

**William Russell Pullen Library**  
Annual Report  
July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2002  
Executive Summary

During the academic year 2001-2002 Pullen Library continued to make substantial progress towards the goals of our strategic plan, and make important contributions towards the University's Strategic Goals. This was accomplished despite a year during which considerable time and effort went into reacting to events that were the result of serious infrastructure problems, static budgets, excessive inflation in the costs of journals and books, the continuing shortage of librarians, and concerns about security. The library continued its evolution into a library for the future, with increasing emphasis on involvement with the academic programs on the university, strong development of our technology environment, and the completion of a Master Plan to transform the library structure to better serve the ever-changing needs of our patrons.

### **Infrastructure**

The most dramatic event during the year was the closing of Library South for two months while safety issues were addressed. What seemed at first to be a disaster turned out to be more inconvenience, and the ability of everyone in the library and the university to work together to address the crisis reminded us all of what a fine university community we work in. During that period staff volunteers went into the closed building on an hourly basis to retrieve over 5,000 books for faculty and students, and media and reserves provided their services without interruption from a new location. The rebricking project was completed ahead of schedule, and Library South is a much-improved building with substantially better environmental control. This project, combined with a project to begin replacing the HVAC system in Library North and smaller projects to bring both buildings into GSUNET2 and install a wireless network all contributed to the library's and university's goals of infrastructure improvement.

### **Budget**

The budgetary constraints that dictated another year of static budgets for Library Materials resulted in the Library undertaking a Comprehensive Serials Review, with a goal of canceling \$220,000 worth of serials titles. This project, which began as a reaction to the inability of a flat budget to keep up with high inflation, evolved into a much more comprehensive look at our holdings and subscriptions, which involved the Deans and Associate Deans as well as teaching and library faculty. As a result, we identified a list of serials to be cancelled that has allowed us to cover one year's inflation and, more importantly, rebalance our subscriptions to better reflect the university's priorities in

growing its strongest programs and enhancing its research status. Two particularly significant contract negotiations resulted in a much-improved contract between the five research institutions in Georgia and Reed-Elsevier, publishers of Science Direct, and the purchase of SciFinder, the online version of Chemical Abstracts. As the new year begins we are developing a list of new titles to replace some of those identified as low priority. Pullen Library's carefully-selected collection makes us eligible for status as a member of the Association of Research Libraries, a long-held goal of the Library, the Senate Library Advisory Committee, and the university's strategic plan.

## **Human Resources**

The slowdown in hiring and the improved retention of library staff during the first ten months of the year resulted in fewer positions being filled this year, but the changes in the local employment picture near the end of the year enabled us to fill some very significant vacancies among support staff – a happy result for us of an unhappy event for many. The nationwide shortage of librarians continues, however, and we realize the importance of growing our own leadership. This academic year the library spent \$31,033 on staff development, with emphasis on helping staff develop skills needed to grow into increasingly responsible positions. Our recognition of the importance of staff development led to the establishment of an endowment to provide staff development, thanks to the generous gift from William J. Utery to establish the Utery Fund: Improving the Lives of American Workers. Our commitment to the goals of a diverse workforce continues to be strong, and our staff reflects our efforts in this area.

The Catalog Department completed the transition to a new organization that enables them to focus on their strategic priorities while taking advantage of outsourcing of routine work. In the library, the resignation of 4.5 professionals in the latter part of the year created an opportunity for two departments to reorganize themselves, which was accomplished through a series of meetings with full participation of faculty and staff. The Special Collections Department has moved to a model of Collection Curators and a central pool of processing staff, allowing for better allocation of staff resources and better service to patrons. The Information Services Department, which has grown rapidly as Pullen's emphasis has shifted from collections to services, determined that it would be more effective as two departments: Liaison & Research Services, and Instruction & Learning Technology Services. Two librarians were promoted to head these new departments, and the positive momentum of these changes is already evident. All of these developments contribute to the Library's Strategic Initiative to create a humane learning Organization, and to the University's strategic goals in the area of staffing.

## **Security**

Continuing concerns about the safety of library patrons and staff led to the University funding the installation of security gates at the entrances to both libraries, with guards to control access. This development has been extremely well received by the library staff and the university community. Although we now have more controlled access to our building, the number of people entering the building increased by 19% this year, with the great increase taking place during the spring semester as we implemented the new system (see chart, page 8). There are multiple reasons for this development, but it seems likely the move back in to Library South and the greater sense of safety patrons feel with the security gates were significant factors.

