

Notes from GOVDOCLAND Spring 2002

by Gaylord Robb, Reference/Government Documents Librarian

Summer is on the way and thoughts of the beach and sun are on many people's minds. Except for a few diehards who will go on to take summer classes and probably limp on to become the next Bill Gates or Oprah Winfrey, most of us are looking for a respite.

In celebration of the upcoming summer, my topic for this issue of the *Enlightener* is "statistics." Uh, oh! I detect that glassy eyed look coming on as your brain begins to shut down. You ask, "Why is this guy doing this to us just before summer vacation? Is he morbid?"

But wait a minute! You are missing something. Statistics can play a role in your life even as you are contemplating spending the summer on the beach. How, you may ask? Well, summer is for relaxation, right? And what better sedative is there on the market than a few pages of statistics. You want to take a nap, but are having trouble shutting out the day's problems. Grab a page of statistics and start reading. If you are especially wound up, grab two pages. You'll soon be in the dream world that you seek. But it is important to direct this sleep, so you don't just want any old statistics, but rather something on a topic which interests you, at least a little. Now if you are a baseball fan, then maybe you should stay away from baseball statistics or you might never get that nap you are striving for. Because as boring as statistics may be, if you get the right statistics, you may even find yourself getting a little excited. "Exciting statistics" ... isn't that an oxymoron? Well, yes and no. Statistics can lead to that glassy eyed distant stare or they can actually be exciting. Depends on the topic!

So where can you find these amazing, versatile statistics? In GOVDOCLAND, for starters. And where is GOVDOCLAND? It's a mythical place. I'll tell you about it later ... sorry for the suspense, but you'll just have to wait.

First, let me mention a great source to use when you just want to see what kind of statistics are out there. It's called the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. Catchy title, huh? Well, despite its title, I can think of no better place to find statistics on such a wide range of topics. Topics cover a span from crude oil production to classroom teacher salaries to dart throwing. Volleyball anyone?

Did you know that there were only 965 NCAA volleyball players versus 7,642 NCAA tennis players in the U.S. in 1997? So if you want to play an NCAA sport and you are equally talented in both sports, your chances are probably better of becoming an NCAA tennis player than an NCAA volleyball player. The above statistical data doesn't mean you should give up your dream of being an NCAA volleyball

player, if that's what you really want. There are a myriad of other factors that might influence your decision and affect your

chances, but checking statistics will often help you to make informed decisions. I found the above information in the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* of which we have copies that date back to the 1950s. The numerous volumes will enable you in some cases, to compile a record of statistics over a period of a half century. Not bad, eh? And yes, if you are a computer addict, then there are recent copies online. They just don't go so far back.

I've listed below the URL for the online version of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. The online version allows you to search the abstract back to 1995 (pretty good?), but not the half-century that is available in the library.

www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical-abstract-us.html

One point I need to stress is that the *Statistical Abstract* should be thought of as a starting point, as there are other statistical sources that may give you more recent in-depth statistics. Under each table entry in the *Statistical Abstract* you will find the source of these sometimes abbreviated statistics. By searching out the source (i.e. a governmental agency or a professional association) on the Internet, you often will find more good stuff.

Where can you find more detailed statistical information from government agencies, etc.? Well, one entry point is to access the various government Web sites listed on our "Government Information" page. This page gives you multi-point access to part of the mythical GOVDOCLAND.

How do you get to the "Government Information" page? (I mentioned it in the last *Enlightener* article, but I am glad to do it again.) Proceed as follows:

1. Go to the Salisbury University home page and click on "Library" or type in the URL: www.salisbury.edu/library/ in the location box of your Web browser and hit the <enter> key.
2. Click on "Resources by Subject" found under the subject heading "Research Tools" on our library homepage.
3. Click on the letter "G."
4. Click on "Government Information" and you should be in.

Once you are in the "Government Information" page, you have numerous links to click on and begin your search.

If you are interested in getting statistics from non-governmental professional associations and organizations, you may access their Web sites, assuming they have them.

