

## Annual Report of the Rhodes University Library for 2009

### Library Director's Review

As you read through this annual overview of the work carried out by the staff of the Rhodes University Library Services Division, I am sure you will be impressed by their achievements during a year marked by major building construction and a demanding institutional review of our services and staffing structures.

- The year started amid dust and jackhammers as the Library Building Project entered its fifth month of construction. Staff and users, who remained remarkably stoic, experienced reduced services areas and office spaces as the construction progressed at a fairly rapid pace. In December, after many months of building construction on our doorstep, the new section was completed sufficiently for the research collections to be moved and staff made preparation to transfer services and offices in time for the start of the 2010 academic year.
- Another challenge was the institutional review of the Library Services - a process that incorporated a self-evaluation of the services and staffing structure which was assessed by a University-appointed Review Panel. The Library's self-evaluation report came at a critical juncture with the need to reorganize the staffing structure to meet the demands of new services that were designed in keeping with a modern academic library and building. In anticipation of the Library Review, any staffing changes due to resignations or retirements were put on hold during 2009 which meant that key services were understaffed and both user and technical services operated under severe strain throughout 2009. The Review was a protracted process with further reviews undertaken of the Cory Library for Historical Research and the departmental libraries. The situation became more pressing and urgent towards the end of 2009 as the Library Building neared completion and the organizational structure to provide staff for the service areas across four floors was still not finalized. The recommendations of Institutional Planning Committee Library Review Report and the two Task Teams, approved by Senate in late 2009, will be implemented in early 2010 to enable the Library Services Division to begin functioning fully and effectively.
- A highlight of this year was the inclusion of the Rhodes University Library as one of six academic library partners in Phase 2 of the prestigious Research Libraries' Consortium Project funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York (2009-2012). The purpose of the project is to provide excellent facilities, research information services and librarians skilled to better understand and support research activities and researchers at Rhodes University.
- Two important milestones for the University Repository included the uploading of the 1000<sup>th</sup> item to the Rhodes e-Research Repository and its ranking, as one of only four South African repositories, in the top 400 in the *Ranking Web of World Repositories*. Another important step was the Senate approval of the mandatory submission of e-versions of theses and dissertations to the Rhodes e-Research Repository (ReRR).

- This was the year in which the Library Management proposed, and received support for, restructuring of the Information Resources Budget whereby all subscriptions would be removed from departmental grant budgets into one subscription budget allocation managed by the Library in consultation with users.
- Our Library staff have been actively involved in the knowledge transfer process including giving talks and writing articles to share expertise as well as invited to participate in specialist workshops. A number of staff are active in regional, national and international forums.

This has been an eventful year, but marks the beginning of the implementation of the Library Review recommendations and nearing completion of the Library Building Project. This means we will need to:

- Complete the staff restructuring and fill vacancies as a matter of urgency
- Employ increased numbers of student assistants to support user services areas
- Train library users more than ever before so that they can navigate effectively across the wide range of electronic resources including nearly 35,000 online journals, more than 6,000 e-books and over 100 commercially licensed databases which are supplied by many publishers and each characterized by different search and find techniques.

The Library Services Division staff is both excited and daunted by the challenges ahead but we are ready to move forward even in the face of the many changes that wait ahead in the new year.

Gwenda Thomas  
Director: Library Services

### **Improving the physical infrastructure**

December 2009 saw the near completion of phase 1 of the Library Building Extension and Renewal Project, with the 4-storey new section of the building, the link-bridges between the “old and the new” and refurbished part of the old building, almost ready for handover to Library staff in January 2010.

The year’s building activities were at times a major inconvenience to staff and users, as well as neighbouring residences and academic departments, but all concerned graciously put up with the disruptions. Library staff ensured that all services to users continued efficiently. Study space for students was compromised, however, and the Library liaised with the Dean of Students’ Office to find alternative study areas on campus during the examination periods.

The benefits of the building project will be seen by all in 2010. The new section will provide state-of-the-art facilities to users, including faculty libraries with service counters and computer hubs, an Information Commons with 54 computers, nine group study rooms, a 26-seater training facility and relaxed-reading areas. With the

completion of the project in July 2010, the Library building will be fully transformed into one that fulfils international academic library standards.

