

Area Studies Division

25-year Vision

June 8, 2004

I. VISION STATEMENT

The Area Studies Division of the University Library at UIUC – which includes the Africana, Afro-Americana, Asian, Latin American & Caribbean, Slavic & East European, and Women & Gender Resources libraries – has over the years built outstanding area studies collections, and enjoys a considerable reputation for its excellent language and subject expertise. In coming years the Division will build on its existing strengths, and move forward by developing new services and programs in line with emerging patterns of information literacy--especially in digital resources. It aims at staying on a par with peer institutions, and providing leadership whenever opportunities present themselves. The division will strive to meet the new collection development challenges related to globalization processes.

The Area Studies Division has several unique characteristics: it collects resources in many languages, and covers areas beyond the traditional coverage of area studies. During the quarter century envisioned in this document, we want to retain our ability to offer access in a wide range of languages, in part by maintaining separate technical services in the Asian and Slavic libraries. We also want to continue to develop outstanding outreach programs, especially in collaboration with the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs.

In the recent past the University has shown a strong commitment to area/ethnic studies. In 2001, the University hired new directors for the Afro-American Studies and Research Program, and the Gender and Women Studies Program. In 2002, the University hired new directors for the Asian American Studies Program and the Latina/Latino Studies Program. All four programs are also hiring new faculties (24 positions), indicating a strong commitment by the University to expand their scope. New directors were also hired in 2003 for the Center for African Studies, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. A new director was hired for the Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies in 2004. We note that four of our area studies centers are designated National Resource Centers and receive Title VI funding from the U. S. Department of Education. The Area Studies Division will engage the University administration and the community to build on this strong local and national support.

OUR 25-YEAR VISION INCLUDES:

- Responding to new and changing geo-political patterns and boundaries of world regions through the appropriate allocation of resources;
- Giving greater emphasis and more resources to ethnic and diaspora studies, especially by outreach to library users, diaspora communities, programs, and centers;

- Increasing mutually beneficial collaboration with other Units/Divisions within the Library, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and in the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs;
- Promoting information literacy through new technologies to provide excellent service and leadership;
- Leading our colleagues through cutting edge research;
- Helping to counter the trend towards US cultural isolationism by enhancing collections in all appropriate languages;
- Improving and enhancing physical facilities for our growing collections, as well as our staff and library users;
- Striving to acquire more digital resources in all appropriate languages as they become available;
- Promoting local, regional, national and international collaborative projects;
- Ensuring user-friendly bibliographic access for discrete materials;
- Encouraging collaboration and enhanced services of our smaller units through creating shared space with circulating collections;
- Working to ensure and defend our decentralized library structure as the best way to provide excellent specialized services to specific user groups;
- Pursuing show-case mechanisms to attract both local and worldwide scholars to our collections.