The library as a perpetual partner in providing services and technology for Academic Affairs is described by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Dean of Library Affairs and the Library Director of Technical and Automation Services. The collaboration includes campus partnerships in Academic Affairs and with other areas of the university such as Information Technology. State, regional and national cooperative endeavors in which the University is engaged to meet the service mission of the library will be discussed. A videotape which provides an overview of some of the partnerships is part of the presentation, and copies are available upon request.
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost

My colleagues and I appreciate the opportunity to share with you some of our accomplishments and how they have been achieved, in the areas of technology support and, providing access to information. Excellence in these areas is necessary to sustain and enhance Southern Illinois University at Carbondale’s (SIUC) mission of teaching, research and service.

As is surely the case with each of you, we are finding that information access, which comprehends technology support, is a principal limiting factor on our ability to remain competitive, as well as to meet the needs of our faculty and student user populations.

The limiting factor on information access of course, is “scarce resources.” We have calculated that to meet our technology “wish-list” needs, SIUC would have to win the Illinois lottery when the lottery reaches the $140 million mark. This mind-boggling number is an estimate of what would be required to: connect all of our buildings with fiber optics; renovate and install wiring closets; and purchase the necessary hardware and software to complete our transition from a mainframe environment to a distributed, client-server model.

As a state-supported institution, the Illinois Purchasing Act does not allow us to either budget for or purchase lottery tickets; hence, we are having to find other means to incrementally fund a much-scaled down list of highest priorities. I am finding that even the process of identifying the highest of the high priorities is a challenge, and the increasing demands for an ever-growing list of services by the user populations combine to form a chorus that may be likened to the Preservation Hall Jazz Band playing counter-point!

To give you some perspective of our University, SIUC is a Carnegie II Research Campus with approximately 23 thousand students and 900 full-time faculty. We have nine undergraduate colleges, a School of Law, a School of Medicine and a Graduate School. At the center of these instructional and research units is the library, which holds memberships in the Association of Research Libraries and the Center for Research Libraries. In addition to meeting the undergraduate instructional needs, the library serves the graduate education and research needs of 57 masters programs and 27 doctoral programs. Our external grant and contract activity is roughly $65 million; $20 million of which is from federal sources, largely to support research.
Approximately 80% of the state appropriated budget for the Campus is allocated to Academic Affairs. Structurally, the instructional and research units except for the School of Medicine report to the Academic Vice Chancellor, as well as do the Library, Admissions and Records, and the Broadcasting Services. A separately budgeted administrative unit titled Information Resources reports to an Executive Director for Information Resources outside of Academic Affairs. Information Resources is responsible for telephone services, central administrative computing, and the basic technology infrastructure needs of the Campus and includes Information Technology which interfaces with the library. From my view as Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Information Technology is a high potential ally and partner for Academic Affairs, and the library in particular, to join forces to meet the information needs of the instructional and research user populations.

In order for this potential to be realized, cooperation and open communication had to be the rule, partnerships had to be forged, and strategies developed. The federation of players included the Executive Director of Information Resources, an informed Library Dean with a vision, and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The Dean of the Library was fortunate to have a first-rate staff, and it has been my good fortune to have maintained open communication and cooperation with the Executive Director of Information Resources. As a result, we have been able to engage a partnership between the library and Information Technology which leverages scarce resources to better meet user information needs. Other benefits of the partnership have included: 1) decreasing cost; 2) taking advantage of complementary expertise within Library Affairs and Information Technology to increase the scope of services delivered; and 3) collectively identifying priorities which have the highest return on investment.

At the core of the Library/Information Technology partnership is a functional team of professionals from both units, which supports the Campus Wide Information System. This CIRCA 2001 Team is the glue which holds the partnership together, and which has contributed greatly to the expansion of information services and technology support to users in a resource-limited environment. I should hasten to add that neither the CIRCA 2001 Team nor the cooperation between units has diminished the challenge to the library for increased services, and additional products and applications. Balancing the resources to meet user needs across the faculty and student populations falls on the shoulders of the Dean of Library Affairs.

