

A new academic library model

Partnerships for learning and teaching

by Hannelore B. Rader

The beginning of the new millennium can be characterized as the information age in a technology environment. Information is generated at the fastest pace ever and has become a major entity of economic development. Countless industries and enterprises are based on information and information technologies. Many people proclaim themselves to be “information experts,” and the Internet and the Web are often assumed to be the “library” of the 21st century. Where does that leave libraries and the library profession?

During the past decade, librarians and information professionals have been concerned about the many changes caused by the electronic information environment, and they have attempted to deal with this changing situation. Professional organizations, consortia, and schools of library and information science have begun to reform themselves to successfully handle the new information environment.



An example of one of the more than 500 classes taught in the University of Louisville Libraries annually to instruct honor students in information skills. This group of honor students is involved in resource-based learning.

As part of these reform movements, the ALA, the Special Library Association, various regional groups, and various professional schools are developing new and revised competencies for the profession in special, school, public and academic library settings. Such work needs to continue to ensure that the library and information professions remain viable, energetic, and ready to assume leadership positions in the information environment of the 21st century.

In the November 2000 issue of *C&RL News*, Carla Stoffle and others discussed how academic libraries and librarianship should be reinvented.¹ They listed 17 challenges for academic libraries and

how these challenges can be met. They described the scholarly communication environment and academic librarians' role within it, and they provided ten axioms for academic librarians to help them be successful in this new century. Most important, the article ad-

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dressed the impact of the external environment on libraries and librarians and provided some guidance on how to deal with that.

There are many noteworthy examples of how academic librarians are addressing their many professional challenges in higher education. Librarians at the University of Louisville (UL) provide one of the successful scenarios where through a variety of partnerships the libraries have become more centered within the campus teaching and learning community. Some of the initiatives described are small, some are large, some are less significant, some are more significant. However, all of them have helped the libraries become more visible on campus and in the community; more involved in teaching, learning, and research; and, ultimately, more effective in producing positive learning outcomes. UL is Kentucky's Metropolitan Research University with ambitious goals for education and research, which are fully supported by the libraries.

Partnerships with faculty

Forming partnerships with faculty has been a goal for academic librarians for a long time. Librarians support teaching, learning, and research by building collections, providing electronic information access, and offering proactive library services and integrated information skills instruction. At UL, librarians who are members of the faculty have begun to form strong partnerships with a significant number of their teaching colleagues. The Library Liaison Program, in existence for several years, connects all librarians with relevant faculty departments for the purpose of collection development and information literacy instruction.

- **Information literacy.** Librarians provide approximately 500 sessions of curriculum-integrated information literacy instruction a year to more than 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students, particularly in the health sciences, music, art, business, chemistry, education, engineering, social work, and English. They have created information literacy competencies for the different levels based on ACRL's "Information Literacy Competencies Standards for Higher Education," adopted in January 2001. They have incorporated active learning techniques in their information skills instruction. Working closely with the faculty,

librarians have integrated a required component of information literacy instruction in the honors program and the undergraduate requirements.

- **Distance education (www.louisville.edu/library/dlls).** The Office of Distance Learning Library Services (DLLS) supports 20 distance education programs, particularly in business, education, engineering, and social work offered by UL in Kentucky and universities and colleges in other parts of the country and the world. The courses use satellite television, interactive video-conferencing, and the Web as onsite teaching at off-campus locations. The majority of the programs are at the graduate level, including a doctoral program in social work. The distance education librarian works with faculty to prepare distance education courses, trains faculty in information literacy matters, and provides information and instructional support for the approximately 3,000 students enrolled in these programs as far away as Athens, Cairo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Panama, and San Salvador.

- **Faculty development.** In 2000, the Delphi Center, a faculty development center that helps faculty to bring technology into their teaching and to develop online courses and programs, was relocated into the main library. Librarians are beginning to work with faculty as they restructure their courses and programs to teach in the electronic environment. The libraries created DLLS within the center to work more closely with faculty development for distance education.

- **Writing Center.** The Writing Center, part of the College of Arts and Sciences, was moved into the main library in 2000. The library works with Writing Center personnel to support the students using the center to improve their writing skills related to term papers, essays, theses, proposals, résumés, and others.

- **Metropolitan College.** Metropolitan College is the result of a partnership between the university and the United Parcel Service to provide higher education opportunities for UPS employees. The libraries are participating through the Metro Computer Laboratory, a state-of-the-art computer facility for all students to learn computer skills, prepare their course work, and do research under the guidance of library-trained assistants.

- **Research (scholars' qualifications).**

Librarians partner with the Research Office to evaluate the university's scholars qualifications, grant support, and research support for the university's more than 70 endowed chairs.

- **Assessment.** The libraries are partnering with all academic units to assess educational outcomes. Working with an external company, survey instruments have been developed including appropriate library information. The libraries have also developed their own instruments for various campus groups. The first batch of surveys has been collected and summarized. The results of these surveys have been most encouraging in terms of student outcomes related to library and information skills.

