Quantitative Leaps

Brinley Franklin

Academic librarians are increasingly pressed to make difficult choices about what they will acquire. Even the most generously funded research libraries purchase a declining percentage of the ever-expanding universe of information each year. As a consequence, many academic library leaders are questioning our traditional emphasis on inputs (volumes added, staff size, collections expenditures) as the appropriate measure of a library’s quality as opposed to measuring outputs (user satisfaction, library impact on research and instruction).

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL), comprised of the 122 most prominent research libraries in North America, has traditionally based its membership criteria on input measures such as those mentioned above. The Chronicle of Higher Education publishes an annual report that appears to rank ARL libraries using these input measures. Consequently, the quality of an academic research library has primarily been assessed by its university’s investment in library staffing and collections.

Now, however, academic libraries more frequently are examining not just their university’s investment in its library, but also how effectively this investment is benefiting the library’s primary users. Seeking to measure the library’s impact on its users, a number of research libraries are making the transition from a culture of counting to a culture of assessment.

New Ways To Measure Quality

The ARL has initiated a formal discussion about whether input criteria are effective in measuring the quality of academic libraries, and member libraries have implemented pilot projects to test five “New Measures” to assess academic library performance. These projects propose to measure the following:

- campus learning outcomes
- effectiveness of general library service
- effectiveness of specific library services
- relative value of cost drivers
- use of electronic information resources

The UConn Libraries are participating in two of these projects. The general library service effectiveness project, led by Texas A&M, builds on their experience with a survey questionnaire (SERVQUAL) they have used to assess library services over a period of six years. UConn will join a cross-section of ARL institutions (Arizona, UC Santa Barbara, Houston, Michigan State, Minnesota, Penn, Pittsburgh, Virginia Tech, Washington, and York universities) to develop and test a survey questionnaire with the goal of standardizing it for all participating schools. The intent of this project is to measure the difference between

Of the Making of Books

Michael McCurdy’s Penmaen Press

Rutherford Witthus

Archives & Special Collections has an interest in collecting the records of private presses, particularly those in New England. These records usually include business correspondence, financial records, design documents, galley proofs and ephemera. In the fall of 1998 Michael McCurdy agreed to donate the records of his Penmaen Press to the university. We were delighted to receive these records and we are now in the process of organizing them for research use.

Some business records are quite dull, but those of private presses tend to be liberally sprinkled with interesting letters from well-known authors and illustrators. Already, we have discovered a series of revealing letters among McCurdy and the poets Allen Ginsberg and Richard Eberhart, written as they collaborated on the production of a book. The letters shed light on the process of creating a book and tell us some intriguing things about the personalities of those involved (see below).

Michael McCurdy was born in Manhattan on February 17, 1942, and grew up in New Rochelle, New York, and Marblehead, Massachusetts. During his boyhood years, he played with rubber type and gelatin printers and, at age twelve, he started to set his own metal type on a toy press. At sixteen, he was setting and running by hand his own publication entitled The Literary Journal. As his interest in printing grew, so did his talent for things artistic. He earned BFA and MFA degrees from Tufts University and studied at the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

McCurdy made his first wood engraving at the age of twenty. His illustrations now enhance more than 167 publications, with significant books published this year and three more forthcoming. Along with numerous exhibitions of his work, he also taught at the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, at Concord Academy in Concord, MA, and at the Book Arts Program at Wellesley College. Although McCurdy now works mostly in scratch board, the excitement and dignity of his earlier wood engravings continue to this day.

The Penmaen Press

In his early years, McCurdy worked as a free-lance illustrator and designer. He published his first book, Genesis, in 1966 under the imprint Hillside Press (suggested by the location of the printer’s apartment on Boston’s Beacon Hill). The book, a mere twenty pages, included six wood engravings by McCurdy. Twenty copies were printed.

Already, at age 24, McCurdy had a sense of what his publications should and would be: “The Hillside Press is not a commercial printing concern in the strictest sense. It is, in fact, closer in spirit to what might be called a ‘private press’, although it is hoped without the overabundance of preciousness usually connected with such adventures. Its desire is to be a designing workshop intimately involved with personalized book building conceived as an art of superlative visual conveyance.”

In 1968, McCurdy changed the name of his press to The Penmaen Press. “Penmaen” is the name of a town in Wales and is Welsh for “head mason.” The first publication under the Penmaen name was a pamphlet entitled The

Continued on page 3
A proposal made in the mid-1960’s to construct several buildings, a reflecting pool and a bell tower, is on display in the library. Only two of the proposed buildings were actually built, although the plan called for ongoing development between 1967 and 1975. The two, serving the School of Social Work and the undergraduate program, form the nucleus of today’s campus, along with the 1962 former home of the Law School (now the location of the Trecker Library, the MBA program and other campus offices). Buildings that were never constructed include those for the administration, cafe, and student union. Additional classrooms were envisioned, as was a structure dedicated to the School of Business Administration. A library building was also part of the plan, although it was probably intended to serve only the needs of the undergraduate program. At the time of the plan’s development the Social Work and Business programs maintained separate libraries. It was not until 1985, when the Law School relocated to Hartford, that the Trecker Library brought the disparate library operations together under a single administration.

