

## Implementing ACRL's "Standards for College Libraries"

The library faculty at Governors State University (GSU), in University Park, Illinois, recently undertook a project to implement the newly revised ACRL "Standards for College Libraries" (*C&RL News*, March 2000). These new standards mark the switch from focusing on inputs to outputs.

### Assessing the library

In response to a university-wide, yearlong focus on outcomes assessment, the library faculty decided to use the standards as our instrument to assess the GSU Library. The standards include the following 12 sections: points of comparison; planning; assessment and outcomes assessment; services; instruction; resources; access; staff; facilities; communication and cooperation; administration; and budget. Each of eight library faculty members and the director took responsibility for assessing the library using one or more of these sections.

### Creating a peer group and gathering data

Nine libraries were identified by GSU's Office of Institutional Research as peer institutions. These libraries were then contacted, requesting their most recent IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) statistics for the sections covering points of comparison and resources. For other sections, we looked closely at the current operations of the university library, investigated past procedures, interviewed supervisors, and consulted annual reports. We also developed two surveys: a staff survey assessing attitudes towards internal communication and working conditions, and a library user survey assessing attitudes towards library service, staffing, and facili-

ties. In addition, library faculty reviewed facilities and staffing levels, access to the library and its resources, and availability of other collections through consortial arrangements. The sections concerning administration and budget were written by librarians familiar with those aspects of library operations. After the individual reports were completed, they were compiled into a single document and then reviewed and revised.

### What we learned

As a result of applying the standards, we now have a better understanding of the overall functioning of the GSU Library. We are more aware of our strengths and weaknesses, and we have a basis for changing policies and procedures, as well as for requesting increases in the library budget.

What will we do differently next time? We will consider the use of focus groups, pre-test the user survey for validity, and distribute the survey regularly and more widely to ensure more meaningful results.

The entire process of compiling our individual findings took approximately three months, and currently we are in the process of analyzing the data and editing the document for publication. We anticipate revisiting this process in two to three years, and on a regular basis thereafter, to assess what needs to be done to improve library operations and respond to our evolving user needs. With the year 2000 as a benchmark, the ACRL standards will be an important tool for continued cyclical assessment of the university library.—*Lydia Morrow Ruetten, Rebecca Bostian, Diane Dates Casey, Linda Geller, Ann Glascoff, Mari Ellen Leverage, Beth Hansen Shaw, Nancy Shlaes, Colleen Waltman, Governors State University*

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tion piece for Five Years Meeting between 1912 and 1960, published in Richmond. The index was created by Tom Hamm, college archivist, and published on the Friends Collection Web pages by Neal Baker, information technologies librarian. There are approximately 13,000 entries in the index. Information thought necessary for purposes of identification (name, date of death—if

given, place of death, and age or year of birth) is included in each entry. For a fee, the library will provide copies of obituaries. Details are available at the Index Web site.

### Call for Papers: Popular Culture Association 2001

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