Partnerships in the health sciences

The Health Sciences Library supports the health sciences campus units—dentistry, nursing, and medicine—and has built strong partnership over the years with various constituents.

- **Initiatives with hospitals.**

The library has worked with the three municipal hospitals to share resources and training. A strong partnership has been formed with the

university hospital to administer that library under contract. A partnership with another hospital has enabled its library to become part of the libraries' Endeavor system. The three hospitals have an informal consortium for joint purchasing of health care databases and electronic journals.

- **IAIMS grant for informatics.** The library has worked with all constituents on the health sciences campus—dentistry, nursing, allied health, and medicine—to obtain a two-year Integrated Advanced Information Management System (IAIMS) grant from the National Library of Medicine.

The purpose of the grant is to plan for the integrated use of health care information for

the support of education, research, clinical care, community health, and consumer health. All health care-related organizations in the greater Louisville area are being included in the joint effort.

Partnerships on campus

Opportunities arise regularly to form more and new partnerships on campus, and the UL librarians have begun to take advantage of them.

- **Students.** The libraries work closely with student government groups to address their information needs and to ensure that they have appropriate access to libraries and library information.

Adding a first-class coffee bar in the main library, lending laptops to students, extending library hours, doing a joint student survey, and general student satisfaction and regular in-

creases in library use are but a few of the outcomes from the student-librarian partnership.

- **Information technology.** Keeping the library on the cutting edge of technology in terms of computers, software, networks, training, and security is based on a strong partnership between personnel in information



Hannelore Rader teaches in a state-of-the-art electronic class at the University of Louisville (UL) Ekstrom Library, the Information Literacy graduate course for the University of Kentucky (UK) School of Library and Information Science. Offering classes at a distance is part of the UK-UL partnership.

technology and the university libraries technology office. The libraries' client server system, Endeavor, is jointly administered by the two units, not only for UL but also the western half of Kentucky, another partnership.

Partnership with business

For more than 15 years, the libraries have had a partnership with General Electric Appliance Park in Louisville to administer its library and information services through contractual arrangements.

Partnership with other libraries

Cooperative ventures among libraries have long been a strong component of library work

in Kentucky. In recent years, such ventures have been increased as follows:

• **Partnerships with public and school libraries.** The UL libraries have worked with the Jefferson County Schools' Media Centers and the Louisville Free Public Library (LFPL) on a variety of projects.

—*Professional education:* The shortage of librarians in the Louisville area is acute—and the university libraries have worked with the school media centers and the public libraries to bring two-thirds of the library and information science program from the University of Kentucky to the University of Louisville. Librarians from the university and the public library teach most of these classes in the university libraries. Some classes are taught through videoconferencing. Thanks to this partnership, the university libraries were able to establish a minority librarian internship in reference where the individual works full-time in the library while completing a master's degree in library and information science.

—*Managerial training:* LFPL has contracted with the university libraries to provide a yearlong management training program for beginning public library managers in cooperation with the university's School of Business.

—*Information literacy training:* The university libraries are working with the librarians in the school and public libraries to help them develop their instructional expertise to teach information skills.

—*Archival preservation:* University archivists are working with LFPL to train them in preserving important African-American archives.

—*Metroversity:* Metroversity is a consortium of all academic institutions, public and private, in the Louisville and Indiana areas to support higher education and workforce development. The academic and public libraries have formed their own council to address the information needs of students and the public. Through resource-sharing of information using interlibrary loan, special loan privileges, and Web sites, the libraries are contributing to area educational goals.

• **Kentucky Virtual Library (www.kyvl.org).** The Kentucky Virtual Library was started in 1999 as a consortium of all libraries in Kentucky—private, public, state, academic, school, public, and special. The purpose is support for distance education, support for

the Kentucky Virtual University, information-sharing, access to electronic databases, reference, and Web-based tutorials for learning information skills electronically.

• **Kentucky Union List of Periodicals.** Since 1968, UL has maintained a union list of serials. In 1972, this project evolved into the state-wide Kentucky Union List of Serials (KULS) with the assistance of federal funding administered by the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives. Currently, the union list contains over 179,000 holdings from more than 200 public, academic, and special libraries in Kentucky.

Between 1993 and 1997, the database was moved from a mainframe at the university to OCLC's Union Listing Module. Among the many benefits of this change was the opportunity it extended to Kentucky Library Network members to process their own holdings records through their established connections to OCLC. Regular training is provided to interested libraries. Librarians across the state have created an important resource-sharing and reference tool for all individuals interested in Kentucky's library collections.