### **Collection development and management**

The Information Resources (IR) Grant once again came under strain with the further devaluation of the rand towards the end of 2008 when the bulk of the subscription fees for 2009 renewals were being paid.

Departments were encouraged to make use of the Fisher Bequest Grant and the Humanities Research Library Fund to purchase books. Despite additional funds being made available through the Fisher Grant, over 1000 fewer book and AV material orders were placed in 2009 compared to 2008 (4133 and 5164 respectively). The following table shows the change in the pattern of expenditure on books vs subscriptions.

<b>Information Resources Grant expenditure</b>		
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Books	29%	21%
Subscriptions	71%	79%

The Library held two update sessions in April for Heads of Departments and Library Liaison staff on the status of the 2009 IR Grant and to discuss the proposed restructuring of the IR Grant for 2010, as outlined in the Library's Self-Evaluation Report for the Administrative Review Panel.

Processes in the acquisition and processing of materials were further automated with the addition of two modules on the Millennium system, E-Invoicing and E-Checkin. The ordering process has also been made more efficient by further uptake of the online ordering facility by academic departments – approximately one-third of orders received in 2009 were placed in this way.

### **Improving access to information**

Access to the Library's electronic resources was greatly improved as a result of the implementation of a newly acquired module of the Millennium software, CASE (Content Access Service). At the same time the federated search engine, ResearchPro, was also installed.

The Library website is a key tool to provide access to the Library's information resources and the Library Technology Coordinator worked closely with the Web Unit to ensure that progress was made in developing the required functionality in the RU Content Management System. The Web Unit migrated the Library's remaining static content on the old server, which could no longer be updated, onto the new web server. This included the exam papers and research databases pages, which are heavily used.

Search facilities on the Rhodes eResearch Repository were enhanced with the upgrade of the open access software, EPrints, to version 3. The content of the repository was also migrated to the SAN (Storage Area Network) from the Library's server.

### **Support for learning, teaching and research**

Over the past year, two significant projects have come to fruition that will have long-term benefit for scholarship at Rhodes University. Firstly, late 2009 saw the completion of Phase 1 of the new library building with its state-of-the-art facilities. Linked to this is the implementation of Faculty Librarian Services that will be responsible for liaising proactively with departments, providing information services, engaging in collection development & management, and presenting information literacy instruction.

Our support for research was boosted significantly by the inclusion of Rhodes University Library, as one of six South African academic libraries, in the Research Libraries' Consortium Project (RLC) (2009-2012) funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The scope of the project includes the implementation of a research portal with advanced discovery tools, together with a Research Commons that comprises an access-controlled quiet space where senior post-graduate students, academics & researchers can read, search the literature or work on publications, reports and theses. A good part of 2009 was devoted to the physical design and planning of this facility which will incorporate a range of seating to support research activities, a consultation area, a seminar room for research groups and a comfortable lounge area for informal interaction between researchers. In addition, the RLC Project makes provision for significant national (3x2 week Library Academy programmes) and international (2x8 week study visits) training opportunities and interventions in research support for motivated and aspirant Faculty Librarians. In late 2009, the first group of six RUL staff was selected for the April 2010 Library Academy. As part of their participation, each Librarian is required to conduct a small research project that will be evaluated with a view to submission for publication in 2010.

We continued to work in close collaboration with the Research Office to strengthen the digital repository (Rhodes eResearch Repository or ReRR) as a tool among researchers at Rhodes University. One outcome of 2009's collaborative efforts was Senate approval for the mandatory submission of e-versions of theses with corresponding amendments to the *Thesis Final Submission Form*.

Digital collections in the Rhodes eResearch Repository grew, with 56 theses and 160 research articles deposited. The 2009 print and electronic theses were only received in the middle of the year, much later than usual, and this resulted in a delay in the preparation of the electronic theses for deposit in the ReRR. The theses that were added during the course of the year were mostly pre-2009 theses that had previously had restrictions placed on their deposit, and the bulk of the 2009 theses will be added in 2010 only.

