

Academic Resources

The last decade has seen an explosion in the demand for computer technology on campus. State-of-the-art Pentium computers, file servers, printers, and scanning hardware are in use by the faculty, staff, and students. Up-to-date operating system and application software are available in computing labs and computer suites. The rapid changes in technology have influenced the role of the Library. Like other academic libraries that serve small private liberal arts colleges, the Blanche Skiff Ross Memorial Library is in a period of transition.

Computer Network

Cotley's computer network consists of a wireless and a traditional wired component. The wireless network, installed in 2001, is used exclusively by students to connect their personal computers to the campus intranet and the Internet within the residence halls. The traditional wired network connects 13 servers, 180 workstations and 21 100/1000Mbit ethernet switches in 11 campus buildings to a gigabit ethernet backbone via a combination of copper and fiber-optic cables. The campus network is connected to the Internet at 3072Kbits/second via dual T1 phone lines.

The network is used by faculty and students for research, teaching, and learning activities. Additionally, the network supports an array of software applications including e-mail, Web browsers, network printing, and administrative department databases.

All academic software in faculty offices, teaching spaces, the Library, and the AAC is supported by academic computing services. Administrative computing supports software in administrative offices and all campus computer hardware.

Internet and Intranet

Both the Internet and intranet are accessible to students, faculty, and staff. The Internet was first made available to Library patrons in 1994 on a single computer. By 1997, individual computers in administrative and faculty offices and in small computer labs in each residence hall had an Internet connection. The College established an intranet in 1999. The intranet provides a place for the College community to post messages, look up addresses in faculty/staff and student directories, and find news and information on a variety of pages related to academics and student life.

Academic Computing Services

The past five years have brought steady increase in the use of computing technology in the academic program. Electronic systems have enhanced communications between students and faculty, and created increased demand on them to be proficient in applications that have periodic hardware and software upgrades. At Cottey all 35 full-time faculty members and most of the six adjuncts have a computer in their campus office.

Construction and renovation in the Rubie Burton Academic Center in 1998 improved the space available for academic computer technology. The space includes two computer labs, one with 24 workstations and one with 11. These labs are equipped with current state-of-the-art hardware and software, and available for faculty to use for classes.

Academic areas with the most significant technology improvements are the chemistry and instrumentation labs, the academic computing teaching labs, the music MIDI lab, and the three smart classrooms. The smart

classrooms are equipped with various types of multimedia, projection, and centralized control systems.

Computer orientation sessions and faculty in-service training are available to increase proficiency.

An endowed fund, totaling nearly \$850,000, ensures that the College acquires the necessary technology to support the academic program and that equipment and software are kept current. This fund was established using excess monies raised for the construction of the Rubie Burton Academic Center.

Student Computers

At the time of the last self-study, there was one computer for word processing in the quiet study suite in each residence hall. Today, the College provides students with access to 90 computers--or nearly one computer for every three students. The student technology fee purchases and maintains student-access computers. A two-year replacement plan exists for the computer lab in the Rubie Burton Academic Center. At the end of two years, those computers replace the older computers in the computer suites in each residence hall.

Since 1996, computer suites in each residence hall have provided computer access to all residential students 24 hours a day. There are nine networked computers in Reeves and P.E.O. Halls, and 11 in Robertson Hall. Each computer suite is also equipped with CD-ROM writers, scanners, and printers.

In fall 2000, students with their own computer who wanted Internet access in their room used local dial-up services. About 50 students were accessing the Internet using the College's 28 existing trunk phone lines. A problem arose with campus telephone access, since about five percent of the students were using 50 percent of the trunk-line capability during peak-use evening hours. For safety reasons, the College changed its policy and no

longer allowed dial-up services to be accessed through Cottey's lines. Student representatives worked together with administrators to develop a temporary plan for the spring semester, allowing students to dial into a bank of modems owned by the College, in essence, using the College as their Internet service provider.

In response to continued student interest for in-room Internet access, the College installed a high-speed wireless network in all three residence halls, the Library, and Hinkhouse Center in fall 2001. This optional service is available to interested students, who must purchase a wireless network card at a cost of \$150 for laptop computers and \$250 for desktop computers. The College provides network card installation and technical support. Approximately one-third of the students are using this optional service.

Information Resources

The Blanche Skiff Ross Memorial Library provides excellent instructional, research, and cultural support to the Cottey community, as well as to patrons from the surrounding area. During the self-study process a number of factors emerged regarding the role of the Library as it seeks to meet the needs of the academic programs.

In January 2002, the College hired a new library director with 16 years of library experience, including over 11 years of experience as a professional librarian. The new director brings considerable expertise to the evaluation of the collections, services, and facilities of the Library. In addition, the new VPAA has considerable experience and expertise regarding library resources.

