

**University Libraries as Agents of Change  
by  
Myles Brand  
President  
Indiana University  
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I am very happy to be with you this evening to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Center for Research Libraries.

Anniversaries are special occasions because they give us a chance to take stock of the experiences that have drawn us together and made us what we are. They inspire a renewed appreciation of the values and traditions that have sustained us.

And they prompt us to anticipate how those values, traditions, and experiences will help us meet the challenges of the future.

One of the values that has sustained the Center for Research Libraries over the last fifty years is a bedrock belief in the necessity of teamwork. Teamwork can be a complicated concept, but it is one that we understand very well at Indiana University. Teamwork means working as hard as one can to cultivate individual strengths while at the same time furthering the development of the group. It means knowing when to compete and when to cooperate and knowing how to do both with complete dedication.

Let me share with you a story that illustrates this idea. One of the first things anyone thinks about in connection with Indiana University is basketball and Bob Knight. Each year Coach Knight asks one of the world's greatest living cellists—who happens, incidentally, to teach at the IU

School of Music—to talk to his basketball team. Janos Starker explains to IU basketball players the importance of tireless practice. He tells them practice is what will give them control of their game. He tells them that if they think they have a tough coach, they ought to sit in on studio sessions with his students. Then he tells them that no matter how beautifully a single instrument can play, it takes an orchestra to make a great musical composition come to life, just as it takes teamwork to win games. That is also the guiding principle for cooperative collection development. No matter how strong our individual collections are, in this age of proliferating scholarship, it takes teamwork for us to carry out our mission. It takes national and international teamwork for us for us to provide our scholars and researchers access to the full body of knowledge generated in our era and in past ones. It's a big job, one that is not getting any easier. But it is a job we can accomplish only by working together.

Over its 50-year history, CRL has developed a strong tradition of teamwork. That tradition had its birth in 1940, when 13 presidents from Midwestern universities met to talk about how they might most productively pool the library resources of their individual institutions. From its modest beginnings, CRL has emerged as a truly cooperative nationwide effort of international repute. From the original 13 participants, the Center for Research Libraries now counts among its ranks nearly 100 full members and 34 associate members. In 1949, the cooperative acquisitions program began by recording subscriptions to forty newspapers on microfilm. Today there are over 500,000 records in the CRL Catalog to which member libraries have access. For CRL, access—not acquisition—is the dominant ethos. And that ideology makes available a vast store of global newspapers, international doctoral dissertations, scholarly journals,

subject collections, and area studies resources. It provides an abundance of information through electronic databases and adds new meaning to the concept of the library as a treasury of knowledge.

I am proud to represent Indiana University here this evening, as Herman B Wells did in 1940. Like President Wells, who just celebrated his 97<sup>th</sup> birthday, I know that the future will bring unimagined changes. I also know that we can be equal to those changes only if we hold fast to the values of cooperation, resourcefulness, and dedication to the scholarly enterprise that prompted our predecessors to join forces 50 years ago.

When President Wells and his colleagues met in 1940 their primary objectives were the same ones as we have today. They were concerned with building solid disciplinary collections, with preservation, and with increased availability of infrequently used materials. While our goals have remained the same, our strategies for achieving them are somewhat different—as they should be. The world Herman Wells and his colleagues faced was very different than one that we live in today.

In 1949, NATO had just been formed. Communist leader Mao Zedong had just established the People's Republic of China. And the magazine *Popular Mechanics* had predicted that "computers in the future may weigh no more than one and a half tons." MIT had just established Whirlwind, the first real-time computer with random-access, magnetic core memory. It was a ponderous device that foreshadowed the sophisticated computers of our era.

In 1949, we were struggling with efficient ways to load and store information. In 1999, we find ourselves struggling to sort and absorb information. As some scholars have suggested, information overload may

the greatest problem we have faced in the twentieth century. It very well may be the most crucial challenge of the next.

