

 **In His Own Words**

Larry Randall: SUNYConnect Project Coordinator

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When I became the *SUNYConnect* Project Coordinator in August, I had just completed nine years as the Library Director at SUNY Purchase. During much of that time, I was involved in a variety of consortium activities that seemed to lead naturally to involvement with a project like *SUNYConnect*.

From the start, I've been active in the SUNY Council of Library Directors, serving as Secretary from 1990 to 1992 and as the Convener for the University College libraries in 1997-98. I was also a member of the executive group that coordinated the work of the five task forces appointed by SCLD in 1995 to explore and report on major issues of concern to SUNY libraries, such as wider access to information and information literacy.

I was a charter member of the Library Automation Steering Group (LASG) that was formed in 1991, serving four years, including a year each as Vice Chair and Chair. While on LASG, the group developed the financial plan that established the principles and mechanisms under which LAIP libraries have shared the cost of operating that 40-campus system.

In 1995, I was on the ad hoc committee of library directors that developed along with SUNY/OLIS an agreement to jointly purchase access to FirstSearch. This was the first step toward making online databases available to SUNY as a whole, which of course is now a major element of *SUNYConnect*. At the end of 1995, I became a member of SLiCAT (SUNY Library Contract Advisory Team) when it was established by Carey Hatch. This group is charged to assist the Office of Library and Information Services in identifying and choosing among the increasing array of commercial information products and services available. I've continued that work with SLiCAT, now serving as the group's convener.

As a state agency, SUNY must operate within the framework of established state contracts for products and services. This factor has severely limited SUNY-wide access to online services, most of which have not been on

state contract. In an effort to address that problem, the NYS Office of General Services in 1996 established a Library Advisory Group to help it identify library products and services for which state contracts could be established. I was appointed to serve as SUNY's representative to that group. Although progress has been slower than was hoped, major database vendors have been granted state contracts and more will soon be added. This has been of significant benefit to SUNY and other libraries around the state.

Outside of SUNY, I've been an active member of WALDO (Westchester Academic Library Directors Organization). This group, originally formed to further common goals and joint projects of college libraries in Westchester County, has grown far beyond the borders of the county and now also includes school, public and special libraries. Many of the important steps to expand the mission and membership of WALDO were taken during my terms serving variously as Secretary, Vice President and President.

Before coming to Purchase in 1989, I had other experiences with library consortia that served to hone my natural inclination to look at the "big picture" and helped confirm my belief that libraries can achieve far more collectively than they can individually. These experiences include four years on SONAC (SUNY/OCLC Network Advisory Council), the final year as chair; two years on the board of the Southeastern NY Library Resources Council; and 18 months as president of the Geac North American Users Group.



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