

APPENDIX B.1

October 27, 2000

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE LIBRARIES AND THE PLAN FOR A NEW CENTURY

The Library embraces its depiction in the College simultaneously described and anticipated in the Plan for a New Century; our librarians believe we are essential actors in educating women – and a diverse corps of graduate students -- in a rigorous, broad and deep liberal arts project. Diversity, globalization, scientific change, visual culture, vitality of the arts and humanities, information technology, collaboration – these words both express the College’s evolving priorities and – along with inter-disciplinarity and integration -- name the Library’s current programmatic emphases.

At various points in the Plan the Library’s “richness” is extolled. This quality extends beyond the tangible assets of books found in our stacks. Since at least the 1980s the Library has modeled successful **collaboration** in its work with Haverford and Swarthmore, enhancing the experience of our faculty and students in ways that a more conventionally isolated Library could not. This partnering only began with the Tripod, the early **information technology** initiative that created a unified catalog of our collections and provided means to deliver volumes among campuses. Information technology and the collaborative impulse inform all of our programs and promote a continuum of positive change. A recently secured Mellon Foundation grant is being used to identify – then implement -- key opportunities for the Tri-College libraries to advance cooperation in access, collections and outreach, and to develop a state-of-the-World-wide Web presence. Bryn Mawr and Mt. Holyoke College are spearheading an initiative – supported by the same grant -- in Techno-Pedagogy, partnering librarians, faculty, instructional technologists and students among ten cohort institutions. The inaugural workshop focused on the social sciences; the next one will take a similarly integrative approach to the humanities.

Integration also characterizes our recent approach to collections, which broadly mean not only the tangible “riches” contained in our books and periodicals – including our distinguished rare books – but also the increasingly pervasive electronic resources. These join collections in another sense: fine arts, artifacts, photographs. These are all cultural productions that the Library works to make available – and usable – to the intellectual community. This integrative approach is obviously vital to the **arts and humanities**, and Carpenter Library is both a monument to the College’s great traditions in art history and classical and ancient culture and a facility adaptable to innovation.

The Library is moving forward in the same direction as the centers concept. We contributed early to the emerging notion of **visual culture**, committing to media studies even before its place in the curriculum was formalized by the search for a full-time teaching position. Indeed, the Library exploited a staffing opportunity to hire a media studies librarian even as that search was underway; a fine film collection is being built day-by-day; a modest capital investment enabled construction of a media room in Canaday Library.

Visualization and technology are only two phenomena rapidly transforming virtually every field in the College curriculum; the disciplines in the traditional liberal arts are all crossing into each other’s now-fluid boundaries. We seek to makeover facilities that are flexible and adaptable in this environment, and to infuse our staff with a certain nimbleness. Our liaison program puts a librarian into direct and regular contact with every academic department and program, stimulating the development of our resources, whether tangible or virtual, and providing mutually beneficial learning opportunities for the Library and faculty in providing the best opportunities for the intellectual enterprise. The first beneficiaries have been in the special programs and modern languages, inter-disciplinary initiatives that especially represent junctures of foreign languages, **globalization** and ethnic/racial/class **diversity**.

Several senior librarians were early endorsers of the Science in Society Center initiative, reflecting not only our appreciation of the inter-connectivity of learning today and the place of the centers concept in the

future. This support also expressed our desire to maintain a great College history of supporting **scientific change**. The resources made available to our patrons in Collier Library are simply world-class, and illustrate how tradition and change draw vitally from each force.

Here are some specific ways the Library wishes to develop in the context of the Plan for a New Century:

People

- The Library will build Techno-Pedagogy partnerships on this campus, seeking more opportunities to work with faculty in the thoughtful use of information technology. Computing Services, Language and Learning, Media Services, Visual Resources and Education Program are among our most meaningful potential collaborators.
- The Library will emphasize recruitment of a diverse staff who combine fluencies in technology, teaching, languages and intellectual openness. This staff will thrive from expansive opportunities for growth nurtured in a professional development leave program.

Space:

- Carpenter might host the Center for Visual Culture and serve as home for the graduate programs in the humanities.
- Collier, with a modest reworking of its public services areas, could become the physical center of a pilot collaboration between librarians, computing staff, faculty and students.
- A renovated, technically robust Canaday – with “smart” classroom or auditorium spaces -- will bring together textual, material and art objects and media collections. The consolidation of Special Collections with College Collections will facilitate proper preservation and bring together the people who tend and interpret treasures with the people who will use them.

We foresee a Library that will highlight and enable the work of librarians as educators; the information commons we aspire to create should once again position libraries as the physical heart of a Bryn Mawr College where continuity and change are mutually enriching.