When our predecessors met 50 years ago to discuss what would become the CRL, television was just a year old. In fact, Harry Truman's presidential inauguration ceremony was the first one to be nationally televised. It was viewed by an estimated 10 million Americans. The TV viewing audience who saw Truman take the oath of office was greater than the total of all persons witnessing all previous presidential inaugurations. Indeed, more people watched Truman's inauguration than ever before had seen a single event. Just to put that in current perspective, let me tell you that last week more than 13 million people watched *Frasier*. The reach of television gave new meaning to the concept of community and shared experience. More recently, the internet has *virtually* redefined our ability to communicate. And I don't have to tell you what level of impact new technologies are having on university libraries.

In 1949, universities were different places, too. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 was in high gear. The GI Bill ushered in an unprecedented period of growth for America's universities. In 1949, our universities were entering the golden age of higher education. They were literally bursting at the seams, doing everything they could to expand classrooms, living spaces, research programs, and libraries. Now, on the cusp of the 21st century, the expansion seems to lie in the volume of scholarly output and disciplinary specialization.

There's a wonderful bumper sticker that says "Change is inevitable; growth is optional." The Center for Research Libraries has a long history of viewing change as an opportunity for growth. First of all, that has meant devising alternatives to the traditional model of collection development—a

shift in focus from collection building to collection management. The old paradigm was to build comprehensive collections on site for faculty and students; it didn't matter if most materials were duplicated elsewhere. Bigger was better, and competition, rather than cooperation, was the order of the day for major research libraries. Rightly so, I might add. In programs such as area studies, for instance, collection development was essential for institutional credibility and grant support. The extent of one's collections determined the prestige of one's reputation as a major repository of knowledge.

Yet that model no longer stands for a number of reasons—not least among these are significant budgetary constraints. David Shulenburger, provost of the University of Kansas, has done a fine job of outlining the economic factors that demand a shift in focus. Shulenburger notes that between 1986 and 1996, the consumer price index increased 44 percent. The cost of healthcare increased 84 percent. The cost of monographs increased 62 percent. Scholarly journals rose 148 percent—nearly triple the rate of inflation. These facts make the traditional model of collection building untenable, especially when one considers that library budgets would have to increase by at least 70 percent to maintain the same proportion of monographs and serials as in 1986. Taking into account the proliferation and price inflation of academic publishing, libraries would need acquisitions budgets two and a half times that of their average allocation.

Even a national library, such as the British Library, acknowledges that collecting in all languages, in all subjects, from all parts of the world can no longer be sustained. Yet full-scale, detailed, national and international coordination is not easily achieved. Our most successful

efforts have thus far been regional and local in nature. These include such ARL initiatives as the Latin Americanist Research Resources Project, the German Resources Project, the Digital South Asia Library Project and others. I chaired the AAU/ARL task force that developed these global resources projects and found the experience an enlightening one. While the librarians serving on the task force were fully on board with the concept of cooperative collections management, the area studies faculty, by and large, continued to see the crucial issues as ones associated with acquisitions. Our task, then is to foment cultural change in so far as we educate faculty members to revise their ideas about the purpose and function of their libraries.

Among other characteristics, the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century will be remembered as a time for breaking down borders that divide countries, national economies, and scholarly disciplines. As we develop more global economies and a more global understanding of our world, we must also develop new ways to organize the knowledge we generate. The changing global landscape requires change on our part, and I believe that university research libraries are uniquely well suited to be agents of change in the higher education community.

The great Mahatma Gandhi once wisely said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” In the higher education community, that is a long-term proposition. I can tell you from first-hand experience that leading a major research university is like being the captain of an ocean liner: change is slow-moving. Have you ever watched a ship as large as the Queen Mary try to make a starboard turn? Her very size gives one the impression that the ship prefers to maintain a steady course straight ahead rather than deviate in one direction or another. The staff and faculty

of a major university exhibit a similar resistance to change. Perhaps this is because the changes in the higher education environment are so gradual that some don't see the need to redirect the course of the institution. Others, who do see the need to react, must do so in cooperation with their peers. Herein lies one of the major challenges for a research library that is acting as an agent of change. We may have crews working against one another at the opposite ends of the ship. Groups of faculty may be isolated from other groups by a number of factors, not the least of which is the old two-cultures paradigm that divides scholars in the arts and humanities from those in the science disciplines. That can make it difficult to effect real change. But while, as I said earlier, research libraries must be the agents of change, and while I firmly believe that institutional leadership in these matters is important, I also believe that we can accomplish our goals only if we galvanize our faculty and staff to address the problems that make the old model of collections development untenable.

