Libraries Committee meeting for February 15, 1995

The Libraries Committee met in the Joyner Library Conference Room at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 15, 1995.

Approval of minutes
The minutes from the November 17, 1994 and the January 18, 1995 meetings were approved.

Encouraging student member participation on the Committee
It was noted that the student member was present during the November 17, 1994 meeting and made positive contributions to the discussion. This was appreciated by the committee which would like continued active participation by the student representative.

Recommendation of methods for getting faculty members more involved in the monograph approval plan.

In order to improve the unit faculty representative participation in the monograph process the Committee recommended that unit chairs be sent a report containing the statistics associated with the approval of monographs and the participation by the unit's faculty representative in the approval process. These statistics would be sent annually during the middle of the Fall semester.

A report on the operation of the Marquis/Horizon system—This system was originally called the Marquis system and is now named the Horizon system. Because it is now referred to by both names we will use Marquis/Horizon to hopefully avoid confusion. Faculty have expressed some concern about the Marquis/Horizon system. It is difficult to respond to problems faculty and students are having unless the details of the problems are stated. Known problems with the system are in the process of being corrected. Three areas of faculty concern were expressed. The first is related to the accessibility of the Marquis/Horizon system. The second is that there are sometimes books listed as available in the Marquis/Horizon system which users can't find on the Joyner Library shelves. The third concern and apparently the most significant or most discussed concern is the tendency for the system to "lock-up" and cause disruptive delays.

Accessibility. At certain times of high usage there are not enough workstations available. Sometimes they would all be busy even if the number of workstations were doubled. There is concern that the system is not accessible to some library patrons because they are not trained to use it. Training is available for classes, but few classes take advantage of it. Library staff are available to train users.

Books listed as available but not on the shelves. This is not a problem with the Marquis/Horizon system. Many books are not located in the library stacks. The database contains records from Joyner Library, the Health Sciences Library, and Elizabeth City Little Library. Users should check the location because it might be in storage, or at another location. Books could be in the process of being put on the shelves after being checked in. When books are checked in they are immediately listed as available in the system even though there is a time delay before they
actually appear on the shelves. This happens with any library system. Another possibility is that books are placed on temporary shelves after being used in the stacks. Lock-ups and disruptive delays. Some of this may be caused by the topology of the local network in Joyner Library. It is an ethernet network which has a 10 Mbytes/sec rating, but which probably runs considerably slower than that, possibly as slow as 1 to 2 Mbytes/sec. There may at times be from 50 to 250 concurrent users. The network gives access not only to the Marquis/Horizon system, but also to the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries (CARL) system through the internet, and the CD ROMs. There were some initial router problems which caused all the campus network traffic to go through the library network, but this has been corrected. There may now be some problems with the way the network is structured, but this can't be changed during the middle of the semester. The new addition of Joyner Library will include a local fiber optic network which will have the capacity of 25 Mbytes/sec up to 100 Mbytes/sec. This should alleviate any current problems associated with network speed and structure.

There are delays caused by the structure of the search of the Marquis/Horizon data base. Some lock-ups occur when there is competition for a particular piece of data in the relational data base. Ameritech personnel have been revising the tables and table structure that make up the relational data base. They continue to work on the system to improve and expand it. ECU is the largest user of the Marquis/Horizon system and there have been some problems with the system just because of the size, but flaws are being addressed and corrected by Ameritech.

Some problems occur at the workstation itself. The system is designed so that much of the work can be done on the workstation rather than on the central computer. The workstations are configured with 16 Mbytes of memory, but this may not be enough. Some workstation problems can be corrected by turning the machine off and back on again. K. Marks said that instructions could be posted that would help users solve some of these workstation problems. There is a possibility that trouble shooters would roam the library giving assistance to users having difficulty with the system.

The ECU libraries, more than many other libraries, have moved in the direction of providing electronic access to information. One of the guiding principles is to have each workstation be a place from which a user could electronically access as much information as can be made available. From the workstations users can currently search the catalog, CD ROMs, and CARL. Students prefer to use electronic media to search for information. One of the desirable features of the Marquis/Horizon system is the great flexibility in the construction of indexes. This has the potential for users to eventually be able to construct sophisticated queries of the catalog.

There are currently several unfilled positions which have an impact on the development and maintenance of the system. Personnel committees have been formed and the positions have been advertised. It is anticipated that the Associate Director and Systems Librarian positions will be filled by this summer. The library administrators are in a quandary concerning the ability of the systems group to
handle the work load when the new library addition is completed and there are 400 workstations. Additional staff may be needed.

The Marquis/ Horizon system has been developed and marketed by Ameritech, a baby Bell company. They acquired the companies Dynix, NOTIS, and LS/2000. Dynix has been developing client-server based library systems since about 1989. NOTIS has developed integrated library systems, and LS/2000 provided the previous on-line library system at ECU. ECU is currently the largest user of the Marquis/ Horizon system, but not for long. The Indiana state-wide University system and the University of Chicago will soon have Marquis/ Horizon systems. ECU currently has about 1 million items in the Marquis/ Horizon data base. The Indiana system will have 7 million items. Any improvements needed for these larger systems can be incorporated into the system at ECU.

Cancellation of journal subscriptions-
The projected cost this year for current journals is $1,148,000 which is $77,000 more than projected at the start of the fiscal year. This year the budget has a one-time addition of $144,000 which may not be available in future years. The inflation forecast is for a 13.1% increase for all titles. This means journals will cost about $150,000 more next year. There is a potential shortfall of $249,000 to maintain our current journal subscriptions for next year. Subscription payments are due in September for most journals. In order to be prepared for next year K. Marks will meet with unit library representatives to start the process of identifying titles that can be canceled. The process will be the same as that used four years ago. Departments may wish to identify core journals.

Agenda for the March 15, 1995 meeting
1. Journal cancellations.
2. Review of the budget for monograph purchases.
3. Continuation of the report on the Marquis system.

The meeting finally adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Submitted by R. Morrison, Secretary