

**Transformational Change
in the
SUNY Stony Brook Library**

Final Plan September 1997

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Dean of Libraries

Preface: Involving the University Community in Library Planning

The final plan for Transformational Change in the SUNY Stony Brook Library evolved over a one-year period from September 1996 to September 1997. It began with a series of meetings with library staff and science academic departments, where the new Dean of Libraries shared his initial ideas about the most important changes needed in the Library. By the middle of the fall semester 1996, these ideas were pretty well publicized on campus with reports in the campus newspaper, invitations to meet with student groups, and an open, public meeting at the end of the fall semester. In January 1997, the Dean of Libraries issued a written draft plan for community review and comment. This draft plan was also available over the Internet from the Library's homepage. The University Senate Library Committee conducted two public hearings on the draft plan during the spring semester 1997.

The majority of the recommendations in the draft plan received general support from the University community and were incorporated without change into the final plan. However, two draft recommendations dealing with use of library space in the Melville building and the possible consolidation of science branch libraries received mixed or negative reviews from the community. Both these draft recommendations have been revised in the final plan as a result of these community reactions. The Alumni Affairs Office will remain on the first floor of Melville Library, and plans to move Circulation Services to the first floor of Melville Library have more clearly been made long term rather than short term goals.

Reaction to the idea of consolidating science branch libraries were mixed and intense. As a result, the plan was modified to recommend an evolutionary process of change in science library service at Stony Brook: Engineering would move to Melville Library, stored science material would be put in open stacks in Melville Library, and basic science reference and reserve operations would move to Melville Library. Over time, as digital library services and document delivery services improved, more consolidation of print science collections would occur.

The Dean of Libraries, Joseph Branin, thanks all those who contributed ideas and comments on how best to improve the Library at Stony Brook. The final plan before you is much better after review and revision by the University Community.

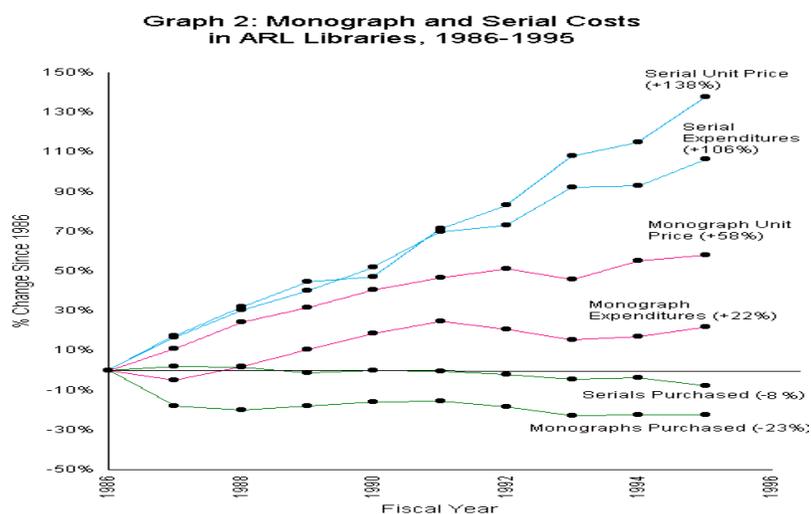
Joseph Branin
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September 8, 1997

Introduction: A Time for Change in Research Libraries

Economic and Technological Change in Research Libraries

Over the last decade many forces have been changing the environment in which research libraries operate. The most pervasive and powerful forces have been related to the economics of higher education and scholarly publishing and to the digital revolution in information technology.

Declines in funding for libraries, coupled with rapid escalation in costs for books, journals, and databases, have forced most research libraries to cut journal subscriptions, reduce book acquisitions, and downsize staffing. In the chart below, statistics from the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) show that the 110 largest research libraries in North America saw their acquisition of new books decline by 23% and their number of journal subscriptions decline by 5% between 1986 and 1996.



