

***Review of Library Technical Services at Cornell University
Phase 1: Central Technical Services, Mann, and Law***

Submitted by the CUL Technical Services Review Group:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The report that follows is the first part of a phased review of the library's technical services operations. The review group gathered and analyzed data at the request of the Library Management Team (LMT) and on behalf of library workforce planning. Phase 1 of the review covers three technical services units—Central Technical Services (CTS), Mann, and Law.

The primary benefits of technical services for the university are acquiring new library materials and organizing them so that they can be found as quickly and conveniently as possible. Delivering these benefits incurs costs: the grand total of technical services activities in CTS, Mann and Law is \$3,133,425 and 88.93 FTE, which represent approximately 70% of CUL-wide expenditures and FTE on activities defined as technical services categories.¹ At the same time, these three units produce 95% of the cataloging and maintain 91% of the serials and newspapers for CUL, so they can be said to produce more than they cost, relative to other CUL technical services operations.

While expenditures for other library services have generally been increasing over time, expenditures for CUL technical services declined 2.4% between 1995/96 and 2001/02, and the downward trend is expected to continue. The downward trend in technical services expenditures is common to CUL's peers as well. During the same period, CUL cataloging productivity rose, and the cataloging backlogs have shrunk an average of 10% a year. Savings from cuts in technical services have been used to support either other priorities within CUL or new ventures within technical services, for example the addition of metadata services, improvement in IT support, and the expansion of e-resource licensing and management work.

CTS and Mann deploy their technical services resources in similar ways, except for the metadata and IT categories, in which Mann devotes proportionately more to metadata and CTS proportionately more to IT. Law devotes proportionately more resources to acquisitions than to cataloging. Expenditures for CTS-Mann-Law management, staff development, unit meetings and department support are in proportion to the size of these three units within CUL.

ACQUISITIONS AND CATALOGING

The weighted average unit cost for a title acquired or maintained by CTS, Mann, or Law acquisitions is \$10.40 and the weighted average unit cost for CTS, Mann, or Law

¹ The combined 70% figure for the three units excludes time reported by CTS, Mann and Law technical services staff on LARIS categories 14.1-4 and 14.6 (management etc.) and IT (category 12). If these two categories are included, the CTS-Mann-Law labor costs reported above represent 31% and 38% of CUL-wide labor costs and FTE on the categories reported in Figure 4. The 88.93 FTE in CTS-Mann-Law reported here represent 20% of the total 444.45 CUL FTE reported in the LARIS staff survey.

cataloging is \$8.82. That acquisitions unit costs are higher than cataloging unit costs is not surprising; similar results have been found in more ambitious and formal cost studies.²

Unit costs for acquisitions and cataloging are less in CTS than at Mann and Law. Differences result from the type and mix of materials processed (for example, Law's many loose-leaves are very costly to maintain); specialized services offered at Mann and Law but not in CTS; differences in staffing patterns (including the integration of bindery activities into their routines); and the relatively high proportion of time spent on e-resource management at Mann. With the approval plans centralized in CTS, there is also a heavier reliance on firm orders in Mann and Law to build their collections. CTS has been very successful in employing automated methods to reduce their large cataloging backlog and uses relatively more student labor, particularly for backlog processing.

Staff interviews revealed a continuum of service models among the three processing centers. All three processing centers are efficient and effective, but they differ in their approaches to both defining and delivering "service." At one end of the continuum, CTS serves a large number of libraries; its service model is centered on high volume, IT-based methods, and streamlined workflows. Mann may be seen as in the middle; it serves multiple clients and emphasizes production but at the same time offers a variety of specialized services and custom procedures. Law's service model is centered on customized offerings for law school faculty and students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Using the LARIS survey direct labor costs, review team members prepared 10% and 20% savings scenarios for CTS, Mann and Law expenditures. The exercise was based on the assumption that the savings needed to be generated over the current and next two fiscal years (FY2003/04, 2004/05, and 2005/06). Appendix C of the full report contains the complete text of the ten and twenty percent savings scenarios together with estimated savings, descriptions and impact statements.

The review team recommends 21 cost-reduction actions to occur over the current and next two fiscal years. These 21 actions, if implemented, will generate an estimated \$380,000 in savings, which represents a 12.2% reduction in current expenditures for CTS, Mann, and Law technical services. Attrition can be expected to generate part of the savings, but it may not be possible to completely avoid layoffs if this plan is carried out.

When choosing recommendations, the review team selected actions that could be implemented without significant negative impact on existing service levels and that could generate savings (marked in green in the following table). They also chose several actions that might be implemented if the tradeoffs are deemed acceptable (marked in yellow).

² Morris, Dilys E., Pamela Rebarcak and Gordon Rowley. 1996. "Monographs acquisitions: staffing costs and the impact of automation." *Library resources & technical services* 40 (October): 301-17.

**CUL Technical Services Review Phase 1:
Recommended Actions and Estimated Savings by Fiscal Year**

TOTAL

Total expenditures for CTS, Mann, Law Tech Services (LARIS) **\$3,133,425**

ACTION (FY03/04)

Switch some searching to OCLC	
Replace permanent receiving/inputting staff with student labor	
Redefine South Asia curator job to include original cataloging	
Ongoing new income for technical services processing	
Project income	
Stop monographic claiming	
Reduce/cease acceptance of gifts	
ESTIMATED SAVINGS FY03/04	\$125,229
PERCENT OF TARGET	4.0%

ACTION (FY04/05)

Switch percentage of firm orders to approval plans	
Complete Voyager recovery for serials	
Shift percentage of Gov Docs print to electronic	
Use more student labor for physical processing	
Change business strategy for acquisitions	
Reduce staffing following elimination of backlog	
Reorganize selected technical services activity	
Impact of e-only expenditures on student expenditures	
Implement EDI invoicing	
SAVINGS FY04/05	\$189,709
CUMULATIVE SAVINGS	\$314,938
PERCENT OF TARGET	10.1%

ACTION (FY05/06)

Shift more Gov Docs print materials to electronic	
Shift percentage of print serials to electronic only	
Reorganize selected cataloging activity	
Send portion of new receipts directly to Annex, no classification	
Reorganize binding	
SAVINGS FY05/06	\$65,875
CUMULATIVE SAVINGS	\$380,813
PERCENT OF TARGET	12.2%