As I said before, the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* gives you the "source" for its summary statistics at the bottom of each table. For example, the volleyball data from above came from the National Sporting Goods Association, which is not a governmental organization. You can find them on the Internet through Yahoo, etc. This particular association does provide some free statistics, but some of these associations, being private associations, may not provide you with additional statistics unless you are willing to pay a fee or join their membership. Another avenue that you may explore for statistical data is to



search our journal databases for journal articles that may publish statistical data from these non-governmental associations and organizations as well as data from the U.S. and state governments.

So anyway, folks, I gotta run, but if you find yourself in need of several pages of statistics, for whatever reason, the beach or academic glory, please come into the library, and we will do our best to help you out.

From the Desk of the Interim Dean

by Judy Fischer

With the selection of Dr. Alice Harrison Bahr as dean of libraries and instructional resources, my appointment as interim dean is coming to an end. I would like to take this opportunity to formally welcome Dr. Bahr to Salisbury University and to Blackwell Library. The library staff and myself are eagerly looking forward to July 15 when Bahr will assume her responsibilities as library dean. Having spent the past 13 years as director of the library at Spring Hill College in Mobile, AL, she will bring a wealth of experience to Salisbury University.

Bahr is active in the American Library Association, has chaired a national library committee and served 10 years as editor-in-chief of *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, a commercial, peer-reviewed professional journal. Not only has she been active on technology committees, but also she has also helped to plan a new library. These experiences will serve her well in her efforts to better integrate Blackwell Library, the Edward H. Nabb Center for Delmarva History and Culture, and the Teaching/Learning Network/Instructional Resources Office into the life of Salisbury University.

I would also like to take this occasion to publicly thank the library staff as well as the staff of the Nabb Center for the support, encouragement and cooperation offered to me during the past two years. The definition of an interim dean is an individual who accepts the duties and responsibilities of a dean for a temporary period. Since it is a short-term appointment,

staff could very easily take the attitude that they do not need to work as hard or that their work doesn't matter since the dean is short-term. I can honestly say that this was not the attitude of the staff I supervised. There have been many challenges in the past two years, but when I have asked for help, the entire staff has always come through for me. They have remained student-centered and service oriented.

For instance, staff members took very seriously their appointments to two search committees. As a result of their interest and input, we now have a new enthusiastic, service-oriented reference librarian as well as a new dean. Without this unquestioning support and cooperation, I would have had a very difficult tenure as interim dean. When I look back over the last two years and realize that the library continued to serve faculty, staff and students with, in my view, no decrease in library service, I realize that the staff has often been taken for granted. They do a great job here in the library, as well as in the Nabb Center, and I sincerely appreciate their help and support. There is no doubt in my mind that the staff will continue to support our new dean.

I would be remiss if I did not also thank the campus administration as well as the academic deans for their support and assistance during the past two years. By observing the work of an administrative team that truly believes in and supports a student-centered environment, I have learned a great deal about what it means to be a good administrator. I look forward to my continued association with this exceptional group of people.

Teaching and Learning Network News

by Mary Gillespie, Ph.D.

Module Development for New and Adjunct Faculty

The Faculty Development Institute (FDI), a collaborative project of the Eastern Shore Association of Colleges, plans to create a set of easy-to-use, easily accessible instructional modules and resources on teaching and learning, especially geared to the needs of new and adjunct faculty. These modules will be accessible over the Internet. Faculty members who create these modules will be compensated \$500 for each completed section of content from the list below.

Content of the modules will become property of the FDI, for sharing with and adaptation by any faculty member who works at one of the member institutions of the Eastern Shore Association of Colleges. Topics include Teaching Diverse Student Groups, Motivating Students and Effective Lecturing.

For additional information, contact Cynthia France, director, Faculty Development Institute, 410-822-5400, Ext. 241 or cfrance@chesapeake.edu.

Upcoming Events

August 26-27 - Faculty Development Days
September 19 - Faculty Development Institute (FDI)
Technology Event

Further information on these events will be forwarded via e-mail and will be posted on the TLN Web site www.salisbury.edu/library/tln.

Summer Projects

Summer is an ideal time to plan and begin grant proposals or develop projects that can enhance teaching and learning. The Teaching and Learning Network is available to assist you—contact Mary Gillespie, Ext. 36232 or Melissa Thomas, Ext. 36510.