

## Executive Summary

### Report of the Science & Engineering Library Task Force Fall 2003

The present task force was charged with two functions:

- (i) to examine the role of the Science & Engineering Library in advancing USC's institutional goals in the near and long term; and
- (ii) to make recommendations for improvements to the library based on academic considerations.

We argue that the principal role of the Science & Engineering Library should be to serve as a common research and learning environment. While digital information delivery will become increasingly prevalent in the future, we believe that the Library's role as a central academic hub will evolve, but not diminish. We identify four separate roles which the Library should play:

- (i) providing access and technical support from librarians and staff for digital resources, including journals, databases, and other publications;
- (ii) providing continued access to conventional printed monographs, journals, and conference proceedings not available in digital format;
- (iii) providing a common research and learning environment which enhances the productivity of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates in the sciences and engineering; and
- (iv) enhancing the overall sense of intellectual community in an urban campus setting.

Our principal findings and recommendations include the following:

- The existing library building is inadequate for fulfilling the library's roles. In order to satisfy academic needs, either (a) the existing library building should be refurbished and expanded; or (b) a new building should be erected in a nearby space adjoining the Engineering Quad and the buildings which house science faculty.
- An expanded library should have the capacity to store roughly 200,000 journals and 150,000 monographs.
- Strong consideration should be given to the use of electronic compact shelving for the storage of the central-campus print collection. Any library addition should be built with load-bearing strength sufficient to support compact shelving.
- Provision should be made for 500 reading spaces, each with Ethernet or wireless network access.

- The updated library should incorporate twenty small group study rooms, four large group study rooms, one multimedia room appropriate for small colloquia and classes, one auditorium for large colloquia or meetings, and technical support room for high-end graphics applications and visualization tools.
- Library access should be provided on a twenty-four hour basis. If this is not practical, a secure twenty-four hour study space should be provided within the library building itself or immediately adjacent to the structure.
- The number of science and engineering librarians should be increased with the addition of specialists in chemistry, biology, engineering, and web services.
- An endowment should be established to shelter the library's acquisition and staffing needs.
- An architectural planning and feasibility study should be carried out as soon as possible to follow through on the implementation of these recommendations.

In our opinion a refurbished and expanded Science & Engineering Library would present a superb naming opportunity for a patron seeking to improve USC's overall standing as a research university. We can think of no more effective means of improving graduate student recruitment and retention, as well as research productivity, than the building of a first-rate library, which serves both as a center for dissemination of information and as a common research environment and intellectual gathering place.