“At the cross roads of interdisciplinary scholarship!” That’s how our website describes the Social Sciences Division. The division consists of six departmental discipline-based libraries. In alphabetical order, these are:

- City Planning & Landscape Architecture
- Commerce (soon to be renamed the Business & Economics Library)
- Communications
- Education & Social Science
- Labor & Industrial Relations
- Library & Information Science

Note that five of the six names have ampersands in them – vivid evidence of the way that disciplines overlap and connect to each other within and around the social sciences. The Social Sciences Division is also the home base for the new half-time Global Studies Librarian. And the Stout Memorial Library in the Psychology Department, the Center for Children’s Books at GSLIS, and the Library at the Illinois Fire Services Institute are all affiliated with us as well.

Just what do we mean by “the social sciences?” The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines the term thus:

**NOUN:** 1. The study of human society and of individual relationships in and to society. 2. A scholarly or scientific discipline that deals with such study, generally regarded as including sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, political science, and history.
Here at UIUC we classify History as part of the Arts & Humanities, and we include additional fields under the umbrella of the social sciences. But the core of that definition -- “the study of human society and of individual relationships in and to society” – pretty much sums it up.

We in the Social Sciences Division find ourselves mid-way between the humanities and the hard sciences when it comes to issues like materials price increases, changes in scholarly communication, and user information-seeking behaviors. At this point in time, the fields we serve rely more or less equally on print AND electronic resources. Social scientists use both qualitative AND quantitative research methods, and they need varied tools and source materials to support many types of inquiry.

Beyond these basic truths, however, each library in the Social Sciences Division finds itself facing unique challenges and opportunities. I’d like to give you a brief tour of our libraries, their services, the issues they’re struggling with, and some of the cool things they’ve done in the past year and are planning for the future. At the outset, let me note that our division directly serves academic units in seven different colleges and institutes.

Let’s start with our two giants: Education and Commerce. The Education & Social Science Library is the biggest library in our division, on any number of measuring sticks. Within the division, it has the largest staff, the longest hours, the biggest circulation, and the most hits on its website (more than 20 million hits last year!) It houses several specialized collections, such as the School Collection of children’s literature, the Mandeville Collection in the Occult Sciences, the Arms Control Collection, and the Curriculum Collection. Increasingly, users of the library want access to large social science data sets, so this area of collections and services is developing rapidly.
The Education & Social Science Library’s faculty members serve as liaisons to several disciplines: education (Nancy O’Brien), sociology and anthropology (JoAnn Jacoby), political science and speech communications (Lynne Rudasill), psychology and social work (Allison Sutton). In addition, John Littlewood, although officially retired from the faculty, continues to select gay literature and is based in the Education & Social Science Library. Ron Banks, half-time visiting librarian, serves as reference coordinator and GA trainer.

In the past year, the Education Library has engaged in a number of new initiatives, including a survey of its reference services to undergraduate students using print and Web surveys in tandem with individual interviews. Summer 2004 will see the implementation of Live Chat. Other major accomplishments include processing gift collections of books and journals - last year they completed processing a notable gift of 5,000 books, and this past month processed a gift of 1,000 items. Instruction sessions conducted by ESSL librarians during the past year included over 40 sessions with 1,000 participants. The Education Library is known for the high quality of its reference service and as a great place to gain reference experience as a GA.

The Commerce Library is the second largest library in our division, in terms of both collections and staff. Soon it will be rechristened as the Business & Economics Library, or BEL. Becky Smith, Yoo-Seong Song, and Kerry Wu are already dreaming up ways to make the “bell” resonate with their users to increase brand recognition of the library. “The Commerce Library: Your Ultimate Database” is their current tag line, signaling the central role they strive to play in the lives of students and faculty in the
College of Business. Now, with the migration of the Department of Economics to LAS, the BEL is directly serving two colleges.