At the same time that libraries have had to contend with declining buying power, advances in information technology have begun to offer new opportunities and new demands for

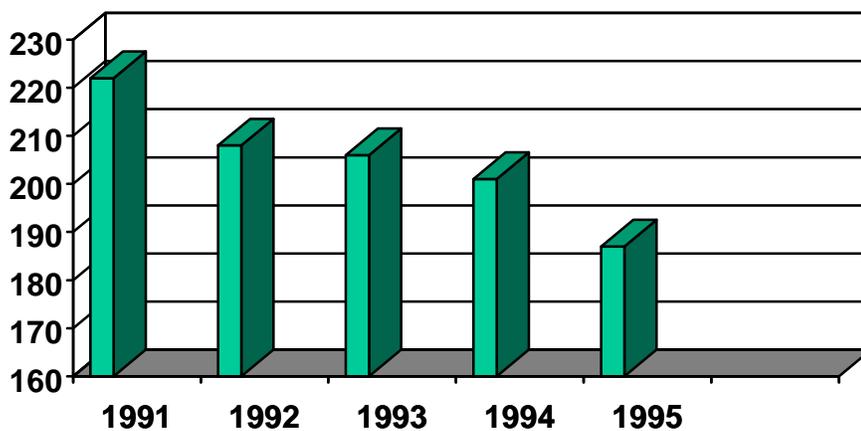
digital information services. Very quickly online library catalogs and indexes have become the basic tools of information access, and full-text databases and digital multimedia are beginning to replace some print books and journals. Electronic publishing and the Internet network present exciting possibilities for fundamental change and improvement in scholarly communications, but this new digital information system will require new investments. Libraries must purchase more access to digital information, buy and continually upgrade more equipment, retrain staff, and work closely with computing and media services to create the proper infrastructure for networked information services. It is likely that libraries will have to manage information services in both the print and digital information systems into the foreseeable future.

The Situation at Stony Brook

The SUNY Stony Brook Library is the 93rd largest research library in North America. Its collection numbers 1.9 million volumes, and its annual budget is approximately \$10.2 million. One of the youngest research libraries in the country, it began in 1957 as the State University College of Long Island at Oyster Bay with a collection of just several thousand volumes. In 1962, the campus moved to Stony Brook, and the Library began to grow very rapidly. By 1975, the collection numbered more than a million volumes, and Stony Brook became a member of the Association of Research Libraries. However, during the last two decades Stony Brook, like most other research libraries, has seen its rate of acquisitions gradually slow. Stony Brook now acquires about 45,000 volumes a year, down from a high of 62,000 new volumes added in 1976.

The Stony Brook Library facilities and collections are decentralized, particularly in the sciences. There are nine libraries on campus: the main Melville Library for humanities and social sciences; the East Campus Health Sciences Library, which reports directly to the Health Sciences Administration; the South Campus Marine and Atmospheric Sciences Library; and six separate science libraries on the West Campus for Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth and Space Science, Engineering, and Mathematics and Physics.

Staffing in the Library (see graph below) reached a high point in 1991 when its FTE count was 222. Today, the Library has a staff of 187, which represents a staffing reduction of 15% over the last five years. Staff reductions have affected all areas of the Library, but the science branch libraries, where staffing was limited to begin with, appear to be affected most adversely.



Library Staffing at Stony Brook 1991-1995

The Library has an online catalog of its holdings, and an Internet Web Site (<http://www.sunysb.edu/library/ldintro.htmlx>) that offers integrated and interactive access to digital information services. The Library subscribes to more than twenty networked databases and to a growing array (more that thirty-five at last count) of full-text journals in a range of disciplines but with a concentration in the sciences.

Equipment in the Library for users and staff is in minimal condition and number, and Library facilities in general lack proper upkeep and attractiveness. During the last few years, efforts have been made to improve the systems infrastructure in the West Campus libraries, and new computers have been added for staff use, public access, and training. But more computers are needed, and other types of equipment, such as microform readers and printers, and audio-visual equipment, must also be added or upgraded. The quality of facilities and equipment seem in the greatest need of improvement in the West Campus libraries.

