bound periodicals.

2. Halt the annual decline in the percentage of ASU's total expenditures that have been allocated to the Library and begin increasing the total with a view toward regaining the former level of 4%. As can be seen from the chart below, there has been a steady decline in the library percentage of the ASU educational and general budget from 4.41% in FY 1990 to 3.29% in FY 2000.

The Library is faced with annual increased costs for books of two percent and periodicals of up to ten percent (see chart, Attachment 1). This translates to the necessity to purchase fewer and fewer new books and the need to discontinue needed periodicals. As noted above, much of the current collection is old and outdated.

To accomplish this, the Committee recommends an incremental increase in the regular annual materials allocation to Reese Library with the view of returning the total library budget to at least the former level of 4% of the institution's education and general budget.

LIBRARY 10-YEAR FUNDING HISTORY

| FY | TOTAL Institutional E & G Expenditures | TOTAL Library E & G Expenditures | Library Percent, TOTAL E&G Expenditures |
|-----------|---|---|--|
| 90 | 20,431,909 | 901,637 | 4.41% |
| 91 | 21,257,742 | 978,652 | 4.60% |
| 92 | 22,419,397 | 932,169 | 4.16% |
| 93 | 26,696,866 | 1,025,919 | 3.84% |
| 94 | 28,582,526 | 1,143,159 | 4.00% |
| 95 | 31,532,270 | 1,122,715 | 3.85% |
| 96 | 34,285,483 | 1,231,757 | 3.59% |
| 97 | 36,547,832 | 1,318,008 | 3.61% |
| 98 | 39,360,495 | 1,369,621 | 3.48% |
| 99 | 40,913,670 | 1,375,501 | 3.36% |
| 00 | 43,528,637 | 1,375,501 | 3.29% |

Source: Augusta State University, Financial Report (FY 90 - FY 00)

3. Convert the \$6,111 of one-time funds to permanent funds for the Documents Librarian position. Furthermore, provide an additional \$19,565 (+ \$3,995 benefits) in funds to upgrade the Documents Librarian position from a part time position (with benefits) to a full time position (with benefits). The upgrade to a full time position is necessary for the following reasons:

- a. Documents Librarian position will have increased demands placed upon them since the documents collection is currently being added to the online catalog.
- b. It would provide a major step toward complying with the GPO requirements for a government document depository. Upon last review the University was placed on probationary status from the GPO.
- c. Help satisfy three recommendations as outlined by the latest SACS review:
 - i. The Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that learning resources and services are adequate to support the needs of users.
 - ii. The Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that the library and media center have adequate physical facilities to house, service and make library collections and media services easily available.
 - iii. The Committee recommends that the library and other learning resources be adequately staffed.

4. Allocate one-time funds for a WLN (Western Library Network) Conspectus Analysis as a basis for determination of the needs related to library materials (estimated cost of \$10,000).

There are several possible collection-centered measures:

- a. Checking ASU's serials against lists, catalogs, bibliographies, etc., to determine a match between recommendations and actual holdings.
- b. Application of collection standards of accrediting agencies.
- c. Examination of the collection by persons familiar with literature of each of the subject areas.
- d. Making statistical comparisons to peer libraries.
- e. Providing for a WLN Conspectus Analysis.

Choices a, b, and c are very time-intensive, and therefore expensive if extra staff or graduate students are asked to take on this task. Asking faculty to take on the additional work would entail providing time to accurately complete this task. The current number of professional librarians is below the recommended level for libraries the size of Reese, as revealed in the Library assessment document. Contracting the WLN to perform the service would be an appropriate one-time expenditure to enable the Library to better determine its actual needs. The Library is in the process of collecting data for the purpose of making statistical comparisons to peer libraries.