As the Pew report issued last year by the ARL and the AAU notes, many in our community perceive the current crisis as the library's problem. According to this line of thinking, if university administrators would only allocate enough money to correct the imbalance between the volume of scholarly output and the budgets libraries bring to bear in managing that output, the problem would be solved. Actually, the issue of high-priced journals is one that faculty must resolve. It is faculty who establish the conditions of scholarly discourse, and it is they who can most productively adapt those conditions to the changing environment of electronic publishing. It is they who can alter the reward structure expressed in the habit of mind that requires, say, 32 published articles be included in a tenure portfolio. It is the faculty who must reconsider the tonnage model

that pits quantity against quality places an unwarranted burden on research libraries. Faculty have the power to change this as they devise new procedures for electronic publication, peer review, and certification. It is up to us to provide the institutional leadership that motivates them to do so.

There is no singular or clear solution, just as there is not one clear course for a to take across the ocean. The course we travel depends on our ultimate destination, on our current coordinates, and on who's piloting the ship.

At IU, I convened a Committee on Scholarly Communications last year to review the current state of scholarly communications, to examine national efforts to change the environment, and to plan a course of action to be undertaken on the campus. In its interim report, the committee wrote that the issues surrounding scholarly communications are many and vary widely among disciplines. Members of this multidisciplinary faculty group, who had spent considerable time discussing the traditions in each discipline, were very surprised at how widely the norms of scholarly publication and the markets for scholarly materials differed among disciplines. Because of these different traditions, the committee did not find that any single "magic bullet" could be used to deflate the prices of journals. Instead they advocated collective actions that would involve colleges and universities working together, the participation of scholarly and professional societies, and collaboration with organizations outside of the academic community.

The committee proposed—and the AAU recently gave its support to—the creation of a national commission on scholarly publishing that would focus national attention on the many substantive issues involved. We are

in the planning phases of putting together a conference to be held in the early spring that will serve as a staging ground for forming the National Commission on Scholarly Publishing. The commission will provide a national, ongoing forum for university administrators, publishers, library directors, and others to engage in sustained dialogue about issues of import to university libraries. The commission, for which we will soon be seeking financial support, will add continuity to discussions that are now followed in a somewhat episodic manner. It will also serve the useful role of enabling us to identify which areas of this problem warrant further research.

Recently, AAU and others have endorsed ARL's Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition—or SPARC as it is known. The Pew Report called on libraries to “be smart shoppers.” Supporting competition among high-priced scientific journals is one way of reducing and containing prices. A competitive market will force the change of the status quo. I was impressed when I learned recently that the new journal, *Organic Letters*, produced by the American Chemical Society in partnership with SPARC, costs one-fourth of a subscription to *Tetrahedron Letters*, a competing publication. In the state of Indiana, where we have a tradition of watching our dollars, Wabash College announced recently that it had canceled its subscription to *Tetrahedron Letters* in favor of the electronic *Organic Letters*. The college made this change with the full approval of its faculty chemists. By eliminating *Tetrahedron Letters*, Wabash College has been able to add thirty-five new journals for ten different departments without any budgetary increase.

The Indiana Committee recognized, as I am sure many members of this audience do as well, the need for “bottom up” change motivated through

key influential members of the university community. In this arena, the research library must act as the agent of change by educating faculty about the plethora of important issues posed by the current state of scholarly publishing and the steps faculty can take to address these issues. Groups such as SPARC and the incipient National Commission on Scholarly Publishing will be highly workable vehicles for accomplishing this important goal. I'm proud that Indiana University is a founding member of SPARC.