Our instructional program mix and strategic geographical location in the state of Illinois have had an impact on our technology initiatives. Our service area is the southern
one-third of the state, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education which is the higher education coordinating board has charged SIUC with giving leadership to the statewide, telecommunication network for downstate Illinois. This places us at the center of two regional consortia, Southwest Illinois Higher Education Consortium and the Southern Illinois Collegiate Common Market each headed by a Director, who works closely with the nine respective Community College Presidents, the two University Chancellors and the SIUC Library Dean in particular. Together, we partner to provide a between-and-within telecommunications network and technology infrastructure on the Campuses to meet the growing Distance Learning needs of the region. The library serves as the macro-interface between our Information Resources and the consortia members, and participates in scheduling and maintenance of the supporting technology infrastructure.

SIUC is committed to fully exploiting the incorporation of technology into the instructional process, to improve teaching and learning. Evidence continues to mount which suggests that creative infusion of technology into the delivery of content to students, at least in some disciplines, results in superior achievement by the students when compared with traditional pedagogical methods. Mastery of content in Mathematics and Computer Science by students in Arizona and Oregon strongly suggests that by using technology to supplement delivery of the material, student performance is increased and cost is decreased. I am not advocating that the so-called “talking heads” can or will be replaced by technology; rather, I am acknowledging that compelling cases are surfacing which demonstrate that the infusion of technology into teaching and learning, can enhance student comprehension, and increase pass rates and student retention. The litmus test for the effectiveness of technology in the delivery of content has to be student comprehension. Cost is also an important parameter but is secondary. At SIUC, our first concern is to improve the quality of the undergraduate instructional enterprise campus-wide through the use of technology as a supplemental teaching tool. We believe that technology has the potential to not only enhance comprehension of focused content, it can also allow the learner to build on the content by accessing a virtual knowledge base independent of the instructor.

The greatest on-going investment of resources on the Campus is in personnel, and the faculty is the knowledge disseminating and generating machine which drives teaching and research. This means that faculty expertise must be matched with the power and capability which technology may afford if the Campus is to take maximum advantage of both resources. Many of our faculty are not trained in the use of technology to improve their productivity in the classroom and laboratory, and others are dubious that the use of
technology can make a positive difference. This inertia must be overcome, and the library is a central, potential change agent to recruit, train, and provide continuing support to faculty, as they make use of technology to increase productivity, as well as increase quality.

Last March, our Campus was selected as one of 52 new media centers nationwide. The cost benefits realized from this designation will allow the Campus to accelerate development of multimedia products and incorporate them into the instructional process. Our multimedia initiative to be successful must be program driven, and to ensure that the program drives technology rather than vice versa, we are seeking an M.A. degree in Multimedia. This degree program will be structurally located in our College of Mass Communication and Media Arts which already houses degree programs in Radio and Television and our Broadcasting Services composed of two TV stations and two radio stations. However, the partners charged with making the multimedia effort a success include the Library, the College of Mass Communication and Media Arts, and the College of Liberal Arts. This three-way partnership is in every way complementary, leveraging existing investments in personnel and in technology to launch an on-going degree program which will produce quality graduates, train faculty in the use of technology, and research, develop and assess multimedia instructional products which can be used to enhance the quality of instruction on Campus, as well as produce quality, Distance Learning course formats.

As you can see, we have devoted considerable effort to forging on-campus partnerships which we believe will increase productivity and cut costs. We see the library as a critical player in our efforts to accelerate the effective incorporation of technology into the teaching and learning process, without compromising its traditional roles as information access provider and instructional support partner.

Dean Carolyn Snyder will now share with you the Dean’s perspective on how well we are meeting our challenges.