## **The Library of the Future**

The importance of the library's collection was emphasized for us this year by an increase in numbers of materials circulated (see chart, page 8), after several years of decline and at a time when many had predicted the demise of the paper library. Our collection grew by 36,086 volumes, to a total of 1,345,440, not including government documents, and the number of electronic resources available through our purchases and GALILEO continued to increase rapidly. The combination of greater use of the buildings and collections, both at Pullen Library and at the Alpharetta Center, was matched by increases in traffic at our service desks and in the number of items provided to students and faculty through Interlibrary Loan and document delivery. Recent national studies suggest that the infatuation with the Internet, which caused many library patrons to cease using paper collections, has ended as learners and scholars recognize the importance of selected and authoritative information, and as libraries learn to exploit the advantages the worldwide web provides. A well-chosen collection supported by a strong service philosophy, focused on supporting the university's programs and mission, has been the center of our strategic plan and annual action plans, and we were well prepared for the return of interest in library services.

## **Academic Involvement**

Pullen Library's involvement in the academic programs of the university has been a continuing commitment, pursued by the dual strategies of the Liaison Librarian program and great emphasis on instruction, focusing on information literacy. In addition to continuing library use instruction, two librarians created a Freshman Learning Community and developed a Perspectives course, teaching it and GSU 1010. Two additional librarians taught GSU 1001, and four additional courses for various departments were taught by library faculty. We have also put additional emphasis on a

consultant model for assisting patrons, resulting in a steady increase of requests for individual consultations.

## **Technology Environment**

Improvements in our technology infrastructure were accompanied by improvements in our inventory of equipment, greatly assisted by a series of successful proposals for Student Technology Fee funding. Most significant, however, were improvements in the systems and software we use, and in our web presence. Work on the Universal Catalog/Universal Borrowing aspect of GIL, the statewide library management system, continued, with expectation of a fall roll-out of a University System of Georgia union catalog with universal borrowing privileges for faculty and staff. Our web page continued to expand and offer new services, including a much-appreciated E-journal locator service, frequent updating of information, the development of infrastructure to automate centralized content management for the development of customized web pages, and mounting photographs and EAD finding aids for Special Collections. The growing importance of our Web presence is indicated by usage: the web site was visited 610,469 times with 4,056,592 pages viewed during the fiscal year – a 32% increase in visits and a 48% increase in pages viewed over the previous year. The centrality of our technology environment results in its improvement addressing almost every aspect of the library's strategic plan, and helps the university meet its goals in providing students with the opportunity to develop information management skills for lifelong learning and access to global databases.

## **Transforming the Library**

Our eyes were firmly fixed on the future this year as we developed a Master Plan for the use of our two buildings that would guide future planning. What began as an exercise in planning for needed renovations developed into a realization that we had the space and mission to transform the library and make a significant contribution to the university's goals of attracting and retaining excellent students, supporting improved student learning, contributing to the urban community in which we work, and demonstrating leadership in the use of technology. A Library Steering Committee worked with the architectural firm of Cooper Carry to develop a schematic plan with cost and phasing estimates. During the year the planning solicited the advice of the Senate Library Advisory Committee and the University community. The Master Plan was presented to the University's Administrative Council in February and received strong support from all present, with a suggestion from President Patton that we pursue student fee funding. We are now engaged in planning for a campaign to gain the support of students and to secure external funding. This spring we developed specific plans for the first three phases of the Master Plan, and successfully initiated the bid process to begin work in August. Our increased emphasis on Development continues and has focused on the Master Plan, while continuing to nurture important donors and encourage participation in the annual Faculty

Staff Campaign. Major gifts and pledges during the fiscal year came to \$230,645, in addition to payments on earlier pledges (see chart, page 9).

During this past year Pullen Library has made significant progress in fulfilling its mission to be the heart of Georgia State University's academic and research culture, and to substantially contribute to the intellectual activities of the University. This could only have been accomplished by a dedicated and well-trained staff, firmly committed to the values elucidated in our 1998 Strategic Plan: Change as Opportunity, Collaboration, Diversity, Integrity, Learning, and Service. Being part of a rapidly growing university with a clear sense of its mission to achieve excellence and distinctiveness is a great opportunity, and we respond with enthusiasm to its challenges.