A pleasing achievement was that the ReRR has continued to maintain its ranking (as one of only four South African repositories) at 240 in the top 400 repositories in the *Ranking Web of World Repositories*:

([://repositories.webometrics.info/top400\\_rep.asp?offset=200](http://repositories.webometrics.info/top400_rep.asp?offset=200))

### **Serving our users**

We focus a lot of time and effort on helping users to find the information they need and to use our electronic resources effectively. One of the ways in which we achieve this is through instructional classes. During 2009 we conducted 128 sessions for 3181 participants in the Main Library, 15 workshops for a total of 375 students in the Education Library, 37 workshops for 617 participants in the Law Library, 15 sessions for 177 participants in the Music Library and 3 workshops for 95 people in the Pharmacy Library.

Secondly, we helped users by answering their specific questions in the Libraries or remotely. This year we dealt with 2620 queries in the Main Library, a 13% increase on 2008. The number of requests for assistance received through email increased by 56%.

In preparation for the new Library and the need to support its Information Commons (fully supported computer facility) Information Services staff interviewed 100 student applicants for positions as Information Commons Navigators and chose 54 of them to attend a training programme in February 2010.

Information Services staff and Departmental Librarians continued to work on developing new Subject Guides to cover all the subjects taught at Rhodes University, and an innovation this year was the well-received preparation of guides on specific topics, for example, Global warming and climate change.

### **Cory Library:**

S. Schramm, Information Services Librarian, liaised with tutorial co-ordinators in both the History and Geography departments, and successfully initiated a new approach to dealing with the annual History 101 and Geography 102 visits to the Cory Library.

In addition, she produced 3 new brochures: Guide to the catalogues, Cory Library Publications, and Guide to handling material and Copyright, which are also available on our webpage. Cory sections were added to the Subject Guides when applicable.

Ms Schramm posted 27 blogs on the webpage over the course of the year, highlighting issues of both local and national relevance.

## **Knowledge exchange:**

### **Local:**

Main Library displays promoted the Confucius Institute, the Most Popular Books of 2008, Fiction in the Library and one was put up in support of the University's campaign against racism. New books acquired by the Library were displayed weekly during term times and the short vacations.

### **Cory Library:**

Cory material was loaned out to the Albany Museum for use in the *Grocotts: then and now* exhibition, and material was loaned to the Community of the Resurrection of Our Lord for the compilation of a CD Rom available at the time of their 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in April.

Displays were changed regularly, and included coverage of Primary Sources, (to aid the History 101 students), and subjects of relevance such as the history of the Rhodes University Library, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Xhosa Bible, and the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille, with its connection to the S.A. Library for the Blind. A display and talk was arranged to coincide with the December reunion of the Grahamstown Training College Old Girls Union.

### **Regional:**

SEALS (South East Academic Library System) held a successful workshop for staff working on the Millennium Circulation, ILL, Acquisitions, Serials, Cataloguing and ERM (Electronic Resources Management) modules from 23-25 March at NMMU. This was attended by I. Vermaak, D. Martindale, L. Cartwright, B. Stoltz, C. Perold and A. Moon. A separate report back session was held on 23 April for all professional staff.

On Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April, E. Shepherd, B. Stoltz and S. van der Riet attended an Ebsco Information day at Lalibela Game Lodge

E. Shepherd, Senior Information Services Librarian, was nominated and selected as a member of the Sabinet Reference and Collection Development Advisory Committee. This is an important development as it provides the users of Sabinet products a means to give feedback and comment on the usability of these services/products. The first meeting took place in October 2009.

Our Library Director, Gwenda Thomas, represents the Library on several regional boards and committees and regularly attended meetings of CHELSA (Committee of Higher Education Libraries in SA), NETD (National Electronic Theses and Dissertations) Project Steering Committee, SANLiC (SA National Library and Information Consortium) Board, The Committee of Scholarly Publishing in SA (CSPiSA), The University of Pretoria Library Services Advisory Committee, the

AJOL (African Journals Online) Board, and the SEALS (South East Academic Libraries System) Trust.

Professional members of staff represent the RUL on the SEALS Standards Committee which meets bi-annually.

Professional members of staff regularly attend meetings of LIASA (Library Association of SA) and its interest groups. F. Still-Drewett is secretary and E. de Wet is a committee member of the EC branch of LiSLIG (LIASA Special Libraries Interest Group).

Cory Library:

The Library was used by 25 postgraduate researchers from other Libraries in SA.