Two years ago the Health Sciences Library at SUNY Stony Brook, with leadership from its new Director, Spencer Marsh, began an ambitious plan to improve itself. After developing a master plan called “Creating the Knowledge Management Environment for the 21st Century,” the Health Sciences Library began renovating its facilities, adding digital resources and new computer equipment, and recruiting new staff. The goal of the Health Sciences Library plan is to “transform the library from a physical entity housing passive, print-based materials, into a 21st Century knowledge management environment that fully integrates data and knowledge sources, access and delivery systems, education and training programs, and personalized information services.”

Help Shape the Future of the Stony Brook Library

In August of 1996, I became the new Dean of Libraries at SUNY Stony Brook. I believe I come with a mandate to change and improve the Library. I respect the accomplishments of the many staff and faculty who built the research library at Stony Brook from scratch in such a short period of time, and I understand the familiarity and comfort that students and faculty have with the current arrangement of collections and services. But I believe the Stony Brook Library, again like many other research libraries, has reached a point in its history where it needs to be transformed and renewed. Library staff must work together with students, faculty, and University administrators to create a new Library that takes best advantage of the limits of the library economy and the exciting possibilities of digital information technology. I need the entire University community’s assistance in achieving the four goals of my library administration, which are to

1. Focus and improve print-based library collections, services, and facilities
2. Increase investment and effort in digital information services
3. Engage in continuous staff development to insure high productivity and morale

4. Reach out to the campus and community for partnerships, support, and development

Some of the changes I propose in the following plan are not controversial. They are internal to the Library's organization or they recommend new services that will clearly benefit students and faculty. But not all the changes I propose will be easy to accept. To do new things in a time of limited resources requires hard choices. What can we stop doing so that we can redirect funds into new and more useful library services? I hope you will assist me in shaping and making these hard choices as well as the easier ones. I also want to make sure that my plan fits well with President Kenny's Five Year Plan (1995-2000) for the University and with Provost Richmond's Academic Plan for creating a "student-centered research university" at Stony Brook. During the spring semester of 1997, the Senate Library Committee will hold a number of public hearings on the proposed plan that follows. I stand ready at any time to discuss with individuals or groups the ideas in this plan. I can be reached by e-mail at Jbranin@ccmail.sunysb.edu or by phone at 632-7100. Thank you for your assistance and support.

Joseph J. Branin
Dean of Libraries
January 6, 1997

**Summary of Plan for Transformation:
Seven Ways To Improve the SUNY Stony Brook Library**

1. Redesign the use of library space in Melville Library to improve functionality, appearance, and security.

2. Develop new strategies for managing science library services and collections at Stony Brook.

3. Increase investment and efforts to offer digital library services and increase access to print information through document delivery services.

4. Revitalize Special Collections.

5. Begin a Development (Fund Raising) Program for the Library.

6. Make the Library a model “learning organization” by encouraging and rewarding continuous staff development.

7. Reorganize library administration, technical services, and public services in Melville Library to better distribute leadership, create more team efforts, redirect staffing resources, and consolidate and strengthen operations.

Plan for Transformation:

Seven Ways to Improve the SUNY Stony Brook Library

- 1. Redesign the use of library space in Melville Library to improve functionality, appearance, and security.**

The Melville Library is a landmark building on campus. It is centrally located and the largest building on the West Campus. Last year the outer shell of the building was renovated, which greatly improved its exterior conditions. On the interior, if it is properly organized and maintained, the Melville building, because of its size and basic architecture, holds great potential for attractively housing library collections and services, study space, as well as cultural and social activities. Unfortunately, at present, library space is poorly organized and designed, underutilized in certain areas, and generally in shabby condition.

