

## ULS undaunted by wintry Philadelphia

By Sharon Wallbridge and Deborah Dancik

### *Highlights of the ULS meetings at Midwinter*

**M**embers of the ACRL University Libraries Section (ULS) braved snow and minus-30-degree windchills to meet their various committee obligations at the 1995 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia, February 3–8. The following is a capsule version of ULS news from the conference.

- The 1995 and 1996 ULS Programs will both focus on change and its effect on librarians. The 1995 program to be held on Saturday, June 24, focuses on the human side of organizational change. Plans for the 1996 annual program call for a focus on development related to generational issues.

- The ULS Communications Committee decided to update the brochure that describes the ACRL University Libraries Section. The brochure is distributed to new ULS members and is made available to ACRL chapters for distribution.

It gives new and prospective members a look at the structure and programs of ULS and the focus of its activities. The “look” of the brochure has been adopted as a de facto logo for ULS. The Communications Committee continues to discuss electronic means of communicating with ULS members. The committee has also recommended that a ULS sticker be affixed to ULS members’ conference badges at the ACRL Conference in Pittsburgh. If the sticker is successful, the idea may be continued at ALA conferences.

- At the recommendation of the ULS Board, ACRL has appointed a task force to look at various issues surrounding the library role in accrediting. The extent to which the current criteria for measuring libraries is effective—as well

as related issues in terms of the library role in institutional goals and how the library is helping to meet those goals—is of concern to many library administrators. Many feel that the library accreditation process is inadequate.

- Those working on draft guidelines for undergraduate libraries are expecting to hold hearings on the draft at the 1995 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. (*Ed. note:* The draft will be published in the May issue of *C&RL News*.)

- A Medium Sized Academic Libraries Committee has been formed to act as a steering committee for the already existing discussion group. Rather than defining “medium sized,” the group has decided that, for the time being, it is self-defining—if one thinks one’s library is medium sized, then it is. It certainly is a diverse group as illustrated by the composition of the committee. The committee will be discussing the challenges facing such libraries including funding and development. These libraries tend to be curriculum-based and are viewed as a local resource, but not funded to assume such responsibilities. They are frequently dependent upon other libraries for research materials. The committee will publicize the discussion group programs. The next discussion topic will focus on technology challenges.

- The ULS Librarians in Higher Education Committee is planning a program around the theme of how to build/improve library credibility within the university administration. The program will be on Sunday, June 25, at 9:30 a.m. in Chicago.

- The Public Service Directors of Large University Libraries Discussion Group is interested in exploring data collection for process improvement, as it would appear that little such activity is happening now. They also want to continue to explore issues related to networked databases as those new services are already con-

## "Distance Education: A Fad or the Future?"

Janet Kendall, director of extended academic programs at Washington State University (WSU), set the stage for other presenters at the ULS Current Topics Discussion Group program by addressing the question of whether distance education is a fad or the future. She suggested that we look at the demographics for the next 10 to 15 years when a dramatic student population increase is projected.

These students will need access to higher education and the current delivery modes and institutions will not be able to meet the demands; distance learning will be the alternative of choice. Technology now allows educators to bring the previously different traditional delivery streams for on and off campus closer together. Also, there will be enhanced and expanded use of distance education methodologies brought into central strategies of the university.

Deborah Dalton, outreach consultant at North Dakota State University Library and a longtime distance learner herself, drew a distinction between distance learning and distance education, the latter implying a particular pedagogy rather than having the focus on the learner. She agreed with Kendall that the future will bring the demise of higher education as we know it and that distance learning will be very much a part of our future. Two things Dalton stressed were the need for a shift in faculty teaching styles—in part because distance education is a very time consuming process where module/lesson preparation is

so important—and that cooperation among all types of libraries within a state or region would be all important in providing library service to distance learners.

The third speaker, Kate Adams, distance education coordinator at the University of Nebraska Library, emphasized that distance education is an opportunity for new delivery methodologies and for partnerships. The library must be represented on committees that develop distance learning programs and be directly involved with distance education staff in course development. Each of the speakers come from institutions with active distance education programs underpinned by library services, if others would like models.

In the ensuing discussion, it was apparent that there is a growing awareness of distance education on campuses because faculty are sometimes the ones at a distance, as institutions make an effort to acquire faculty expertise from other campuses. This scenario puts a tremendous strain on the "home" library, implying again the need for partnerships among libraries for improved access. Accreditation was an issue brought forward. Kendall noted that WSU had anticipated this, addressing the concerns with the accrediting agencies up front (again, an example of success through careful planning and allowing adequate time for preparation). One knotty problem remains: that of libraries needing to develop strategies to fund support for distance learning, a definite part of our future.—DD

suming five percent of budgets—a figure that is likely to increase. Topics of discussion in Philadelphia included budgets, potential consolidation of libraries, customer-initiated ILL, cooperative efforts, student technology fees, serial cancellations, renovations, home pages, asbestos removal, space and facilities planning, electronic reserves, databases, and document delivery. (*Thanks to Don Frank, Georgia Tech University, for providing this report.*)

• The Undergraduate Librarians Discussion Group topic for the 1995 ALA Midwinter Meeting was the electronic environment. Planning for electronic reserves was the main area of interest, with reports from undergraduate librar-

ies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Virginia, and the University of Michigan. Information on the UWired Program at the University of Washington was also presented. UWired is a pilot program in which a test group of entering freshmen were issued laptop computers to use during 1994-95. In addition to their other classes, these students take a two-credit information technology seminar taught by librarians. *Ed. note:* See the awards article on page 264 for the story about the UWired FIGS project winning the BIS Innovation Award. (*Thanks to Paula Walker of the University of Washington for this information.*)—SW

# BLACKWELL for SMART Sourcing™

Full Book Processing  
Tables of Contents  
Full Authority Control  
FTP MARC Records Worldwide  
OCLC PromptCat™ Provider  
Catalog-Ready MARC Records

The LEADER in Bibliographic Services for  
Over 20 Years

B. H. Blackwell  
Oxford

Blackwell North America  
Lake Oswego, OR • Blackwood, NJ