Music Library:

A University of Fort Hare Music staff member and four post graduate music students were hosted for a morning. In depth subject and information searches were done for each student.

**Global:**

G. Thomas attended an OCLC Member Council meeting in Ohio from 9-11 February. She was elected as the Chair-elect for the OCLC EMEA (Europe, Middle East & Africa) Regional Council for the period mid - 2010-2011. This means that she also participates in the Executive Committee of the OCLC Global Council. She attended an Exco meeting in Leiden on 1 October and included in her trip a visit to Leiden University on 30 September.

F. Still-Drewett, Music Dept. Librarian had an article published in an international journal:

South African music libraries: collegial, institutional & geographic isolation: an examination. *Fontes Artis Musicae*, July 2009, p 207-214.

Cory Library:

The Library was used by 13 researchers from overseas universities.

**Staff development**

E. De Wet attended a Basic Paper Conservation Workshop in Kimberley from 24-26 March.

D. Martindale was awarded the level 1 St John Ambulance 1<sup>st</sup> Aid certificate and M. Mpokela was awarded the level 3 certificate in May.

I. Vermaak participated in a NRF/CCNY National Digitisation Project Stakeholders Workshop in Pretoria on the 18 March. She also attended the African Digital Scholarship and Curation Conference in Pretoria from 11-15 May and the

National Library IT Event at NMMU from 19 -20 May.

L. Verwey completed the National Library of SA Telemarc bibliographic course which was offered online from 11-29 May.

C. Perold attended the SANLIC Licencing and Negotiation Capacity Building Workshop at the CSIR, Pretoria from 26-28 May.

G. Dampies attended a DSpace Workshop in Stellenbosch from 5-11 September.

N. Mkhathali & V. Nhanha represented RUL at the LIASA Conference, held in Bloemfontein from 29 September-2 October.

Y. Williams attended an MS Outlook course in October.

D. Martindale, B. Stolz, I. Vermaak and W. van der Walt attended the full IUG-SA Conference held in Port Elizabeth and hosted by NMMU from 11-13 November, while V. Botha, G. Thomas, J. Berger and E. Shepherd attended the Directors' Symposium only on 11 November.

F. Still-Drewett was awarded a certificate in December for successful completion of an MS PowerPoint course.

W. van der Walt, I. Vermaak and E. Shepherd took part in Research Library Consortium Portal software training in Stellenbosch from the 8-10 December.

**New appointments:**

Yvette Williams, Library Assistant (Law Library), May 2009

Wynand van der Walt, Electronic Resources Librarian, October 2009

**Retirements:**

Lizeka Titi, June 2009

Enoch Nontyi, June 2009

Michael Nondlwana, November 2009

**Farewells:**

Anne Moon, June 2009

Shirley Kabwato, July 2009

Caroline Moshesh, September 2009

## Loans Statistics

### Item use by check-out on the Millennium system

<b>Main Library</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Change</b>
Students	121252	118884	- 2368
Staff	11240	9843	- 1397
Alumni	1170	1426	+ 256
Others	2258	1612	- 646
<b>Total</b>	<b>135920</b>	<b>131765</b>	<b>- 4155</b>
<b>Education Library</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Change</b>
Students	2095	3416	+ 1321
Staff	751	675	+ 76
Alumni	49	201	+ 152
Others	76	128	+ 52
<b>Total</b>	<b>2971</b>	<b>4420</b>	<b>+ 1701</b>
<b>Law Library</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Change</b>
Students	16961	16885	- 76
Staff	432	536	+ 104
Others	32	82	+ 50
<b>Total</b>	<b>17425</b>	<b>17503</b>	<b>+ 78</b>
<b>Music Library</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Change</b>
Students	2905	2174	- 731
Staff	1572	1321	- 251
Alumni	97	69	- 28
Others	186	77	- 109
<b>Total</b>	<b>4760</b>	<b>3641</b>	<b>-1119</b>
<b>Pharmacy Library</b>	<b>2009</b>		
Students	713		
Staff	60		
Others	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>		

### Inter-Library Loan transactions with other libraries

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Items Sent</b>	1016	1198	+ 182
<b>Items Requested</b>	1808	1601	- 207