The final exam required students to present their personal web pages to their classmates, invited faculty and staff. They personalized a template that the instructors had provided for them, downloading photographs and other graphics, including animated gifs. They created links to other pages and to sites set up by Dr. Harmon and Ms. Cudiner, who plan to enhance their online interaction with the students through use of the WebCT platform during the spring semester. The class schedule and notes are available at a web site set up by Dr. Harmon and Ms. Cudiner, who plan to enhance their online interaction with the students through use of the WebCT platform during the spring semester.

The 50th anniversary gift campaign committee for the Class of 1950, led by co-chairs James Blizas and Peter Lind, has successfully met their target of $100,000 to equip and furnish the Class of 1950 Lecture Room in the Babbidge Library. Working with Linda Perrone, the library’s director of development; and Brian Lacy, director of the annual fund; the Class of 1950 has raised more money than any other 50th reunion class in UConn’s history. The lecture room will be outfitted with a console for high tech presentation displays, seating for 35, group tables for multi-purpose training, flexible lighting options, and wall mounted white boards.

Information Technology Skills Taught at UConn/Stamford

Shelly Cudiner & Nancy Gillies

Jeremy Richard Library reference librarian Shelley Cudiner and associate professor of economics Oskar Harmon unveiled a new information technology course for UConn/Stamford freshmen and transfer students in the fall of 1999. “Information Technology Survival Skills” is offered for one credit through the First Year Experience program and aims to teach students how to take advantage of the university’s vast computer resources and how to survive in an electronic world once they have graduated.

Students build and maintain their own web page, which is mounted on the SP server. They learn to use Netscape Composer, WSFTP, and Adobe Acrobat Writer; to become familiar with research technology tools (full-text citation databases, proxy server, HTML form, listserv and email); to search the web effectively using Boolean logic; and to evaluate search results critically.

Tools for the class include a floppy disk for files and bookmarks, a CD with lecture notes, readings and software, an email account on Hotmail, access to the class listserv, a web template design, and server space for the web portal. The class schedule and notes are available at a web site set up by Dr. Harmon and Ms. Cudiner, who plan to enhance their online interaction with the students through use of the WebCT platform during the spring semester.

We heard you! In response to expressions of dissatisfaction with the library’s copy machines, we installed 12 new copiers in Babbidge Library during the winter intersession. Every machine now accepts VendaCards, coins, and bills ($1 and $5s). The library has contracted with IKON Office Systems to improve copy services. Shown here are (right to left) library director Brinley Franklin, copy services coordinator Amelia Hinckeldey, and IKON service representatives, Chris Adams (UConn, 1993-1995) and Lisa McGill (UConn ’92).
February/March 2000

Michael McCurdy's Penmaen Press
Continued from page 1

Purpose of the National Economic League by Jesse W. Beaton. The following year, McCurdy published the first book under the Penmaen imprint: *The Quaker Querist*.

To Eberhart from Ginsberg: A Letter about Howl 1956

In 1975, McCurdy published *Poems to Poets*, a book of poetry by Richard Eberhart, considered by many to be one of the major lyric poets of this century. In January of that year, Eberhart wrote a letter to Allen Ginsberg (with a copy to McCurdy), in which he recalled a 20-page letter that Ginsberg had written to him as he was about to write an article on the poetry of the West Coast for *The New York Times*. Eberhart wonders if Ginsberg would like to see it published as a “remembrance of old times.”

McCurdy follows up with a letter to Ginsberg the very next day: “...I would love working with you on this subject—and I’ve been devouring *Howl* once again to prime myself.”

The next day, Ginsberg sent McCurdy a postcard in his usual telegraphic style: “Overwhelmed w/Paper. Can’t correspond easily—Ok to print my letters, try to keep close to original style except for obvious spelling mistakes—Perhaps I can see proofs and xerox of originals when you’re ready? And he adds: “Be sure to send over to Ferlinghetti at City Lights sooner or later...”

McCurdy offers Ginsberg his standard royalties and mentions the signatures that would be required on the limited edition. Ginsberg shoots back a postcard: “...just don’t have time to unwrap, sign, repack 300 books—I am too overloaded to be able to work for you on any schedule or accept any (underlined 4 times) responsibility except to correct my text and see that it’s OK. My travel schedule is too complex to outline here and I don’t have time for letters—OK for all else as long as it’s OK by Richard Eberhart for the mutual project.”

