

Since the merger of the programs at the Endowment, many librarians have apparently assumed that NEH was no longer as responsive to projects on humanities topics and themes through libraries. While this is not entirely true, the results were clear: fewer proposals and less money offered for support. There were only 27 proposals received in 1983, down from 78 in 1981, and by the 1984 deadlines only 37 proposals were received, of which 20 obtained Endowment support for a little less than

\$2 million.

Once again the Congress has marked a level of support for Humanities Projects in Libraries at over \$3 million for fiscal year 1985. For more information about this renewed effort, or for guidelines on programs through libraries, call or write to: Thomas Phelps, Division of General Programs, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0271. ■■

A case study in closing the university library to the public

By Brenda L. Johnson

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The pros and cons of restricting access in a state-supported university library.

On October 28, 1983, a number of Rutgers University librarians attended an ACRL tri-chapter (New York Metropolitan Area, Delaware Valley, and New Jersey) symposium based on the case study method. The symposium, "Life on The Technology Express," led one librarian, Adeline Tallau, to conceive of a similar-type program for her Rutgers' colleagues. She immediately thought of an issue of great concern to the Rutgers Library community—serving the non-Rutgers clientele.

Rutgers University Libraries' Forum on Services (a faculty group made up of librarians working in the areas of reference, interlibrary loan, circulation, online database searching, technical services and bibliographic instruction) agreed to sponsor a program entitled, "A Case Study in Closing the

University Library to the Public." On May 16, 1984, about twenty-five librarians gathered to discuss the issues, problems and solutions generated by a pre-distributed set of documents or "case," set at the fictitious New Jersey University Library.

The mythical New Jersey University, with over 40,000 students on two campuses in New Towne and Dennison, is one of the major state university systems in the nation. According to the case, several years before her arrival at New Jersey University as the university librarian, Manfreda Edsel published the highly controversial article, "Are Libraries a Public Utility?" in which she divided public utilities into two classes—the service type and product type. Clearly, she stated, libraries are a service and "services to a group which the library

was not designed to serve strain the ability of the library to provide service to its intended clientele. At the same time, the service provided to the non-intended user is often less than adequate. If library users now had to pay the real costs involved in providing service when they use an inappropriate library, economic factors would influence their choice of library."

Background documents included in the case were memoranda on such matters as overburdened reference staff, building security, a new GPO depository library ruling concerning public use, and offering database searches to the public. Petitions and student paper editorials strenuously opposing the closing of the library to the public, a letter from a local attorney, a statement of the University-Wide Goals and Objectives Committee, and a memorandum from the Director of the Center for High Technology that proposed the "selling" of library services as part of a fund-raising drive, were all included to help describe the series of events and circumstances at New Jersey University leading to the current problem.

To start the program, Manfreda Edsel has convened the Library Faculty Forum to consider the effect that closing the library to the public would have on library services. In a memorandum to the University President she stated, "Last year a decision was made to close the libraries at Kingston University.... Their experience with this decision has been mixed. There has been a marked decrease in the number of persons using the library. It is not yet possible to determine if there has been a reduction in the number of books missing from the stacks. There has also been an accompanying cost to administer the program which allows admission to persons who, although they do or did not attend classes, or work for the university, are nonetheless in valid need of access to the library.... I am reluctant to suggest the adoption of this type of program, although I am forced to realize that closing the Libraries to non-New Jersey University users would also provide some relief to some of the other problems facing the Library system."

The all-day program was divided into morning and afternoon sessions with the purpose of discussing Manfreda Edsel's charge to the faculty. The morning session began with an introduction to the program and the case study method and continued with small group discussions of the overall or philosophical issues which would be involved in closing a library to the public in a state-supported institution. Each group debated whether to close or not to close the library, listing reasons to support either decision. Some arguments for closing the library included:

- more seating space would be available;
- it would save wear and tear on the collection;
- it would force the strengthening of the state network;
- it would provide better security;
- a greater percentage of the budget would sup-

port the primary users; and

- keeping out the general public would free up the staff and equipment for New Jersey University users.

Some reasons for keeping the library open to the general public included:

- it is the philosophical obligation of a public institution to be available for use to anyone in the state;

Selling library access to businesses was discussed.

- it is just good public relations;
- to meet Freedom of Access and Information requirements; and
- to fulfill obligations to provide access to some Special Collections material and government documents.

Through separate deliberations the two discussion groups, surprisingly enough, came up with the same conclusion—restrict access, but do not completely close the New Jersey University libraries to the outside public. This limited access alternative was subject to differing interpretations, varying from maintaining an official access office to requiring a sign-in procedure. Both groups ultimately decided to propose a public access or screening office.

Clearly recognizing this as a compromise position, the groups had discussed the cost of maintaining a screening office vis-à-vis the positive results to be achieved. One group envisioned New Jersey University receiving additional public funding to support this access office. Through the access office, studies based on collected data could document to the State the number of outside users who use or wish to use the New Jersey University Libraries. Additional data on who these users are and why they need to use New Jersey University libraries would support the case to be made for greater funding. Indeed, even the idea of selling access and services to business and industry was discussed.

The group members went on to list how an access office might appropriately discourage inappropriate use of New Jersey University Libraries. If viewed as an opportunity to educate non-New Jersey University patrons to what kinds of collections and services NJU really has to offer, patrons may be better served. The discussion groups were concerned about the actual disservice being paid to users who unwittingly come to NJU for material which would more likely be found in a large public library and who, equally uninformed, leave without the knowledge that the material may be found

elsewhere. An access office, if properly staffed, would steer those individuals to the proper source(s).