In the past year, the BEL refurbished its offices with “gently pre-owned” furniture donated by Goldman Sachs. Long-standing partnerships with various units within the College of Business continued to support several electronic resources, including the new and wildly popular Bloomberg service, which provides up-to-the-minute financial news and data from markets around the world. At this writing, plans for a new building for the Business School are still evolving. Whether the library will be housed in the new building someday, stay where it is now, or move to a third location, is still uncertain. What is clear is that the transition from print to electronic is occurring at a dizzying pace in the business world, and the BEL is determined to keep up.

A major shift within the Division will occur this summer. Margaret Chaplan, long-time head of the Labor & Industrial Relations Library, will retire, and her library will move under the managerial wing of the Business & Economics Library. Yoo-Seong Song will be reassigned half-time as the labor & industrial relations specialist; GA staffing will be added (with funding support from the Institute of Labor & Industrial Relations); and a half-time academic professional will be hired at Commerce to pick up some of Yoo-Seong’s current responsibilities for supervising reference services and training GAs.

In this transition, we are cognizant of the added value that the Labor Librarian contributes to the Institute’s research and outreach missions. For example, the LaborLit database, with almost 38,000 entries compiled since 1972, is unparalleled as an access tool to the labor literature. No commercial database does what it does. But currently, it’s
only accessible within the Labor Library. A priority for the near future is to migrate it to the open web. Margaret also maintains a wonderful website on labor in Illinois; we’re looking at how to keep updating it. The division is committed to keeping the doors open, materials purchased, and services running at the Labor Library, with as little disruption as possible, although we can’t replace the quality and breadth of Margaret’s knowledge of the field. (And speaking personally as Division Coordinator, I’m really going to miss Margaret’s wisdom at our divisional meetings. She is the “living memory” of the division and practically has our bylaws memorized!)

Like the Labor Library, the Communications Library is located near its users in Gregory Hall, home to the College of Communications, with its four departments: the Departments of Journalism and Advertising, the Institute of Communications Research, and WILL AM, FM, and TV. The Communications Library is a busy spot, despite having its permanent personnel pared down last year to one librarian, Lisa Romero, and one staff member. In addition to the usual books, journals, and e-resources, the library houses approximately a thousand videocassettes and several important special collections: the D’Arcy Collection, consisting of almost 2 million print ads published between 1890 and 1970; the Woodward Collection, of 4 million ads; the Cohen Collection; and the Fund for Investigative Journalism Collection. Other special collections on videotape are the Benevolent Dictator Collection and the Housecalls Collection.

The Library’s unique NewsRoom provides access to Internet News and WebTV. New Books in the Communications Library, an annotated list compiled quarterly by Lisa Romero, has more than 400 subscribers worldwide. The collection’s scope is expanding
as journalism and advertising embrace new technologies. For example, the library recently acquired resources to support a new course on Interactive Advertising.

What impact will the School of Communications’ ongoing review and potential re-organization have on the library? The future is never clear, but we anticipate that the library will continue to play an important role in the School’s teaching, research, and public engagement activities.

Although the City Planning & Landscape Architecture Library is part of the Social Sciences Division, the departments it serves are in the College of Fine & Applied Arts. Among its special treasures is the Evert Kincaid Collection, comprising the personal papers of a leading city planner and UI alum. The CPLA Library also houses a growing collection of historical writings on gardens, and a large and unique collection of planning documents from Illinois cities, villages and towns. CPLA also received a series of planning documents on the Lake Michigan Development Project, which includes comprehensive plans, master plans, zoning ordinances from various counties and communities surrounding Lake Michigan. The library’s web site features detailed information on the contents of the Illinois and Lake Michigan documents.

During the past year, librarian Priscilla Yu has strived to build up the collection to respond to the increasingly international focus of the Urban and Regional Planning curriculum, and to meet the needs of the new PhD program in Landscape Architecture. Many special and valuable books for the PhD Program are kept in a beautiful locked case donated by Professor Robert Riley. A significant recent gift to the City Planning Library is the Edward C. Banfield Collection. Banfield was an influential political scientist and conservative thinker who authored 16 books on the structure of communities
and urban environments. He was on the faculty at Harvard, and he headed the
Presidential Task Force on Model Cities under President Nixon. In the early 1960’s
Banfield edited reports on selected American cities, published by the Joint Center for
Urban Studies at MIT and Harvard. The CPLA Library holds many of these reports.
Information on the Banfield Collection is found on CPLA’s home page.