The good news on this front is that technology facilitates change, but as we all know, technology can be frustrating—involving, as it inevitably does, different interfaces, crashing search engines, remote access, licensing terms, copyright issues, disparities in pricing electronic resources—not to mention budget strains caused by the need to provide electronic resources and paper ones, too. Nevertheless, electronic catalogs and web-based communication enable the cooperative collection development that is our best survival strategy. This is a strategy we have not yet exploited to its full potential. Improved telecommunications, including e-mail, conference calls, and the Internet provide infrastructure for greater possibilities for interlibrary cooperation. Distributed learning also opens new paths of collaborative collection management. As professors teach more in a distributed environment, library resources need to be accessible through professors' web sites. Thus, an investment in technology is also becoming a direct investment in teaching and learning. Such investments are providing the backbone for us to be able to distribute library resources.

Ten years ago, John Howe, a history professor and interim director of libraries at the University of Minnesota, wrote that the library might still be

the symbolic heart of a the university, but it was losing its place as a central funding priority. First, information technology was enabling faculty to access scholarly information directly—without library intervention, and money that was being invested to build the technology infrastructure was diverting funds from the library. Second, the decline in arts and sciences and the rise of science and technology programs were eroding the power of disciplines that most directly supported the traditional library. And, third, libraries were not competitive enough in the new, aggressive environment of higher education to be a major player. He concluded that libraries could no longer take it for granted that they had a special status in the university.

I think Howe got it right, but ten years later, with distribution of library materials being so integral to the success of distributed learning, libraries and librarians are becoming key players once again. In addition, faculty need librarians to help educate them about the best values in publications, to suggest alternative publications, and to support their teaching.

My predecessor Herman Wells, whom I mentioned so fondly earlier in my talk, once noted that whoever is talking, no souls are saved after 20 minutes. I think there is a great deal of wisdom in that sentiment. I know we've all had a long day and a fine dinner on top of it. But before I end my remarks this evening, I would like to offer you some advice from my perspective.

My advice to you is to facilitate dialogue with your peers, your constituents, and your administrators. At all costs, maintain and strengthen your contacts with faculty, presidents, provosts. Learn your constituents' needs so that you can avoid the unproductive position of being a passive reactor or a complainer. Make every effort to get the

issues on the table, to expand the scope of the conversation about acquisition and cooperative collections management.

In dialogue with your faculty and administrators, pursue those areas where you still need to build unique collections for research, but forge ahead with national and international cooperation. No one will ever build a full collection: economics won't allow it; technologies don't require it. Continue to put your energies into cooperative collections development, no matter how difficult it is. The International Coalition of Library Consortia is a good example of recent cooperative effort . The Coalition continues to be an informal, self-organized group comprised of library consortia that is now expanding to the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia and other countries. And one of its primary functions is to facilitate dialogue on issues of common interest.

In my talk this evening I have advanced the idea that libraries can be agents of change in the higher education community. In doing so, I do not intend to underestimate the complex and changing world to which libraries must respond. In many ways you are all working in pressure cookers that continue to build up steam as the problems associated with scholarly publishing and technological innovation become more complex.

As AAU board chairman, I look to you to help us devise solutions to the pressing problems facing research libraries today. When I think about the important job that lies ahead of us, I am reminded of the ancient redwood forests that I love to visit in the Pacific Northwest. There's a fact most people don't know about these beautiful and ancient trees. Despite their impressive size, redwood trees have very small root systems. How then, you might ask, do they reach into the clouds? How do they grow so

huge that a car can drive through their hollow trunks? The answer is a simple one: they grow in clumps, and they hold one another up. Their roots are networked together. Like the giant redwoods, like the trees in the magnificent redwood forests, we are also intertwined. We can grow, indeed, we can thrive, but only if we do so together. Now more than ever, we must look to the future, rely on our mutual strengths, and share our resources if we are to enter the new millennium with confidence.

Thank you for the important work you do and for the opportunity to speak with you this evening. Like Coach Bobby Knight and Janos Starker, you are distinguishing yourselves by combining unique talents with teamwork—and you are making a difference. I have every confidence that you will continue to do so.

Questions?