McCurdy, undaunted, suggests that Ginsberg will be able to sign flat sheets while he (McCurdy) pulls them away after each one is signed. He writes: “If agreeable, I’ll pay you $40 for the ¾ of an hour.” It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40 ever exchanged for the ¾ of an hour. It’s not documented in the records whether the $40...
During February’s University Employee Appreciation Week, the University Libraries honored seventeen library staff with 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years of state service, including Betty Dzurnak (30 years), and Iris King, Linda Perrone, and George Walle, all with 25 years. Graduating UConn seniors consistently rank the Libraries’ services among the best university services, due primarily to the library’s excellent staff. The employees honored were:

Stephen W. Fairfield has joined the staff of Research & Information Services as a reference/liaison librarian for computer science, engineering, mathematics, and statistics. Stephen earned his BS degree in astronomy from UMass/Amherst and has completed graduate work in physics and astronomy at the University of Wyoming, where he also provided lab instruction in introductory physics and astronomy and research assistance at the Wyoming Infrared Observatory. In 1998 he was awarded a Master of Library Science degree from Texas Women’s University. Stephen has worked as a research librarian at Teldercia Technologies, in NJ; at Hudson County Community College; and at Shannon Laboratory, AT & T Labs, in Florham Park, NJ.

Madeleine Harrington resigned from her position as head clerk in the Library’s Administrative Office in December, after more than twenty years of service to the University. At various points in her tenure in the Library she supervised student hiring operations, travel services, and the publications and insurance accounts, among other things. She is now employed by Eastern Connecticut State University as secretary for the Classical Languages Department.

We are pleased to welcome Heinz Hermann as a volunteer in the Conservation Lab. Dr. Hermann, professor emeritus of biology with a particular interest in the philosophy of science, is helping us in our handling of materials that have been attacked by mold. In addition to drying and cleaning materials, Heinz is helping us perfect our procedures for treating moldy volumes.

Amelia Hincliffe has joined the staff of Information Technology Services as coordinator of the computer & copy services desk. Amelia comes to the Library from University Parking and Transportation Services. Earlier, she worked as a lobbyist assistant in the State Senate. And since her new responsibilities include the supervision of more than 40 student assistants, she will no doubt find her previous experience as an Army ROTC platoon sergeant invaluable.

Sam Nolette is the Library’s new help desk coordinator. Prior to joining the library staff, Sam was a technical contract employee in help desk and computer support positions for several major corporations in Connecticut.

Richard O’Toole has accepted the position of public workstations coordinator. Richard is a UConn graduate who has worked at Spear Technologies Inc. in customer support and as a hardware/network technician. Prior to that he was a senior information services coordinator for Staples Inc.

The UConn Co-Op’s Newsstand, recently opened in the north entrance of Bailey Hall Library, now offers a selection of newspapers, supplies, and snacks. Shown here are: (right to left) Bill Simpson, executive director of the Co-Op; Suzy Stanbuck, general books manager; Bradley Franklin, director of library services; and Evelyn Whitman-Gonzalez, newsstand manager.

Library Staff News

UCONN Libraries

February/March 2000

Quantitative Leaps

Continued from page 1

the quality of library service expected by users and their assessment of the service actually delivered. The project further aims to identify best practices of libraries that deliver high quality services. The library is also engaged in a second pilot project to define use measures for electronic information resources. This is particularly critical for UConn because we spend almost twenty percent of our collections budget on electronic services.

Local Efforts to Assess Performance

In addition to the "New Measures" projects mentioned above, the UConn Libraries have taken significant steps during the last five years to develop a culture of assessment based on outcomes.

• USER Town The Libraries’ USER Team has conducted user surveys, service evaluations, and focus groups for four years. Each year the team undertakes a major survey of one of the three primary user groups—faculty, graduate students, or undergraduate students. The library has worked with the Roger Center on survey design and with the Neag School of Education’s Bureau of Educational Research to analyze survey results and to measure how effectively the UConn Libraries serves its users.

• Statistical Methodologies Town This team is designing a decision support system to help assess performance and to aid decision-making. Our new integrated library system (HOMER 2) can provide us with a great deal of information about the relationship between library collection expenditures and collection usage. Over time, library liaisons will be able to use the decision support system to assess how well their collection ownership and access decisions serve library users. Liaisons will be able to track use patterns for both printed and electronic resources, as well as requests by users from specific subject areas for materials from other libraries and document delivery suppliers.

• Organizational Assessment Study The Libraries reorganized in 1996 with the intent to create a more service-oriented, client-centered organizational structure. Recently, we evaluated our progress to-date by conducting an organizational assessment study, using a staff survey with follow-up interviews conducted by an independent consultant. Our self-perceived areas of strength include: delivering excellent basic services to users; playing a leadership role in campus information policy; being client-centered and responsive to user feedback; positioned for the future and flexible to change; and positioned for user outreach.

