

California State University Council of Library Directors

Update on the CSU Virtual Library

April 1, 2009

The following is an update on the progress of the CSU Virtual Library—a major initiative of the CSU Council of Library Directors.

What is the CSU Virtual Library?

A virtual library is a library which provides electronic resources and services easily accessible by computer. Each of the 23 CSU libraries already provides a virtual library for each campus.

The vision of the CSU Virtual Library is to create a shared virtual library to provide universal access to all students and faculty. This initiative will combine all of these virtual libraries, including their electronic resources and services, and provide them to all faculty and students regardless of their home campus. Our intent is to 1) unify our electronic resources and services; and 2) develop new resources and services through our collective information expertise and purchasing power.

Why do we need a CSU Virtual Library?

First, faculty and students will be able to access all resources regardless of their location. This continues the broader vision of the CSU to provide equal opportunity education independent of geographic location or socio-economic level.

Second, libraries whose collections are broad and deep substantially improve research and education.

Third, faculty are attracted to and retained by campuses that provide extensive scholarly resources to support their research and inform their teaching.

Fourth, students are more engaged in learning when they are exposed to a wider world of knowledge through robust library resources. This is particularly important for students who have not previously enjoyed the advantages of information-rich environments.

Fifth, students need to be prepared for a workplace that is information intense. Our students will have fine-tuned their information literacy skills by searching through extensive knowledge resources.

Why develop the CSU Virtual Library now?

The groundwork for this initiative was laid long ago with every CSU library investing heavily in electronic resources. A convergence of key elements propels us: technologies that finally exist to fulfill our collective vision of powerfully linking our resources and services for the benefit of our aggregate communities; high levels of user expectations that resources and services will be delivered electronically; and the CSU libraries' proven record of collaboration which has increased our confidence in our ability to undertake this bold vision.

This CSU Virtual Library is also in step with the CSU's [Access to Excellence](#) in its support of faculty research and student academic achievement. It provides excellent support for the emerging concept of the teaching commons, for the CSU's many online degree programs, and for our new applied doctorates.

Even though there are budget challenges, the CSU Council of Library Directors (COLD) sees a responsibility to build this platform for the future.

Where are we now?

Since the April 22, 2008, presentation to and approval of the CSU Executive Council of the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellors and the Presidents and the May 8-9, 2008 resolution in support by the CSU Academic Senate, COLD has focused on launching the CSU Virtual Library.

To date, COLD has taken the following actions:

1. Established a steering committee comprised of the Executive Committee of COLD (Ruth Kifer, San Jose and Chair of COLD; Richard Pollard, Fullerton; Cesar Caballero, San Bernardino; Mike Miller, San Luis Obispo; Carl Phillips, Maritime Academy; and Alice Kawakami, Los Angeles) and Sue Curzon, Northridge, Project Leader.
2. Identified the priorities of the CSU Virtual Library.
3. Created six task forces to achieve these priorities. The chair of each task force was provided with a clear charge and a strong team, each of whom has a background in the area of the task force.
4. Undertaken discussions about the challenges of launching the CSU Virtual Library during a budget decline; the interaction between the CSU Virtual Library and the campus libraries; and the strategies for resource sharing for these collaborative ventures.

The task forces in turn have refined and enhanced the charge; established timeframes and action steps; identified policy issues for COLD; and provided updates at each COLD meeting about the progress of the task force.

What are the task forces?

1. *Common Access to E-Resources*. Charge: Purchase cooperatively and make accessible the majority of electronic resources to all faculty and students. Chair: Carl Phillips (Maritime Academy).
2. *Resource Delivery*. Charge: Examine and recommend targeted strategies for shared Technical Services among the CSU Libraries. Chair: Peter McDonald (Fresno).
3. *Cooperative Reference*. Charge: Explore increased and/or different modes of delivery for cooperative e-reference. Develop guidelines for the CSU for the assessment, marketing and outreach of e-reference. Chair: Susanna Eng-Ziskin (Northridge).
4. *User Education*. Charge: Develop and implement shared strategies, best practices and resources for continual education about CSUVL services and resources for all users in collaboration with other appropriate task forces. Chair: Barbara Butler (Sonoma).
5. *Integrating Digital Collections*. Charge: Create strategies for integrating and sharing digital collections, including digital archives and institutional repositories. Chair: Keven Jeffery (San Diego).
6. *Assessment*. Charge: Develop a long-range plan for assessment of information literacy skills, user satisfaction and available resources that allows CSU libraries to establish baselines, track progress and compare progress within the CSU libraries and with like institutions. Chair: Cesar Caballero (San Bernardino).

What is next?

At the end of academic year of 2008/09, the final reports of all task forces will be due to COLD. The reports will be discussed at a COLD planning meeting, and the top priorities of the CSU Virtual Library will be selected to move forward for implementation. In the 2009/10 academic year, COLD intends to begin a phased implementation.

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