In 2001, the College joined the Missouri Bibliographic Information User System (MOBIUS), a consortium of academic libraries across the state. MOBIUS provides access to a union catalog of approximately 14 million volumes, a common library platform, inter-library loan courier service, and purchases electronic resources for sharing. The College's participation in this system significantly enhances and improves its services and resources. In July

2002, library personnel began the extensive and rigorous training necessary to enable Cottey to "go live" with this system while also engaged in the tasks necessary to implement the system, such as re-barcoding the entire collection.

As noted in the table below, the Library's collections total approximately 71,000 volumes.

Table 9.1 - Library Collections

Type	Size of Collection
Books	54,578
Audiovisuals	12,080
Serials	330
Microforms	166
Reference	4,442
Archives	149
Databases	10+

This number far exceeds the standards approved by the appropriate library associations such as the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association of College Research Libraries. However, as the average publication date for the print collection is 1967, there is a concern about the currency of the collection. The library staff will use Conspectus, a nationally-normed tool, to provide a thorough evaluation of the print collection and assist in the creation of a strategic plan for further collection development. A serials usage survey is now underway.

A considerable strength is the Women's Collection, housed in a special section of the Library. This collection numbers over 4,000 volumes and is focused on the lives and works of women. This collection makes an important contribution on Cottey's part to the MOBIUS catalog.

Currently, the Library is organized into five units: administration, reference, collections, technical services, and public services. It is staffed by two professional librarians, three paraprofessional library staff, and

approximately ten student workers. The director is advised by the Library Committee. The committee is composed of students, staff, administrative, and faculty representatives.

While MOBIUS significantly enhances the ability of students and faculty to access information resources, questions exist regarding the proper staff size necessary to deliver service to patrons in an efficient manner. MOBIUS also creates the need for additional professional development opportunities for current library personnel, some of which have already occurred.

Annual fiscal allocations for the work of the Library are supplemented by a large number of gift accounts; however, current expenditures place Cottey somewhat below ALA standards for a minimum library budget of 6 percent of educational and general expenditures. The ALA standards are for all types of institutions, and the small size of the College, as well as its two-year status, may be seen as mitigating factors for decisions regarding Cottey's library allocations. Over the past several years, the budget allocation for the Library has not increased.

Another issue in the Library budget relates to the funds allocated to each faculty member to purchase books and audiovisuals for his or her discipline for the collection. In 2001-02, the allocation for books was \$200 per faculty member. In 2002-03, the director of the library adjusted this amount to \$294 by reducing the funds allocated toward the purchase of audiovisuals because faculty were not expending all those funds. In considering the role of a twenty-first century library program, the College should allocate resources for optimal support of the curriculum, and the current system may not be the best possible plan for the future development of the collection.

Information garnered in a recent student survey on library services will be given serious consideration. Summaries of the student responses were

reviewed by the Library Committee in December 2002 and indicate that the most pressing issue for students is the desire for an expanded and updated collection. Student responses also show satisfaction with the services provided by the staff and with the facility. (More information on the survey is available in the Resource Room.)

Joining MOBIUS addresses the need for an expanded and updated collection, but the Library is in a critical transitional period, and it is time for a larger conversation regarding further development of the delivery of information resources. The Library faces a number of significant challenges, and the President has charged an augmented library committee with the responsibility for a review, for developing a new mission and goals statement, and for establishing the College's priorities for the Library. This strategic plan will guide the allocation of fiscal and human resources for the Library.

Conclusion for Criterion Two

Cotley devotes considerable resources to accomplishing its mission. The College has an established governance system, a committed faculty and staff, a strong financial base, an attractive physical plant, and keeps pace with rapid changes in technology. Cotley's student population is geographically diverse, and students are academically qualified for the transfer-oriented liberal arts curriculum. The effective organization of resources allows the College to accomplish its purposes and fulfill the requirements of Criterion Two. The College has identified the following strengths, concerns, and issues for the future.

Strengths

- An established shared governance system that includes student participation exists within the institution.
- The faculty is highly qualified, stable, and committed to liberal arts education for women.
- The financial aid program has unique opportunities for scholarships for international students, as well as local, state, and provincial P.E.O. scholarships for students from the United States and Canada.

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- A strong financial base includes support from members of the P.E.O. Sisterhood.
 - The student population is geographically and internationally diverse.
 - Cottey's physical plant is safe, secure, and well-maintained.

Concerns

- The Cottey College Board of Trustees is relatively small, and the membership is not as diverse as it could be.
- The declining enrollment trend could threaten the future of the College.
- The Library is being challenged by a number of serious issues: rapidly changing technology, staff development, and budget allocations are impacting the delivery of information resources.

Issues for the Future

- The size of the Cottey College Board of Trustees will be addressed at the convention of International Chapter of the P.E.O. Sisterhood in Oklahoma City in September 2003. In addition, the trustees will consider the diversity of membership in future appointments.
- The College will continue to implement recruiting strategies and work to reverse the declining enrollment trend.
- An augmented library committee will study the delivery of information resources and develop a strategic plan that will guide the allocation of fiscal and human resources.

