"A Great University... A Great Library"
by Lance Query, Dean

Under the leadership of Diether H. Haenicke, the University has undertaken the most ambitious of all courses that an institution of higher education can elect: to be a research university while at the same time recognizing the importance of quality teaching for undergraduate and graduate students, traditional and non-traditional students. In the best of times, the election of such a course is commendable; in these times of fiscal constraint in which higher education finds itself, it is remarkable.

In support of the University’s mission, the Libraries, too, must undertake a most ambitious course. We must build quality collections and provide access to information in all formats whether it be paper, electronic, or multi-media. And this must be done in an environment in which information proliferates exponentially and costs have increased to such an extent that even the largest and richest libraries can be expected to acquire only a fraction of what is available. Moreover, we must educate our students and faculty in the use of the powerful tools that enable them to obtain the information they need not only for today but also—and equally important—for their future roles as productive and fulfilled members of our society. We, as teachers, administrators, and librarians, must be sure that our graduates are literate not only in their general and specialized fields of study but also “literate” in information retrieval. Samuel Johnson stated it well more than two centuries ago, “Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves or we know where we can find information upon it.” That simple, yet powerful, observation captures what I regard as the mission of our teaching and library faculties: to ensure that Western Michigan University graduates possess both kinds of knowledge.

Libraries have always been integral to the social and intellectual fabric of our communities. They still are! However, they may never look the same since multiple computer terminals and other automated resources are intermixed with bookstacks, research and reading areas, and service desks. In addition, technology has enabled us to obtain access both to bibliographic records and to full-text documents without leaving our homes and offices. Computers make it possible to search catalogs of libraries and data bases found throughout the world and to obtain materials directly from those libraries and information brokers. Electronic delivery systems provide actual documents to users by mail or fax machine at the touch of a key and the entry of a credit card number. By cooperating in networks of larger and smaller libraries and information systems, we have access to materials we did not even know existed just a decade ago.

While computer technology provides students and faculty with powerful access to information, it is merely a part of what academic libraries are. Libraries are still books, journals, reference tools, manuscripts, and maps. Libraries are still the most egalitarian of all our institutions—places where those for whom matters of the mind are important can engage one another in discourse and discovery, where a student is as important as a scholar, and where no question is unimportant, however ill-defined it might be.

Most of all, our libraries are people: professional librarians who comprise our faculty, highly trained paraprofessionals and clerks, and our incredibly dedicated student assistants. The academic research library is a labor intensive enterprise where, like the rest of our society, technology has not reduced our need for skilled staff. Rather, technology has enabled libraries to offer better collections, expanded access to information, and more responsive services to our users.

Western’s libraries enable the University to meet its mission and enrich the community. In return, our libraries need the support of our entire community. We ask the rest of the faculty to be engaged with our librarians in the building of collections which are essential to

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The Friends of the University Libraries: Call for Membership

Dear Friends:

"We are very proud of Waldo Library. I've always felt that a library is the heart, the true centerpiece of any academic institution."


Slightly over two years ago, Western Michigan University was delighted to reopen a totally remodeled, uniquely contemporary, and state-of-the-art academic library built on and around the foundations of the original 1958 building. Many of you to whom this letter is addressed played significant roles in that tremendous effort and we will always thank you for that support.

However, we continue to need your involvement and contributions in order to achieve the important goals that are essential to a fine university library. This letter is a special invitation to you to become an official member of our growing organization, the Friends of the University Libraries at Western Michigan University, and, through your membership, assist in the development of the library collections and information resources.

The Friends of the University Library was established in 1992. A brief history of its first year and a half of activities is found elsewhere in this newsletter. Its purpose, however, bears repeating:

"To strengthen and support the activities of the University Libraries, to offer an opportunity for interested individuals to come together with a common interest in the literary and cultural activities of the University Libraries, to encourage gifts and bequests, to assist in special projects, and to aid in the development of special collections."

Membership in the Friends of the University Libraries offers: (1) use of the University library collections, (2) invitations to Friends' programs throughout the year, (3) an invitation to the annual reception and meeting, and (4) subscription to the newsletter, Gatherings. Activities of the Friends include a variety of cultural and social events that are focused on special acquisitions or additions to library services or resources.

When you complete the form below and return it with your donation, your name will be entered on the membership rolls for 1993-94. You will become a part of the exciting future of the Friends of the University Libraries, Western Michigan University.

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...the teaching and research needs of the University. We ask them to work with librarians as partners to enable our students to become "information literate." We ask our students to be not only consumers of our collections and services but also partners with us in the preservation of information so that future generations will have access to the resources which students enjoy today. We need the support of the local and regional community as we share the depth and breadth of our collections and the utility of our services with you. As the University Libraries' goals inevitably exceed our ability to attain them, we look to the Friends of the University Libraries to support the libraries in any way possible, be it through financial contributions, the donation of library materials, or time volunteered as partners with us.

I am excited about being part of a library that so many have worked so hard to build. I am also excited about being part of the ambitious course Western Michigan University has elected. As our mission and stature as a great research and teaching institution evolve, we would do well to understand that there has never been a great university without a great library. We're on our way. I hope you will join us.

FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
Western Michigan University

Annual Membership Application

□ Personal □ Corporate

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

City ____________________________ State ______ Zip ______

Phone ____________________________

Make check payable to:
WMU-Friends of the University Libraries

Return To:
Waldo Library
Attn. William Smith
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5080

PERSONAL MEMBERSHIPS

□ Student* $5.00
□ Associate* $10.00
□ Contributing $25.00-$99.00
□ Donor $100.00-$499.00
□ Patron $500.00-$999.00
□ Benefactor $1,000.00
or more

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIPS

□ Donor $100.00-$499.00
□ Patron $500.00-$999.00
□ Benefactor $1,000.00
or more

Contributions above $5 are tax-deductible ($5 are dues)

*Contributions above $2 are tax-deductible ($2 are dues)