

TRIANGLE UNIVERSITIES LIBRARY

COOPERATION COMMITTEE

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Proposal for Funding to Support
Cooperative Library Development Programs
Between Duke University, The University of
North Carolina at Chapel Hill and
North Carolina State University, Raleigh

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INTRODUCTION

The Libraries of Duke University (Duke), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), and North Carolina State University (NC State) are in a highly favorable position to develop and support cooperative library development programs which could lead ultimately to the coordinated use of these libraries as a single resource. The principal factors which define this unusual, if not unique, condition are: 1) proximity, 2) long standing coordination of the development of research level collections, 3) the existence of a large, active population of non-affiliated researchers and scholars which already views the library collections of the area as a single resource, 4) the recent establishment of the National Humanities Center in the Research Triangle Park (RTP).

The proximity of the institutions makes possible the rapid delivery of materials between the institutions via daily courier service as well as convenient on-site use of the neighboring libraries. As a result, inter-institutional use of the collections is not necessarily subject to the delays which characterize normal interlibrary loans and other forms of interlibrary use. The three libraries have taken advantage of this proximity through the courier service, coordinated collection development programs, and through borrowing and photocopy agreements. However, considerable progress remains to be made in order to capitalize fully on the proximity of the collections. For example, the new photocopy law may well result in an emphasis on on-site use. Improved forms of remote bibliographic access will also be necessary.

A new service orientation toward outside users, possibly with important implications of staff needs in public services, may well be called for. In short, proximity alone does not insure significant inter-institutional use of resources without active, funded programs which encourage and support this use.

The cooperative collection development agreements between UNC-CH and Duke University which date back to the 1930's are one of the earliest examples of this type of coordinated activity. These agreements are in the process of being refined and extended to reflect both the current economic pressures on the libraries and new areas of research and study among the faculty and the students of the institutions. The indirect coordination between the collections of UNC-CH and NC State University is less obvious. However, the early consolidation of the University resulted in a program definition which has been maintained with unusual consistency over the years in comparison to similar attempts of many state university systems. In developing collections to support their own programs, the collections of the institutions have grown in complementary directions without systematic attempts at coordination by the two libraries. These two conditions--the long standing, formal collection development agreements between UNC-CH and Duke and the complementary nature of collections at UNC-CH and NC State--provide both a tradition and a framework which offer a unique opportunity for successful cooperative development of library collections.

There exists in the RTP an active research community which already makes extensive use of the collections at UNC-CH, Duke, and NC State. These Library collections are considered an important part of the total scientific and

cultural resource which draws research establishments to the RTP. The further development of programs which would both broaden the range of materials available and improve their bibliographic and physical accessibility would undoubtedly enhance the attractiveness of RTP as a location for research facilities. It should also be noted that the programs which would facilitate inter-institutional use of library collections are for the most part identical to those needed to improve services to the RTP constituency.

The establishment of the National Humanities Center at RTP will raise the outside demand on the collections of the three libraries to new dimensions. For the first time, there will be located in the RTP an organization whose principal research resources are library collections rather than laboratories, and whose interests lie in humanities rather than the sciences. In spite of the rich library resources already in the area, the provision of adequate library services to a new constituency of this level raises several problems. First, it is by no means certain that the collections of the three institutions can provide even a base level of support for the full range of research interests likely to be represented at the Center. Additional funding for the acquisitions of library materials to support the work of the National Humanities Center is required; these funds must be used in a coordinated manner which will enhance the total library resources available in the area rather than enrich the collections of a single library. Secondly, the Center's goal of promoting an intense collegiality among its scholars by discouraging their dispersion to the libraries of the area will require advanced systems of remote bibliographic access if this goal is to be met while simultaneously providing for the scholars' need for research resources. Here again, the programs required to support this important constituency are identical to those needed

to provide improved services to the libraries' affiliated users.

In addition to the existence of these pre-conditions for coordinated development, the libraries individually face economic and technical problems which can best be approached through joint program development. The major economic problem is the inability of budgets for books, serials, and other library materials to keep pace with inflation, expanding publication rates, and the growth and diversity of programs requiring support. Although a cooperative approach to library acquisitions is not the complete solution to this problem, coordinated collection development, supported by appropriate means of remote bibliographic access and physical accessibility, can serve to reduce the negative impact of this economic crisis on the abilities of the individual libraries to serve their users.

The major technical problem facing the three libraries is related to the plans of the Library of Congress (LC) to automate its catalogs by 1980. The automation of LC has critical implications for all research libraries which depend heavily on cataloging produced by LC. Briefly, automation will allow LC to make major bibliographic revisions that will overwhelm research libraries which must continue to update manual catalogs in order to maintain consistency with LC's current practices. Research libraries which make extensive use of LC cataloging will face the necessity of either automating their catalogs or losing, over a period of time, their ability to make effective use of LC's bibliographic production. The latter outcome will result in a major crisis in terms of the operating cost of large research libraries.

Over the next four to five years, the libraries of UNC-CH, Duke and NC State must each develop a technical response to automation at LC. It is apparent that this response should take the form of local computerized catalogs operated and supported in the context of regional and national networks. Once again, a cooperative approach to this technical development holds the promise of a more cost effective solution to the problems of the individual libraries while simultaneously providing the means to support better inter-institutional and non-affiliated use of the collections.

It is the view of the Triangle University Libraries Cooperation Committee (TULCC) that the factors described above define a condition in which cooperative program development between the libraries of Duke, UNC-CH, and NC State deserves the formal recognition and commitment of the institutional administrations, the highest priorities of the library administrations, and the strong support of the National Humanities Center and other organizations in the RTP. Assurances of this commitment and support should be secured prior to the submission of proposals for grant funds for joint library development.

It is also the view of the committee that programs of cooperative development between the three libraries are uniquely deserving of grant support. First, the proximity of the libraries and the existing coordination of collections are conditions which promise a high probability of success. No other known interlibrary environment offers a better base from which to develop successful model programs of coordinated collection development and inter-institutional use of collections. Secondly, emphasis on providing joint services to non-affiliated users appears to be unique among similar cooperative projects. The situation holds a potential for developing model

programs for extending the use of research collections on a cooperative basis to non-affiliated users. The fact that the National Humanities Center, a national resource, will be a primary benefactor of these programs is noteworthy. It is also noteworthy that the collections at Duke and UNC-CH are the most distinguished in the Southeast and represent collections of national and international significance. It is unquestionably worthwhile for these collections to be made known and accessible to an even wider clientele.

Finally, the design of the computerized catalog component of the program is expected to be of considerable usefulness to libraries on a national level. It will represent an attempt to deliver local services on a cooperative basis within the context of established regional and national networks. As such, it can serve as a pilot for numerous research libraries which find themselves in similar conditions involving network membership and geographic proximity.