REFLECTIVE ESSAY

Changes at the Library
Office of the University Librarian
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Over the past few years the UHM Library has immersed itself in initiatives that are beginning to show excellent results. Although staff size is still small by national standards, the dedicated library faculty and staff are forging ahead in the areas of improved facilities, growth of the collections, services to UH, cooperation with other libraries, and digitization of unique materials.

Physical Plant Improvements
Not so long ago, the University housed its collections in one building that was not air-conditioned and a second building that was overflowing with new materials. As of today an addition to Hamilton Library and a reorganization of space in the existing building not only house all the books, journals, and electronic databases in a brighter, greatly updated building but also provide smart classrooms, ample room for computer workstations, and several areas of wireless Internet access. Sinclair Library is on the University’s schedule for renovation, which will include the long-awaited air conditioning that is essential to the long-term maintenance of our collections.

Collection Growth
As the library that provides materials for a very comprehensive university with scores of Ph.D. programs and status as a land-, sea-, and space-grant institution, the UH Mānoa library acquires books, journals, videos, sound recordings, maps, and electronic resources in subject areas in the humanities, social sciences, and science/technology. The library collection strives to reflect in its own strengths the excellence found in UH teaching and research programs. We have an unwritten pact with the region and the world to be the most comprehensive collection on Hawai‘i and the Pacific. Although this is not always easy or possible in times of economic constraints, the Library has made excellent strides in the past few years in maintaining the comprehensiveness of these two collections, and adding substantially to the excellence of our Asian collections and other areas, particularly in the sciences. The University administration responded to the arrival of a new university librarian in 2002 by providing sufficient funds to ensure not only the steady growth of our collections of strength, but also the development of the entire collection across the board. A few crucial databases have recently been purchased; some for basic research and others for research at the most advanced levels. With those critical databases added, we can now turn to rounding out the collection with more electronic journals and specialized databases such as those now becoming available in Asian languages. The collection is back on a pattern of growth, and with the help of a new Director of Development for the Libraries who has begun fundraising activities for the Library, we anticipate that the growth will not diminish.

Services to Students and Faculty
Despite a loss of librarians during the days of economic exigencies, the Library has introduced new programs that aid students and faculty in making the best use of the materials we have and those we can borrow from elsewhere. Staff who work with the
library management system (including the on-line catalog, circulation, ordering, cataloging, etc.) continue to learn about and utilize more of the special features of the Voyager integrated library system. The system already provides an integrated catalog of all the UH system libraries, something which had long been a dream at UH. We are now developing various reports from the system which enable us to compile a list of all titles purchased from a certain fund or of all the journals we purchase in astronomy. We assume that the day will not be too far away when the “federated search” will be possible so that, in one search, a user can find not only books on a certain subject but also journal articles as well. The Library carries on an active program in information literacy, thus preparing students for their coursework and research they engage in today, and also for their life beyond graduation as a citizen in the information society. Because no library can acquire every item needed on campus, we are exploiting new technologies to make interlibrary borrowing more efficient and capable without the intervention of library staff.

Cooperation with Other Libraries
The past two years have seen unprecedented progress in inter-library cooperation on the university and state level. Thanks in part to the advent of the shared Voyager catalog, librarians across the UH system are working together in new ways and creating innovative ways to cooperate. The UH Library Council, a group comprising the heads of each campus library, have initiated joint purchase of the EBSCOHost database of journal index and abstracts, and are planning improved interlibrary loans and uniform assessment of services. All UH campuses are participating in a statewide consortium that, after UH’s joint purchase, chose to jointly purchase EBSCOHost as a statewide entity encompassing state, public, school, college, and university libraries—both public and private. Hamilton Library is a partner with the John A. Burns School of Medicine to develop a gateway to medical journals throughout the State of Hawai‘i. And talks are occurring to create a museum-library database of digitized images of Hawai‘i that could bring together the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Library, the Hawai‘i State Library, the Honolulu Academy of Arts, and the Bishop Museum.

Digitization of Unique Materials
The Library has a growing collection of digitized materials drawn from its treasure house of unique resources. Most of these come from the Hawaiian collection, and, as such, facilitate expanded access by the general public to Hawaiian materials. The rich holdings of Hawaiian newspapers, documents, music and art can be made available throughout the world on the Internet, thus creating a true library without walls. Although the Library’s efforts in this area are highly selective rather than broad, we make steady progress at bringing to the rest of the world the best of our collections.