The Library and the University must invest more to improve and maintain public areas in Melville Library by adding new furniture for study space, more computer workstations and multimedia equipment for information services, and by making interior renovations to carpeting, window treatments, wall painting, ceiling tiles, and lighting. The Library should take the lead in reorganizing use of library space and in increasing security in the Melville building. The following steps would greatly improve the Melville building as a library facility:

- Organize major library service points off the Galleria on the 1st Floor of Melville Library
 - Move Music Library and Multimedia Services to 1st Floor and move Technical Services operations to the 2nd Floor
 - Reorganize discipline-based reference services and collections on north side and core areas of 1st Floor to create a consolidated Humanities/Social Sciences library center and an Engineering and Applied Sciences library center
 - Begin library stacks and study area on the south side of 1st Floor, and move Circulation, Reserves, and Copy Services to 1st Floor (space now occupied by Commuter Lounge)
- Increase library stack area in Melville Library for collection growth
 - Expand 3rd Floor Stacks to occupy entire south side of 3rd Floor (space now occupied by Humanities Departments)
 - Add compact shelving to areas of stack core and north-side of 2nd Floor

- Improve study and service space throughout Melville Library
 - New floor treatments in public areas
 - New furniture in public areas, increase overall number of public seats
 - Add more computer and multimedia equipment
 - Open space in 1st Floor Core by removing walls
 - Create attractive service areas with low shelving and clearer sight lines to windows
 - Paint walls and replace worn or missing ceiling tiles
 - Improve lighting in Galleria and south side of 1st Floor

- Improve security in the Melville Library
 - Create new positions in the Library for evening and weekend supervisory staff in Circulation Services and hire uniformed student security monitors to patrol building during late evening and weekend hours of library operation

- The costs for making these improvements to the Melville Library facility are not insignificant, but they do not require any major structural renovations or large capital expenditures. Costs for improvements on the north side and core areas of Melville Library would range from \$400,000 to \$800,000 and in the south side stack area from \$1 to \$4 million depending on the extent of improvements made.

- Current floor plans for levels one to three of Melville Library follow.

Melville Library Floor Plans, Levels One to Three

2. Develop new strategies for managing science library services and collections at Stony Brook

Stony Brook has a tradition of a decentralized approach to science library service and collections. There are now seven science branch libraries in addition to the Melville Library and the Health Sciences Library. The decentralized approach has both advantages and disadvantages that need to be carefully considered. Branch libraries are more convenient to use for single discipline focused faculty and students. They help create a sense of community among a smaller, focused group of users, and the branch libraries tend to be more attractive and personal facilities than a larger main library. At Stony Brook, many science faculty and students support this decentralized approach and do not want to see the current organization of branch libraries change.

On the other hand, it is difficult to maintain the quality of library services in multiple sites as staffing and operating resources decline. Decentralized libraries are more expensive to operate than a consolidated science library would be. In the case of Stony Brook, about \$200,000 per year goes into purely duplicative costs of managing seven rather than one or two science libraries. Interdisciplinary faculty, undergraduates, and the general public would likely find a consolidated library system more convenient. By concentrating staff at fewer service points, more reliable and longer service hours could be scheduled.

There is a range of options regarding possible change in the management of science libraries at Stony Brook in an environment of scarce resources and a growing dependence on digital information services. The following analysis or steps need to be taken:

- Consider moving one or more of the science libraries to Melville Library or the Health Sciences Library
 - There is ample space (55,000 sq. ft.) on the north side of Melville Library to create a consolidated Engineering and Applied Sciences Library
 - The cost of moving up to five of the science libraries and renovating space for their use in Melville Library would be approximately \$300,000
 - Study space and seating need not be lost in such a move. There is ample space in Melville Library for increasing the current seating of 385 in five of the science libraries to more than 500 in Melville Library

- Hire a new junior science librarian and a new science library clerk to compensate for the recent loss of 5 FTE staff in the Science Libraries

- Take a team approach to managing the science libraries regardless of how the collections are organized
 - Offer basic scheduled science reference service from one site, likely Melville Library
 - Use a team approach to develop online science reference services and library instruction
 - Have library staff manage and serve more than one science library facility, more cross-training and flexibility of assignment for science library staff