Dean of Library Affairs

My comments will focus on the library’s role and goals as a perpetual partner on campus in both the state and the region. The academic technology leadership position that the library holds on campus was established and encouraged by Provost Shepherd and the Chancellor when I was appointed at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC) four years ago. The library plays a key role in projects that bring together individuals from units such as Information Technology, Broadcasting Services, the colleges and the regional higher education consortia.
Library Affairs is a unit of Academic Affairs. As the Dean, of Library Affairs, I report directly to Provost Shepherd and am a member of Deans’ Council. All of our library activities are based on our mission: “to support the current and anticipated instructional, research, and service needs of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Library Affairs will strive to serve the citizens of the state and scholars of the nation and world. Library Affairs will assume a leadership role in providing intellectual, bibliographic, instructional, and physical access to information resources. Service to users is the first priority of the library.” To reiterate, the library is a service organization for our faculty, students, staff and other users. The SIUC library has broader campus technology responsibilities than some of the other major research libraries. In addition to the usual range of library and information services, the SIUC library has responsibility for:

1. Distance Learning coordination and Distance Learning technical, network, and instructional support. (Distance Learning is defined as the utilization of interactive video to deliver courses.)
2. Other Instructional Support Services including instructional development, instructional evaluation, video production, multimedia and other instructional technology, and classroom equipment support.
3. The Ulysses S. Grant Association, an editorial project.

In the context of the campus environment described by Provost Shepherd, relevant operational objectives of Library Affairs include:

1. Providing high quality services and maintaining efficient and effective operations.
2. Increasing and enhancing services to users.
3. Increasing library and information resources and services available to locations outside the library, including offices and homes.
4. Accomplishing this in an environment of serious staffing and budget limitations (even though the library has received special consideration for the limited funding available).
5. Reviewing on an ongoing basis resource allocations and appropriate reallocations to meet the highest priorities.
6. Providing ongoing programs of education and training for library users and library staff.
7. Broad sharing of information among library staff in all types of appointments. For example, a graduate assistant may be the expert for a particular software application.

The assets of Library Affairs include:
1. University administrative support and understanding of our challenges.
2. Excellent, creative and dedicated library faculty and staff.
3. A library leadership team which is committed to plan and implement new technologies and services for our users. This team is willing to change, to learn, to take some risks and is enthusiastic about technology.
4. A tradition of partnerships and networks, such as our leadership in resource sharing/interlibrary loan in the state, the region and the nation.

However, even with these assets, we have been challenged by the range and diversity of opportunities for providing excellent services and resources to the entire academic community. Therefore our new and evolving partnerships are essential to meet our service goals.

The most basic and long-standing partnership of this library and most research libraries is with the faculty and students of the campus. The faculty and staff of the SIUC library have a broad understanding of the teaching, research and service activities of the university because of their long history of collaboration with the faculty to build the library collections and because of their provision of library services. This partnership was strengthened two years ago with the implementation of the library’s Liaison Program, the assignment of a library faculty member to work with each of the some sixty academic departments on campus to meet their library and information resource and service needs.

In the last four years, the library has also formed other strong and special partnerships to meet the needs of our users. With limited staffing and fiscal resources, this collaboration and sharing of staff resources has been essential. Our partnerships, which I will describe only briefly because they are illustrated in the video, include:

1. CIRCA/2001 Team: A partnership with Information Technology which was established in 1992 to establish, maintain, and expand the CWIS, Campus-Wide Information System.
2. Campus CIRCA/2001 Group: A user group led by Library Affairs and Information Technology which includes representatives from many academic and support areas. It meets once a month for information sharing and demonstrations.
3. Geographic Information Systems (GIS): A group of campus users who formally and informally share information and resources.
4. Instructional Support Services: A wide range of projects in instructional development, video production, multimedia and other instructional technology developments involving many partnerships with individual
faculty members and others involved in the instructional process.

5. Distance Learning: Multiple partnerships on campus and in the region.

6. Digital Imaging Unit: A number of collaborative activities including the University Press/University Library projects begun as one of the original Coalition for Networked Information/American Association of University Presses projects.

7. Athletics: The fifth year of partnerships with both the men’s basketball team and the Student Recreation Center in publicizing our joint activities through fund raising events.