• Performance Measures for Professional Staff Each year, the library sets goals for the entire organization, for each area and team, and for each individual. Our performance is measured by how successfully each person or group achieves their agreed-upon goals and objectives. Technology continually offers new opportunities for us to develop library collections and services, but we operate within staffing and financial constraints. In any given year it is therefore critically important for us to focus on those efforts deemed to be strategically most important.

The University of Connecticut Libraries are engaged in a transition from measuring inputs to assessing the impact of its investments in collections and services. Library users can help us accomplish this important goal by giving us feedback when we ask “how are we doing?” With your help, we can succeed in delivering the most effective information services possible with our available resources.

Bradley Franklin is director of library services; bradley.franklin@uconn.edu or (860) 486-0497.
New Sculptures at the Libraries

Sculptor Tim Prentice (below) and his associate David Culbert install the Zinger mobile in Babbidge Library. The mobile, commissioned to honor former associate director David Kapp, was donated by his colleagues, friends, and family.

Two Lines, Eighteen Feet by sculptor George Richey is on display in Stamford’s Greenwich Library. The sculpture responds to the gentlest air currents and is on loan from the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Planned for Electronic Records

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission has awarded the University Archives a grant of up to $10,000 to develop a strategic plan for preservation of and access to the university’s electronic records. The one-year grant began on March 1. University archivist Betsy Pittman will administer the grant. ☞

Babbidge Declared Smoke-Free

The last refuge of smokers in Babbidge Library — the Level 4 Smoking Lounge — has been eliminated. The lounge, never designed to a smoking room, had no special ventilation. People studying in adjacent areas were annoyed by the smoke and complained to the library’s Environmental Safety Committee, who decided to make the lounge, like the rest of Babbidge, smoke-free. ☞

Booth Research Center Moves to Babbidge

The Booth Research Center for Computer Applications and Research is now housed on Level A in the Babbidge Library. The Center’s mission is to provide a physical/ intellectual environment for advanced computing and communication-related research and development and to provide computing and networking support and services for the School of Engineering. The Center is comprised of 19 labs (10 in HBL) and has 60 externally funded grants and contracts totaling $5.2 million. The Center was instrumental in getting an NSF grant to connect UConn to Internet 2 and they are UNIX, Windows NT, and networking experts.
EXHIBITS

Through March 17

**Somehow Beauty Survives**
Paintings by John Cortese
Babbidge, Stevens Gallery

**Seasons of Champions**
UConn Basketball 1995 and 1999
Babbidge, Gallery on the Plaza

**Challenge & Change**
Civil Rights for Gay, Lesbian & Transgendered Americans
Dodd Center

Receive Exhibit Announcements by Email
The Homer Babbidge Library and the Thomas Dodd Research Center present fifteen to twenty new exhibits each year. If you would like to be notified about new exhibits by email, please subscribe to Exhibit Announcements as follows:

To subscribe send email to: maiser@lib.uconn.edu and type in the text area: subscribe Exhibit A exit

To unsubscribe send email to: maiser@lib.uconn.edu and type in the text area: unsubscribe Exhibit A exit

**March 27 - May 21**

**Pictures of the Year**
The Best Photojournalists of 1998
Babbidge, Stevens Gallery

Pictures of the Year is an annual, juried competition established in 1943, recognizing excellence in news and feature photography. The exhibit presents fifty of the best photographs from 1998, selected by a panel of photographers and editors, and sponsored by the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri/Columbia. Presented in cooperation with the University of Connecticut Journalism Department.

**Recent ceramics by Betsy Tanzer**

**Barry Moser and the Pennyroyal Caxton Bible**
March 27 - April 24
Dodd, Reading Room

Designed and illustrated by Barry Moser, noted contemporary book designer and illustrator, and published in 1999, the *Pennyroyal Caxton Bible* is the only fully illustrated twentieth century edition of the Bible. Both volumes from one of the 400 copies in the primary edition will be displayed. The images being presented (from among the 235 relief engravings in this edition) will be changed periodically.

**Antique Oriental Rugs of the Silk Route from the Gregorian Family Collection**
Dodd Research Center

The Gregorian Collection surveys the history, art and diversity of antique oriental rugs. The exhibit represents an extraordinary opportunity to view rugs of a quality and beauty usually seen only in the homes of wealthy collectors or museums. Also included will be photographs from collector John Gregorian’s forthcoming book *Oriental Rugs of the Silk Route* (Rizzoli, New York, June 2000). Mr. Gregorian will comment on his family’s rug collection and share his experiences as a veteran trader in the bazaars of Iran, Turkey, India, and Pakistan at a free public reception on Sunday, April 30, 2–5 pm, Dodd Center.