

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

An emeritus member of the University faculty visiting the fifth floor of the new Library reminisced about the first library he recalled at St. Thomas College. It was, he said, somewhat smaller than the Heritage Room.

The size difference between that library and today's Weinberg Memorial Library is dramatic, but nearly as significant are the changes that are now underway in the realm of information science.

We move into this magnificent new building, designed for the future, while our society is in the middle of growth and change that dwarfs anything that has happened in information storage, retrieval, and transmission since Gutenberg's printing press revolutionized his fifteenth century world.

Our challenge as an academic library in this information age is to prepare students to be information-literate: to be aware of the importance of information in our society, to identify the information they need and to link that need to appropriate sources, and finally to synthesize the information they find.

Today's rapid changes in the ways that information is made available put a special responsibility on university libraries and librarians. Campus library collections will continue to offer breadth and complexity matched to the scope of the academic programs, but will be increasingly supplemented with electronic access to information held elsewhere. In addition to continuing to collect materials published in traditional formats, we must begin to accommodate new ways of storing, retrieving, and trans

As the Weinberg Memorial Library moves into full operation for its first academic year, we will be using its potential to explore many new possibilities for the future. These include a broad spectrum of services based on information not only within a library's collections but accessible to it via electronic communication channels. Through these channels, library users will be able to search local and national databases for bibliographic, full-text, numeric, and graphic information; download citations, text, and data from the databases, reformat it, and incorporate it into their personal systems; and communicate with library staff for such things as interlibrary loan requests, placing items on reserve, or recommending materials for purchase.

Technology already available will ultimately allow us to transform our online public catalog into a "Super Catalog," a single gateway with access to other library catalogs, databases, and information sources as well as to our own holdings.

A developing new technology called "imaging" could allow library users to view text and graphics at the same terminal they now use to search the online public catalog.

Soon libraries will be able to have document delivery systems for delivering either hard copies or electronic materials to users on-campus or at remote sites. Along with other academic libraries, we will be weighing the feasibility and economies of telefacsimilies and transmission of machine-readable documents via electronic mailboxes.

The role of librarians will increasingly be one of teaching users the knowledge and skills needed to locate and integrate a variety of information resources. As a university library, we will also continue developing instructional programs for library users, training them not only to use traditional services but also training them to use information retrieval systems and to manage the information derived from them.

Through the 1990s the Weinberg Library will serve as the information hub for the University community, providing access by students, faculty, administrations, staff, alumni, and local citizens to a "virtual library" of international resources. It is exciting for the Library staff and for our students as we face the future in this building that has been designed to meet the changes and challenges of the twenty-first century. Enter our gateway to the future with eagerness. I promise you will emerge recharged.