Conclusion

Based on UL's limited experience with partnerships involving academic libraries, this seems to be a good direction in which to move at the beginning of the 21st century. Both Carla Stoffle and Emily Mobley advocate that academic librarians need to be aggressive, able to take risks, and look outside their specific library environment to continue to be successful in this competitive information age.² They must be aware of, and not intimidated by, the competition from such diverse areas as the NetLibrary, e-learning groups, e-information providers, and others. Academic libraries in the 21st century will continue to be major players in education and the center for teaching, learning, and research on their campuses if they use their unique and specialized expertise, think out of the box, reach out to form new partnerships, and achieve measurable educational outcomes.

Note

1. Carla Stoffle, Barbara Allen, Janet Fore, and Emily R. Mobley, "Predicting the Future: What Does Academic Librarianship Hold in Store?" *C&RL News* 61, no. 10 (Nov. 2000): 894-901. ■

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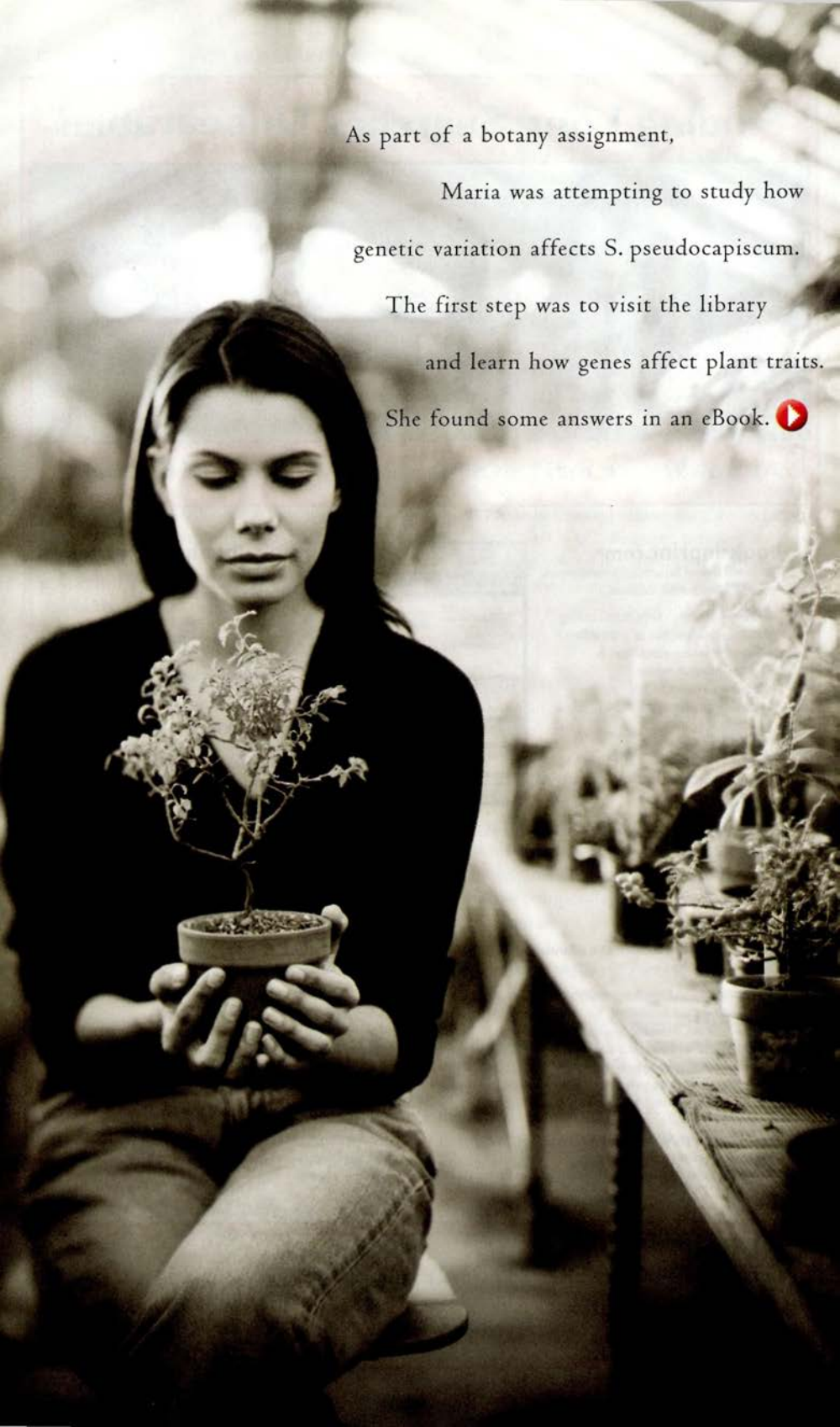
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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and jeans, is sitting on a wooden bench in a greenhouse. She is holding a small potted plant with both hands, looking down at it with a focused expression. The greenhouse is filled with many other potted plants on long wooden tables, and the background is softly blurred, showing the structure of the greenhouse and more plants.

As part of a botany assignment,

Maria was attempting to study how genetic variation affects *S. pseudocapiscum*.

The first step was to visit the library and learn how genes affect plant traits.

She found some answers in an eBook. 

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