

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRIANGLE RESEARCH LIBRARIES NETWORK July 2001- June 2002

This year the Triangle Research Libraries Network continued to provide opportunities for member libraries and their staffs to accomplish significant work to further the mission of cooperation. Library users will see direct benefits of TRLN's collaboration as expanded electronic resources are offered, as new library systems are put into place, and as materials are delivered quickly and conveniently throughout the Triangle. The central TRLN staff worked with the consortium's standing committees to provide structure for continuing collaborative activities in the areas of information resources, information technology, library services and human resources.

Cooperative collection development continues to be a hallmark of TRLN. The consortium has negotiated licensing agreements for shared electronic access to over 1500 full text journals, primarily in the scientific, technology and medical fields. This access, which includes distance education students, is made available at considerable cost savings to the member libraries. TRLN libraries were included in the Triangle South Asia Consortium grant and are cooperating in the purchase and provision of vernacular language materials. In addition, bibliographers are exploring a collaborative approach to collecting African publications working through the Library of Congress Cooperative Acquisitions Program. The preservation of materials is an important component of collection management for research libraries. TRLN librarians have created an electronic template for use in the event of a disaster, and regularly provide hands-on disaster training to staffs of member libraries.

This past year was one of exploration in the information technology area. Our integrated library system vendor was purchased last spring, and the new owner announced that our current system would not be supported or developed indefinitely. A committee was formed to assess the library automation marketplace. Four integrated library system vendors were identified and evaluated. A "Request for Information" and a "Request for Pricing" were issued and the vendor responses were shared among the member libraries. Each vendor conducted a two-day demonstration of their systems at a central location so staff from all TRLN libraries could attend. These initial information-gathering sessions, together with the vendors written proposals proved useful but were not sufficient for all members to make a purchase decision. The Council of Directors determined that it was not necessary for the libraries to purchase the same system. North Carolina State University Libraries purchased the SIRSI software while others will undergo further systems analysis prior to making a decision.

Faculty and students of the TRLN institutions benefit from reciprocal library services provided through the consortium. In order to streamline visits to TRLN member libraries, information on the various lending policies was collected and collated on the TRLN website. The libraries continue to support the expedited document delivery service that provides 48-hour delivery of materials throughout the Triangle. An interlibrary loan forum was held for staffs to share information and best practices and to hear about new and upcoming technologies that could streamline the processes for lending within TRLN.

Centralized training events offer member libraries a cost-effective method for developing staff and building skills. An online survey was developed and administered to library managers to

identify technical training needs of their staffs. The analysis of the survey results ensured that scheduled workshops responded to expressed needs. In addition, a management skills seminar was conducted locally by the Association of Research Libraries to further develop our younger librarians with supervisory responsibilities.

Staff groups gathered throughout the year for continuing education and information sharing programs. A collections symposium was held in August that featured Dr. Paul Genoni, a lecturer from Curtin University of Technology to discuss cooperative collection development in Australia. Tom Peters, Director of Library Initiatives at the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, was the featured speaker at the TRLN Annual Meeting in July and spoke about the CIC E-Press Venture. Vendors appreciate the opportunity to visit the Triangle and demonstrate new technology to the sophisticated TRLN libraries' staff. Digital imaging and content systems were demonstrated as well as systems for ordering books and monitoring electronic journal collections. TRLN exhibited at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions at the annual meeting in Boston. This provided an opportunity for many foreign librarians to learn more about the triangle libraries and their programs.

Three of our institutions are participating in a national program to assess users' perceptions of library services and their expectations of those services. The Association of Research Libraries developed this survey instrument called LibQual. A TRLN symposium, "Measuring Service Quality", was conducted as a precursor to libraries launching the LibQual survey. Presenters included the dean of the School of Information and Library Science at UNC, a professor in business management from NCSU, and a librarian who works with the Association of Research Libraries on the survey project. Additionally, two visiting librarians, from Texas A&M and Virginia Tech, discussed their libraries' experience in evaluating the LibQual results. Future programs are anticipated as the survey results are examined.

The area of special collections emerged as a national focus of the Association of Research Libraries. A symposium was held to highlight responses to a national survey on "Special Collections in ARL Libraries", and to provide an overview of ARL's action agenda. In addition, the four academic library directors commented on potential TRLN special collections activities. The rich special collections and staff expertise resident in our member libraries make this a fertile area for exploration in the coming year.

This past year has seen TRLN maintain its current programming focus as well as explore emerging projects and national agenda items. There has been broad participation and involvement by staff of the ten member libraries. We look forward to the coming year to provide us with new challenges. We have begun the search process for a new TRLN Executive Director, and successfully filling this position is of utmost importance. As the materials budgets of our member libraries are threatened we face the challenge of maintaining our cooperative agreements and capitalizing on our collaborative purchasing arrangements to maximize our buying power. As the libraries move to disparate automated library systems increased cooperation and collaboration will be necessary to provide consistent services to our users. The structure and interconnections established through the Triangle Research Libraries Network will assist us in meeting these challenges as well as others in the coming year.