And last but never least, the Library & Information Science Library, which I
oversee with the able assistance of 2 staff members and a GA. We have two primary user
groups: the students and faculty of the Graduate School of Library & Information
Science; and the faculty and staff of the University Library. Increasingly, the needs of
these user communities are diverging, as the field of LIS grows more and more diffuse.
The LIS Library’s collection runs the gamut from storytelling techniques to information
architecture, from the history of the printed book to the future of the semantic web.
Perhaps the most challenging and exciting aspect of working in the LIS Library is
supporting the LEEP program – the online masters degree option. Currently, GSLIS
enrolls about 500 masters students; approximately half of them are in LEEP. Nearly a
hundred more students are enrolled in undergraduate courses, usually in pursuit of a
minor in Information Technology Studies. In addition, there are about forty doctoral
students.

In the past year, the LIS Library has worked with masters students to redesign
segments of the library’s website. We’ve become a node (though hardly the most active
one) of the Ask-a-Librarian virtual reference service, and we’re in the process of
designing a new feature for our website. You heard it here first – the LIS Library intends
to be the first UIUC departmental library to host a blog. While we’re focused on
increasing our effectiveness and enriching our resources in the electronic realm, we also have a new opportunity, thanks to an unrestricted bequest, to replace unused carrels and tables with comfortable seating areas.

The Graduate School of Library & Information Science has weathered its first year under the new dean, John Unsworth. John has instigated some much-needed changes in IT support at GSLIS and has fostered conversation among the faculty, including adjuncts, by hosting monthly “faculty diets” at his home. GSLIS is about to launch a search for a permanent faculty member in a core area of library science, probably cataloging or youth services. Meanwhile, the School is designing a new post-MLS Certificate of Advanced Studies in Digital Libraries. The LEEP program is evolving as well; this semester GSLIS and Syracuse University experimented with cross-enrollment in distance ed courses. Under John’s leadership, the School is staying true to its vision of “holding the center,” balancing and blending the disciplines of library science and information science to produce versatile, well-informed graduates. Affiliated international scholars are visiting with greater frequency, and there is a general sense of excitement and energy at the School. This energy infuses the student body too. Recently a group of masters students organized a student chapter of ACRL, the first in the nation.

Did I say that the LIS Library was last on the list of the Social Science libraries? Actually, that’s not quite true. The division is also home to the new half-time position of Global Studies Librarian, filled by Lynne Rudasill. Lynne is creating the first virtual library within our division. She supports and interacts closely with five "clusters of excellence" in the Center for Global Studies. These clusters are:

2. Strengthening cultural, identity, and diaspora studies and their global interactions.


4. Global information and communication.

5. Cross-cluster activities aimed at advancing leadership in global studies and faculty development.

So far, Lynne has helped to develop the Center’s website, created a brochure about bringing globalization into the K-12 classroom, and begun preparing a presentation for the Center’s summer conference, "Prisms of Globalization." She’s also initiated work that will allow the working papers of the Program on Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security, the European Union Center, and the Global Studies Center to be digitized and made keyword searchable.

Despite our diverse users groups, collections, and opportunities, the physical and virtual libraries in the Social Science Division have united to help each other as we all bear the burden of the ongoing budgetary crisis. So let me wrap up by spotlighting three recent division-level accomplishments:

- First, we created a web site for the division. A big thank you to Allison Sutton for designing it and serving as its first web mistress!

- Second, we pledged to provide emergency staffing in each other’s units when illness or other unforeseen events make it impossible to cover service points. To this end, each library compiled a slim, bright red binder of “essential
information,” which enables a stranger to that library to step in and provide a minimal level of service.

- Third, we’re currently collaborating on a combined request for the 60% portion of the 2% collection budget reallocation, based on the recognition that our common need for increased funding for electronic resources and the monographic approval plan transcends any particular pressures on our individual funds.

In the coming months and years, we look forward to continued cooperation, frank discussions, and further creative problem-solving within the division.