We have available an eleven minute videotape produced totally within the library. This videotape, produced to update the campus about Library Affairs, describes and illustrates some of our technology partnerships. Our colleague, Jay Starratt, had primary responsibility for writing the script and overseeing the production. Copies of “The Library And Technology Partnerships” are available for loan from Carolyn Snyder.

Director of Technical and Automation Services

My part of this presentation is to describe the benefits and challenges associated with working in these numerous and varied partnerships, and to explain what the day to day enterprise entails.

I should first say that the benefits of working together far outweigh any drawbacks. For every instance of small annoyance and frustration, there are scores of moments where there is a sense of real accomplishment and urgent enthusiasm.

Without a doubt the primary benefit of our cooperative efforts is improved campus-wide communication about technology initiatives. I cannot overestimate the value of the fact that through various formal and informal alliances formed over the past few years, across the campus, people working on aspects of information on instructional technology have gotten to know each other. Such familiarity breeds respect.

It is valuable for the people in the colleges to know what the library and the Information Technology staff are doing. It is equally vital that they have an opportunity to help us in our developments and for us to know what their priorities are. When people are informed, they are usually supportive.

This sharing of information moves easily into sharing of expertise. With quick and easy communication, what one person learns, we all become aware of or can learn without
the struggle of being the first to learn. Indeed in many cases, the first to learn becomes everyone’s resident resource, no matter where they actually reside.

Sometimes, sharing of staff expertise can lead to sharing costs, as when the Geography Department helps support a graduate assistant in the library’s Geographic Information Systems (GIS) unit.

Again, sharing of expertise moves easily into sharing services, facilities and equipment. Not every one has to own every thing if they are fairly confident that they can avail themselves of a service or piece of equipment easily and without hassle. The proof of this benefit is that a number of colleges have helped the library purchase equipment or software, but let it reside in the library. We all can stretch our funds that way.

As this illustration shows, the partnerships build trust. We give each other the benefit of the doubt and we don’t look too deeply for camouflaged agendas. As the technology experts in a college come to trust us, so do the others in the college.

Perhaps the greatest benefit is that of the simple awareness for the library and for the Information Technology staff of the conditions throughout the university. Sometimes we get used to rarefied atmosphere where everyone is well equipped and well trained. Our conversations with our colleagues can bring us back to earth.

The challenges of our partnerships are the same as with any groups working together, but I have to say that our conflicts are minimal because of the enthusiasm we all share for the work.

Our biggest challenge lies in the fact that the library staff is at the crossroads of everyone’s highest priority project. It is occasionally difficult to have everyone keep an appropriate perspective on their key projects. Needless to say, these partnerships not only allow for better communication, they demand it.

The coordination of all the people and projects can be a challenge when the people are working in different units. It is especially difficult among a group notoriously disdainful of meetings, most notable about general meetings. The Head of the CWIS Team and I get a lot of good natured abuse when we call big meetings for the purpose of information sharing. We have many “Dilbert” fans in our groups. But if we rely too much on the informal, we drift apart and surprises start to pop up.
Ongoing support for the projects we help our partners develop is another challenge for which we don’t have a miracle cure – development is just more fun. Fortunately, the various campus units are adding technical staff at a steady rate.

This expansion of staff has also meant that we must pay closer attention to protocol. It may surprise you to know that there are some people who act without the authorization of their units. We must always be careful not to overstep our bounds and trample on someone’s toes, while still maintaining an approachable front.

It is a challenge to keep all the balls in the air; to keep everyone committed and enthused; to keep everyone in the same book, if not on the same page, but it is well worth it, especially for our users.

The last thing I am supposed to talk about are future initiatives. To be honest, I had hoped I would be able to say “but since our time is almost up and we need to have a period for questions, I will just stop here and open up the floor to questions,” because I have developed a legendary status about being wrong about predicting future initiatives. I only know that future initiatives will come from out of left field and will overwhelm us with their urgencies.

(January 4, 1996, CAS)