

third dimension

Love story - the UNL libraries

Rudolph says budget cuts hinder future library programs expansion



Photo by Steve Boerner

By Rex Seline

Gerald Rudolph, UNL dean of libraries, says he hopes to improve "a climate that isn't appropriate to accomplish certain aspects" by bettering services provided by the libraries.

Rudolph said he doesn't have the facilities, funding or staffing to do everything he wants, which means "doing with less and trying to get more done."

"We have to be creative and determine how we can re-arrange and relocate to accomplish what we'd like to see done," he added.

But library funding was increased this year, new programs are being planned and Rudolph said he anticipates bettering services.

A cop-out

"Lack of funding is a cop-out, although it has a certain rationale," he said.

"The situation at Nebraska is more like this: Anybody comes in (like Rudolph did to his position nearly a year ago), with a lot of dreams. They are dependent on additional monies. I happened to come in at a time when, instead of a national funding increase for libraries, the whole economy is closing in on us.

"There are some realities involved," he added. "The university isn't going to get money like it would like to and we (the libraries), have to bear our share of the lesser funds."

The library has received more money this year, though, raising it in a budget comparison with nine other mid-west schools. But the money received has been restricted, according to Rudolph.

He also said Nebraska's budget for this year ranks third compared to the rest of the Big 8 schools and Colorado State University. Only Iowa State and Colorado University

rank above Nebraska's \$1,156,003 total.

"The unfortunate thing about it is these budgets (for the compared schools,) aren't very big," Rudolph said. He guessed that UNL's libraries rank somewhere in the 60's among major institutions.

More than one quarter of the budget is designated to help increase collections for departments that have been designated Areas of Excellence, he said. In addition, \$237,970 of the money given to the libraries in this year's budget cannot be spent on anything but books for the Areas of Excellence.

Another problem with the budget concerns catching up, according to Rudolph.

"It would have been good if we had it (a larger budget) the last few years too," he said. "It's now a reasonable budget, but it had been so low for years it necessitated a lot of catch up buying."

UNL fifth

Rudolph also said UNL's library system ranks fifth among the nine schools in total number of books (1.2 million), and fourth in number of volumes added this year.

Future plans for the library include the possibility of computerization of the circulation system, according to Rudolph.

He said UNL has joined the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and the Medical Center libraries in studying the circulation system. A joint request will be made to the central administration for a computerized system probably by August of 1976, he said.

The Legislature probably will get the request in January, 1977 and, if the funding is approved, it will be provided sometime around July, 1977, according to Rudolph.

Computerized checkout

The proposal will include a computerized checkout system making it possible to refuse checkouts to people who owe fines and easier to keep better track of the book inventory, Rudolph said.

Rudolph said he dreams of being able someday to deliver requested books to students with delivery to dormitories or fraternity and sorority houses.

"The delivery is within our capability now," he said. "We have a van and a driver who now delivers between branches."

Only one inventory

The problem is the library does not yet have the capability to tell students which volumes are where, Rudolph said. The only place that now has the complete inventory of books for the entire UNL system is Love Library.

"That day is coming soon," he said. UNL now has direct line access to the collections at Kearney State in Nebraska and some 400 other post-secondary institutions across the country, which are members of a collection cataloguing service.

He said that the 30 other post-secondary institutions in the state soon may join the service, making the collections at these schools available to UNL students on interlibrary loans.

Being able to give students information at all branches about holdings in the library system and then being able to deliver to the student, means an expansion of our service capabilities, Rudolph said.

Changes upset branches

Troubles resulting from procedural changes at some of UNL's 10 branch libraries this year are temporary and involve emotional issues, according to Gerald Rudolph, dean of libraries.

A sampling of branch directors indicates the problems result from policy changes in circulation and fining. Law students were upset about the reduced hours that the new Law Library remains open.

The law protest was "an unfair move by a small number of law students," Rudolph said, "to dramatize something—I'm not sure what their motives are—in the law college."

Other complaints are "momentary, it's an emotional matter," he added.

The 10 branches include East Campus' C.Y. Thompson, Law, Dentistry, Architecture, Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics and Physics. The Engineering department's library will move into Nebraska Hall, vacated when the Undergraduate Library goes to Love.

Beginning this semester, a uniform circulation policy was implemented for all branches by Rudolph, regulating length of time books and periodicals can be checked out and fine procedures.

"We don't fine just to fine," Rudolph said. "There's no pleasure in charging someone. Fines came into being because at present there is no way of controlling non-conformists to certain regulations. "The only one who gets fined is someone too lazy to return a book or the card to check it out again."

"My point of view was bear with it, very few people in those libraries will be fined," Rudolph said. "I think only five students in law have been fined and it's an equally small proportion in the other libraries."

At UNL, the libraries are geared more toward undergraduates "because I think they use the library more than others," Rudolph said.

Rudolph said he was upset at his inability to enforce circulation procedures for faculty. He said registration and transcripts can be held for students not paying fines, but there is no way to penalize offending faculty.

Library studies have shown a definite drop-off in use during later hours, according to Rudolph.

The Law Library now closes at midnight, although director Eugene Johnson said he is seeking to keep it open 24 hours during finals.

"We've had no luck getting students to volunteer to work during exams, though," Johnson said. Unlike the old Law College, the new building can be locked and must be staffed if it is to remain open.

Architecture Library Director Peggy Kreger said her

library has been operating under the new regulations for three and one half years and had no problems when the other branches changed policy. Initial reaction against the change three years ago was minor and has died down since, Kreger said.

The Dental College Library changed procedures this year and graduate students were unhappy, according to director Pam Zeier.

"It's understandable I think," she said. "It's unfortunate we had to have fines. They're returning materials just as good as before."

The Dental Library has been allowed one policy variation and are able to release the names of those who have checked out books.

The rule, designed to prevent potential users from bothering those who checked out the book, does not apply to the dental school because those with the book share information with others who might want to check it out, Zeier said.

Both Lyle Schreiner, director of libraries for the Science and Technology departments, and Wayne Collings, C.Y. Thompson director, said no significant problems developed with the change at their libraries.



Dean of UNL Libraries Gerald Rudolph

Photo by Steve Boerner