The afternoon session was eloquently introduced by Mary George, head of the General Reference Division at Princeton University Library, who discussed what issues the Princeton University Library staff raised before closing the Firestone and Marquand Libraries to the general public in 1982. According to George, when restricted or controlled access to Princeton was proposed, many doubts were voiced. Among the chief concerns were:

- appropriate scholars might be turned away;
- the perception of offensive red tape;
- a lack of flexibility in procedures;
- possible inadequate hours for the access office;
- the difficulty in staffing the access office properly;
- the necessity for consistency in screening potential users;
- an assurance of proper referral to branch libraries;
- developing a routine to take care of access to depository collections; and
- the whole issue of intellectual censorship.

George also reported on what actually happened after the closing of the libraries. She stated that although there have been some rough spots, it has gone much better than expected. Visiting scholars now receive passes with no problems; many people are helped at the guard desk or access office and are properly referred; the increased public contact has actually helped public relations (for example, where patrons once walked in with no direction, they are now properly guided); cooperation from local libraries has been very good; there are fewer total questions asked, but a higher percentage of the questions are reference questions.

The afternoon small group discussions focused on the practical problems which would be encountered in restricting access to the library. A list of major concerns emerged from each group and included the following:

- the necessity to have early consultation with university faculty and administration about the whole issue;
- ensuring proper public relations with the outside community regarding the university's decision; and
- the need to prepare a thorough planning document which includes, among other things, a time table, the definition of a "user," redesign of the building entrance, and a formal evaluation mechanism.

The small groups rejoined to report on their discussions and recommendations and to wrap up the day. Weary but stimulated, the participants had taken part in a program designed to provide the opportunity for examination of an issue apart from their "home" institution. While certain aspects of the case bore close resemblance to the circumstances and events at both Rutgers University and

Princeton University, the participants were asked to extract themselves from the "real" world and place themselves temporarily at New Jersey University. By removing themselves from Rutgers University Libraries, if for only one day, broader thinking was required. The focus centered on the problem-solving process rather than on what would happen to me or "my patrons" or "my library."

As previously mentioned, discussions and plans for the case study program began in late October and early November 1983. Several months later, in a very real situation, the President of Rutgers University appointed a select committee made up of faculty members (including library faculty) and administrators, charged with reviewing some issues of concern within the libraries. Several members of the Presidential committee received copies of the background documents distributed for the case study. However, the committee did not have the results of the Forum on Services program before drafting a recommendation on this issue. The recommendation was drafted several weeks before the program took place.

The unofficial recommendation¹ of the committee on this issue was to retain the so-called "open door policy." The rationale included statements of unacceptable administrative and political costs associated with restricting access. Admitting that service to non-Rutgers users adversely affects service to Rutgers users, the committee suggested refining existing use studies to demonstrate to the State that additional funds should support these services to outside users. The committee's draft recommendation, although calling for retention of the open door policy, also encouraged the study of how other University libraries limit access through user fees and identification cards, particularly other state university systems.

It is not known by this writer if the case study documents helped to provoke thought or stimulate discussion of the issue within the Presidential committee. It is encouraging that many of the points made by our case documents were certainly considered by the committee. And the fact that study of limited access at other institutions was encouraged by the Presidential committee, brings the reality and the case study method very close. When selecting between the various options within the two discussion groups, leaving the library open to the public ran a very close second to restricting access. The library faculty groups and the Presidential committee I believe were not too far apart in their recommendations. Certainly the issue is not over and if future study is pursued, the report of the Forum on Services case study program may provide useful information.

¹At the time of writing, the report of this committee has not been officially released, and it is still within the discretion of the University President to do so.

The actual documents for the case study are being sent for deposit with a national clearinghouse and should be available in the near future. Inquiries regarding the case are welcome and may be ad-

ressed to: Brenda L. Johnson, Network Services Unit, Rutgers University Libraries, P.O. Box 212, New Brunswick, NJ 08903. ■■

Coping with stress: The 14th annual Workshop on Instruction in Library Use

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Stress and burnout on the BI trail.

The 13th Annual Workshop on Instruction in Library Use was co-sponsored this year by Queen's University and St. Lawrence College Saint-Laurent and took place in Kingston, Ontario, from May 16 to 18. Participants from Ontario and Quebec universities and community colleges were joined by instruction librarians from eastern and western Canada as well as by a number of Americans.

Attendees were able to balance the long workshop sessions against the enjoyment of some of Kingston's waterfront attractions, namely, a *coq au vin* banquet aboard the Island Queen on the opening night and a light lunch at the Yacht Club on Thursday. The Workshop's theme was "Coping with Crisis: Strategies for Survival" which included sessions on crisis management, coping with burnout, time management, computer-assisted instruction to combat staff shortages, using media as a tool for coping with financial crises, job sharing and job exchanges as a means of self-revitalization

and the trials and tribulations of CAI programming.

The workshop opened on Wednesday afternoon with the group as a whole participating in a crisis management session which featured a film called "Managing in a Crisis" from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management in which a series of crises takes place in a large hotel catering operation. Actors, assuming the roles of the key personnel involved, played out several scenarios designed to show the effectiveness of using "information-based problem solving." The film outlined a 5-step procedure which stressed adequate planning and information gathering as a means of crisis management. These steps are: 1) setting the climate; 2) collecting information; 3) classifying the information; 4) setting priorities and guidelines; and 5) following up.

Using the method outlined in the film as a guide, the audience was then divided into smaller discussion groups in order to examine a case study prepared by Sandy Casey, Queen's Faculty of Educa-