- Automate and centralize serials control (receipt and check in of journals) to eliminate duplication of effort in this task in the separate science libraries
- Move selective portions of the science collection to Melville Library as science libraries run out of space. (This is already underway with infrequently-used science material now in storage in Melville Library)

- Add more access to science databases and electronic journals and depend more on document delivery services

3. Increase investment and efforts to offer digital library services and increase access to print information through document delivery services

In the print environment, local library collections are essential. Until recently it has been difficult and expensive to move paper resources from one location to another. However, with new digital indexes, books, and journals and the Internet for network access to them, the limitations of time and space begin to disappear. If the user has the proper hardware and software, access to online library services and resources can be from anywhere at any time. Print resources still make up the majority of scholarly publication, but the trend towards electronic publishing is quickly gathering strength. With new scanners and fax equipment, it is also becoming easier to move print material around as well. The Library should consider acquiring needed information through electronic access and document delivery services rather than through local ownership whenever the access option is more cost and service effective

The Stony Brook Library must position itself to take full advantage of the access option new information technology offers by taking the following steps:

- Expand access to networked information sources: indexes, current awareness services, and full-text books, journals, and reports
- Select, organize, and integrate networked resources to help users find what they need in this new and chaotic information environment
- Collaborate with Instructional Computing and Media Services staff to create an effective campus infrastructure for technology support for learning, teaching, and research
- Provide instruction and assistance in the use of new information technology to students, faculty, and the community
- Create a Systems Unit for the Library that has the staffing and expertise to lead planning, training, and technical support for the Library's growing efforts in digital information services

- Establish a document delivery service for all faculty and a personalized, online, current awareness service for all faculty and students

4. Revitalize Special Collections

Special collections of unique and rare material help define a research library. Stony Brook has a number of important special collections that record the cultural, political, and economic history of Long Island and New York State. There are also literary and historical scholarly collections of international scope. The Jacob Javits Papers, the Environmental Defense Fund Archive, and the Yeats Collections are just three of the more well known components of Special Collections at Stony Brook.

Special Collections has an attractive facility in the 2nd Floor of Melville Library, but staffing is at a minimum, hours of operation are very limited, and no active program of continuing to build or publicize Special Collections is underway. This needs to change. Special Collections needs more staff, and staff who can further the important mission of Special Collections. Stony Brook should have an active, effective Special Collections program that offers generous hours of operation, regular exhibits, engagement with University teaching and research, fund raising opportunities, and continuous collection of appropriate unique and rare material that build on existing strengths in local history and international scholarship. The following actions should be taken to improve Special Collections:

- Increase staffing in Special Collections, through reassignment, from the current level of 1 FTE to 3 or 4FTE
- Expand hours of operation in Special Collections
- Schedule exhibits on a regular basis
- Engage faculty and students in use of Special Collections for learning and research
- Create more digital finding aids to Special Collections (There is a very useful digital finding aid to the Javits Collection available to anyone with Internet access.)

- Continue to build and maintain unique and rare materials on Long Island and New York State

5. Begin a Development Program for the Library

As public funding has declined, libraries of all types have had to look for new sources of financial support. Development efforts to raise funds through corporate and private donations and through grant seeking are becoming an essential part of a library's program. The New York Public Library, for example, has one of the most successful development programs of any library in the nation, or of any type of cultural institution for that matter. The state-of-the-art, beautiful new Science, Industry, and Business Library (SIBL) at 34th and Madison Ave. in New York City is a \$100 million addition to the New York Public Library system that was funded by 90% corporate or private donations. Libraries are really excellent targets for fund raising, for they are tangible and symbolic centers of an institution. The Stony Brook Library should take full advantage of the opportunities that an effective development program can offer by taking the following steps:

- Hire an experienced Development Officer for the Library in 1997-98
- Coordinate Library Fund Raising with University development efforts
- Begin a Friends of the Library Program
- Have the Dean of Libraries and Special Collections staff play an active role in development efforts
- Increase support for the Library by a minimum of \$500,000 through fund raising by the year 2000

6. Make the Library a model “learning organization” by encouraging and rewarding continuous staff development

A staff with high productivity and morale is the key to any successful library program. At Stony Brook, the Library is fortunate to have a talented and dedicated staff who appear quite open to change and improvement. Many staff have taken on additional duties in the Library as the overall size of the staff has decreased. Like other research libraries, Stony Brook’s staff can be characterized as stable and aging. There is little turnover in staffing except for retirements, and few new staff have been added to the library in the last decade.

As the Library changes because of economic constriction and the introduction of new information technology, a stable staff must constantly adapt to new ways of organizing work and accomplishing tasks. Team work, flexibility, changing assignments, and the use of new technology will characterize the library work place in the years ahead. Although the staff will be smaller in number, those who work in a research library must be well equipped, continually educating themselves, and comfortable in a dynamically changing environment.

All segments of the Library staff (faculty, technical professionals, and clerical staff), along with the Library administration, have a shared responsibility for taking and offering continuing education. All staff should be open to new opportunities to increase their knowledge and sharpen their skills in information science and management. The Library staff and administration must work together to design and offer training and continuing education for the entire Library community. The Library administration must supply the resources and rewards needed to motivate and support an effective staff development program, and the Library staff, in turn, must be open to and positive towards new learning opportunities. The Library faculty, by virtue of their status, have special responsibility to teach and share their research with others.

Continuing education should be varied and continuous, and cover a wide range of topics in librarianship, management science, computer science, and subject disciplines. The

following steps should be taken to implement such a continuing education program in the Library:

- Establish a Library task force to design and implement a complete training program for the Library staff
- Assign coordinating and support responsibility for continuing education to the Library's Personnel Officer
- Expect all Library faculty to be actively involved in teaching in the staff development program
- Reward and recognize staff for their continuing education efforts
- Allocate adequate funds for staff development support
- Create proper training facility in the Library for staff development

7. Reorganize library administration, technical services, and public services in Melville Library to better distribute leadership, create more team efforts, redirect staffing resources, and consolidate and strengthen operations

To improve library services, the internal organization in the Library must change to respond to reductions in staffing and the automation of many library operations. The Library as a general strategy will increase its staffing commitment to public services work and to systems support by reducing the number of service points in the Library

and its branches and by streamlining and consolidating technical and administrative support services as much as possible. Talented staff will be reassigned and new staff added to the System Support Team and to public services in circulation, document delivery, special collections, and humanities, social sciences, and sciences reference.

As much as possible, the Library will promote from within and hire junior level staff through national and local searches. Internal staffing changes are being made for positive reasons: to better achieve the stated goals of the Library and to place staff where their talents are best employed. The boundary lines separating units and operations in the Library are beginning to blur, and staff must work more in teams that are much more flexible in terms of assignment and duration. Organizational change will be an ongoing process in the Library.

The following staff changes are underway or under discussion in the Library:

- Create new leadership positions for technical services, access services, and systems support
- Link multimedia services to Music Library, and reassign staff member to be new Music and Multimedia Librarian
- Reassign staff to create Head of Special Collections and increase staffing in this unit from 1 to 3 or 4 FTE
- Create a new Systems Support Team with an FTE of 4 to 5 through reassignments and new hire
- Hire new junior science librarian and a new junior social sciences reference librarian
- Reorganize clustering of services and staffing in humanities and social sciences, and in sciences
- Hire a Library Development Officer in 1997-98
- Hire a Weekend and Evening Supervisor for Circulation Services
- Employ student assistants as security monitors for evening and weekend hours in Melville Library
- Hire 1 FTE clerical support staff for Science libraries

- Create a campus document delivery service as part of Access Services, increase student assistant staffing for document delivery.