

Owen speaks of improvements and new attractions in library

YSU?

Owen: I hope so. It's there. Right now the state universities are thrashing out the technological details of the problem.

The Jambar: What do you think of the tattle-tape security device that will be part of our new library?

It's one of the best measures they've devised so far. If your books aren't desensitized they call you back. And rather than say Hey you're stealing a book, they just inform you that you forgot to check it out.

(Editor's note: Dr. Richard J. Owen, director of Library services at Heidelberg College, was appointed the new head librarian at YSU last month. His appointment will be effective this November upon the retirement of Dr. George Jones, present head librarian. The following is a Jambar interview with Dr. Owen.)

The Jambar: Are you planning any innovative changes for our new library?

Owen: Certainly! I'll impose my personality on the library. Really, though, I haven't had the chance to make plans one way or another. I hope any changes we make will be improvements. As far as staff is concerned I hope to get more people to supply services. Personally, I'm in favor of having more para-professionals.

The Jambar: Do you see the new library offering new additional services?

Owen: I really don't know what you offer right now. But I know what I would like. I'd like to see the library made the center of campus. In the past I've had a student string quartet come into the library some evening it's normally closed, or a poetry reading and have students come in to sit and read enjoying the entertainment. I think there should be more places to display art. You can't do this all the time, but you can investigate the possibility and see how the students react.

The Jambar: Do you see the needs of student changing with respect to the library?

Owen: Well, you're not going to do away with the book but there are other media to be used. Students are more gadget minded. They're not afraid to use microfilms. They're not afraid to sit down and look at a small tape and use program learning. You can buy equipment small enough

to carry out and sit under a tree and use it. You shouldn't be restricted to using everything in the building. We'll also have 98 study carrels in the new library. And for every two floors there will be three layers of books. There will be a classical breakdown as far as departments. I think there's going to have to be some sitting down between the library and the administration, the faculty and students deciding how you want the library development. I feel that there should be at least one person too, one staff member whose primary and only job will be working with the faculty. Finding out — What does the faculty want? What do the students want?

Somehow you have to start with the faculty encouraging them to structure their courses so they will more fully utilize the resources we have. Once they do that then you're going to get the students involved with the library. But, without a library on campus you don't have a school. So just in itself, what is it... it's the center of campus. But, in order to make it the true center of campus you're going to have to have the students enjoy coming into the building.

You mentioned that there's no place to sit, you can't group study... well, we're playing with arrangements, with round tables where you can sit six people to sit and study or work on group projects.

We can also present attractions in the library. I mentioned this quartet we had, or art displays. I'm really not sure what the students here are open for. The students are going to feel me out and I'm going to feel the students out. At Heidelberg we developed an attitude where the staff enjoyed having the students in the library and the students therefore

enjoyed going to the library.

The Jambar: Students are turned off by the library basically because they do not know how to use it. How would you cope with this?

Owen: At Heidelberg we initiated going to the students in the classrooms and through the faculty, examining syllabi ... And the library can see from this what the students will need throughout the semester, throughout the quarter and in turn prepare for it.

This is a neverending problem of how to get people to use the library. Part of it's a faculty problem. If the faculty does not require students to get material out of the library the students will not go to the library. It's kind of a three-way education between the library and the faculty and the library and the students.

The Jambar: What about hiring students to help other students learn to use the card catalogue?

Owen: Now you're getting into a pet project of mine. I'm trying to do away with the card catalogue. In 20 years I may be able to. Are you aware that there is a college library computer circuit system where you can sit at a keyboard and query to a computer to find out if Youngstown has a book. You won't need a card catalogue. Some people figure in 20 years there won't be card catalogues. You're not afraid to sit there and punch it out. It's just like typing. This is based on technology which students are not afraid of.

The Jambar: Do you think this system eventually will be used at