

NO.57 SUMMER 2001
BENE LEGERE
 NEWSLETTER OF THE
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The Library Associates

Join more than 6,000 other friends, book lovers, alumni, and faculty who recognize that the influence of a great research library reaches beyond the university it serves to the many communities of which it is a part.

Library Associates receive complimentary copies of the quarterly newsletter *Bene Legere*, as well as invitations to special occasions at the Library. For more information on the Library Associates program, please write or telephone: The Library Development Office, Room 188 Doe Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-6000; telephone (510) 642-9377. Or, [check our website](#).

CAL'S LIBRARY COLLECTIONS BENEFIT FROM INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

In 1884 University Librarian Joseph Rowell sent a circular to 98 historical societies and foreign universities requesting "that you do us the great favor of placing this Library upon your exchange list." He promised in return that Berkeley would reciprocate by sending "our registers, Reports and such of our Bulletins and other publications as possess any historical interest."

Records indicate that by 1887 "correspondence with nearly one hundred foreign universities had been started with a view to increasing the exchanges, which were already proving to be of great value." And, by the time of the dedication of Doe Library in 1912, it was estimated that nearly one-third of the Library collection of almost 100,000 volumes had been accumulated by gifts and exchange ("Red Letter Annals of the Library," page 15, in *Dedication of the Library*, 1912).

And so Cal's Exchange Program was born and has thrived ever since. Today the Library collaborates with more than 3,000 active exchange partners. The impact on the collections of the Exchange Program is important. Currently 23 percent of the serials collection in the Marion Koshland Bioscience and Natural Resources Library is received via exchange. And in the Earth Sciences and Maps Library, 604 serials titles out of the 1,795 currently received, slightly more than one-third, are acquired by the program.

Exactly how does an exchange program work? And how is it that all involved stand to benefit from it?

The ingredients required for an active exchange program include: library staff willing to make the effort, potential users of the materials, and publications published by this institution that would be of interest to other research institutions. Exchange is especially effective when the value of materials received from exchange partners exceeds the cost of their acquisition, or when it adds information to the collections that the Library could not otherwise provide.

Going back to the early years of Cal's program, in 1893 the University initiated two series of publications, one on geological sciences and another on education, which allowed the University to expand the initial exchange program and became the basis for its continuing success. Today, through special arrangements with the University of California Press and other campus publishers, the Exchange Program receives significant discounts on many



respected serials titles (*University of California Publications in Botany* and *Journal of Musicology*, to name a couple) that it uses to exchange with other institutions. The Library's wide distribution of these publications advances the University's reputation and promotes scholarly communication, while at the same time offering an avenue for acquiring Berkeley's publications to institutions that otherwise might not be able to afford them.

Cal's program spans the world. In fact, at a recent Library exhibit to highlight the Exchange Program, pins representing exchange relationships were spread on a world map from southern Chile to northernmost Siberia and many places in between.

Cal's Slavic Exchange Program is one of the largest in the world. It is also one of the oldest in the United States, as the Library established its exchange agreement with the Russian Academy of Sciences during the first decade of the twentieth century. The greatest expansion of our partnerships with Eastern Europe occurred after World War II, when direct book purchase from these countries was not possible. The Slavic Exchange Program remained productive during the darkest days of the Cold War, and now accounts for slightly more than 80 percent of the 2,895 Slavic serials received by the Library, and for more than three of every five Slavic monographs added to the Library's collections every year. Interestingly, much of the Slavic exchange material is not available in any other UC library.

Since the inception of *perestroika* a rigorous and vocal press has developed in much of Eastern Europe and what was the Soviet Union. This new journalism was created by individuals and groups from all points of the political spectrum. An especially interesting segment of the new journalism is a small group of conservative activists who maintain steady pressure against the groups who are striving to keep the country on the course of democratic reform. The conservatives tap into nostalgia for the days under Communism when Russia was a feared world power. Thanks to our Exchange Program, we have gathered a substantial collection from the Russian independent press, going back to 1989, which will provide valuable insight for study of this era for future generations of scholars.

Another by-product of the Slavic Exchange Program is the Russian Women Writers microfiche collection, which was created in cooperation with the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg.

The number of women writers mentioned in the histories of Russian literature has been small, though there is emerging interest. Much of women's fiction appeared in the "thick journals" which were popular in 19th century Russia, but many were also collected and issued as monographs. Almost none of this material is available in American libraries. Thus the Russian Women Writers Microfiche Collection, developed under the auspices of our exchange agreement with the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg, is a working collection of texts which are available to Berkeley scholars and to other researchers across the country. Already the collection contains almost 300 titles.

Finally, thanks to the efforts of the Russian National Library and the Library of Foreign Literature, we are also creating a collection of Russian "street corner poets," who are publishing hundreds of volumes a year. These titles are never offered via the traditional booksellers' catalogs, but must be purchased, virtually off the street, in Moscow and other Russian book centers. Are these tomorrow's classics or simply hacks? Who knows, but scholars at Berkeley have a rare opportunity to judge for themselves and perhaps discover the Pushkin of the 21st century.

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