

ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Preconference

The ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section will hold its fifteenth annual preconference at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, from June 30 to July 2, 1974, prior to the ALA Annual Conference in New York City. **Special Collections—Their Conservation and Preservation** is the theme for the preconference.

An all-day tour to the W. J. Barrow Research Laboratory and the W. J. Barrow Restoration Shop, in Richmond, Virginia, will highlight the preconference. Meetings will feature the problems and solutions of repairing and conserving special collections materials. Among the speakers will be Bernard F. Walker, Barrow Research Laboratory; George M. Cunha, New England Document Center; Jean Gunner, Hunt

Institute for Botanical Documentation; William Spawn, American Philosophical Society; and Lawrence Towner, Newberry Library.

C. Waller Barrett, noted collector and former president of the Bibliographical Society of America, will host a dinner for the conferees at his home. James Bear, Jr., curator and director of Monticello, will speak on the assembling of the Monticello Library.

Vesta Lee Gordon, of the Manuscript Department at the University of Virginia Library, is serving as chairman of the preconference planning committee. Further information and registration materials may be obtained from Beverly P. Lynch, Executive Secretary, ACRL, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. ■■

Inside Washington

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No funds have been requested in the 1975 budget for the college library resources program, under-graduate instructional equipment, and library training and demonstration. This is consistent with the Office of Education's general higher education policy of moving away from institutional support toward student support. . . .

—from "The Fiscal Year 1975 Budget," The Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Academic librarians may be enjoying their last fling with federal money this year if the administration refuses to fund college and university library programs next year.

While Washington has never squandered much largess on academic libraries, federal funds this year have already been pared to the lowest amount since 1970 and in next year's budget the White House (for the second year in a row) has requested no money at all for long-standing programs—the \$5,000 basic grants, the special purpose grants, library training programs and research and demonstration grants included under Title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

To add to this picture of fiscal misery, the Higher Education Act, itself a bare toehold on Capitol Hill for academic librarians, expires in 1975 and will need new authorization or rewriting. But congressional education staffers are busy this session wrestling with a new elementary and secondary education act and have few thoughts to spare on higher education. Many staff people would seem to agree with the HEW conclusion that federal assistance has been "marginal" and colleges probably won't miss it. Few have heard the plea of the university library director who moaned, "if nothing else, it kept me from falling any further behind."

Academic libraries are thus in danger of being caught in midstream. While few would quarrel with the judgment of economists William J. Baumol and Matityahu Marcus that the evidence shows clearly "the past rates of expansion in library expenditures, like those of educational institutions in general, could not have been expected to continue indefinitely," a consensus of where to turn next is needed.¹

¹William J. Baumol and Matityahu Marcus, *Economics of Academic Libraries* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1973), p.1.

While library educators have for years bemoaned the dearth of accurate data about library performance and needs, hard thinking on the role of academic libraries will be more essential than ever in the next two years. Guidelines for performance such as ACRL's upcoming standards for academic libraries, evidence of technological experimentation such as that sponsored by the Council on Library Resources, and demonstration of innovative approaches being taken by library administrators will be what turns the tide of disinterest on Capitol Hill.

Money in this year's budget was finally released in December after months of standoff between Congress and the administration, which budgeted zero funds for all library programs. But the fiscal year 1974 grants are extremely limited, with little chance of special purpose awards which have spurred library cooperation in the past.

For this year the Office of Education has \$9.975 million to spend on basic \$5,000 grants (compared with \$12.5 million in fiscal year 1973) and \$2.850 million for library training (compared with \$3.572 million in fiscal year 1973), so the academic community is already feeling the pinch. Money for research and demonstration has also been reduced to \$1.425 million (from \$1.785 million in fiscal year 1973).

Notices and application forms for the first

two programs have been mailed to every institution which ever applied for money, whether successful or not, according to OE officials.

Forms for basic grants went out to 3,000 possible applicants this year. Last year 2,100 institutions received grants. However, this year there is only money for 1,995 institutions to receive a full \$5,000 each and the funds will have to be prorated if more eligible institutions apply; officials say. With inadequate funds for basic grants, there seems to be little hope this year of special purpose awards which came mainly from impounded money last year.

Application forms for the \$2.85 million in library training funds were sent to more than 800 institutions which had previously participated in these programs either through fellowship programs or institutes. Last year OE officials estimate more than 1,500 individuals in 57 institutions benefitted from some aspect of the program. Included in these are 145 library master's degree candidates who will finish their work this August, 24 Ph.D. candidates who began programs last year and need two years further funding, 20 Indians in their third year of library bachelor's degree training, and 50 paraprofessional library students.

This year's \$2.85 million allocation means the program must be cut back approximately 20 percent. OE officials say ongoing programs will be continued, however, and reductions will be made in new grants.

Applicants for research and demonstration grants should write to Mr. Paul Janaske, USOE, Division of Library Programs, Department of HEW, Washington, DC 20202. Last year twenty-four projects were funded under this program, most of them aimed at providing opportunities for the disadvantaged. Several projects did involve networking and innovations in the use of academic library resources. The program will continue with this same approach in fiscal year 1974.

Academic librarians will have to evaluate the importance of government programs such as these to their operations. Are these the programs they want continued, or what new ones should be designed?

In their analysis of library costs, Baumol and Marcus concluded, "these trends indicate . . . that this cost increase for services is not a fortuitous phenomenon whose effects can be expected to be transitory nor one ascribable to peculiar circumstances within one or a few activities."²

The crunch is with us to stay. In the new age of austerity, what role will Washington play for higher education? ■ ■

²Baumol and Marcus, *Economics of Academic Libraries*, p.56.

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