

YORK COLLEGE LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT

1997-1998

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Chief Librarian

Introduction

In the budget year 1997-1998, the York College Library has continued to maintain services to the public while coping with continuing unfavorable staffing and budget situations. In following the Library's mission, the Librarians have continued to stress public services while deferring other professional Library responsibilities, including collection development, to some extent.

With a minimum of professionals supported by a minimum of support staff, the Library has continued to be confronted with a declining materials budget. Not only has the budget decreased in terms of adjusted dollars due to the increase in the cost of Library materials and inflation, but also the total budget has decreased by more than one-third. Because of this, the Library's faculty has continued to make decisions on which important Library materials to discontinue acquiring, including subscriptions to periodicals and annual publications. Due to the budget situation, book titles in various subject fields are not being ordered, thus forcing the Library community to rely more heavily on other Libraries, document delivery, and interlibrary loan services.

It is hoped that the budget situation for both the College and the Library will be reversed in the not too distant future, permitting the Library to better fulfill its mission to serve the needs of the York College community.

I. Professional Library Personnel

The professional staffing of the York College Library has not changed in the past year. This decline in the number of professionals is more pronounced when viewed over the past number of years, when the Library faculty has decreased significantly while the student body has increased even more significantly.

Chart 1 illustrates that the professional staff has decreased significantly over the past 12 years. At the same time, the ratio of full-time equivalent students to Library faculty has increased substantially, as can be seen in Chart 2.

The Association of College and Research Libraries has detailed standards that academic Libraries should attempt to meet. According to the standards, by the size of the student body, faculty, and collection, York College's Library should have approximately double the number of full time faculty members as it presently has. The formula is used to calculate the optimum number of professionals to deliver quality service to the user community.

Rather than using the standards of a professional association, it may be helpful to compare the York College Library staffing with that of other CUNY senior college Libraries. Chart 3 details the number of Librarians at each of the senior CUNY colleges from the 1991/92 to 1996/97 academic year. As the chart reveals, in comparison with other CUNY senior colleges, York College's Library has few Librarians. Looked at another way, the proportion of Librarians per FTE in the senior CUNY colleges can be seen in Chart 4.

At York, it is significant to examine not only the ratio of FTE's per Librarian, but also the ratio of students per Librarian using the headcount of students. This is significant in

the Library since a Librarian must be prepared to perform individual bibliographic instruction with each student who uses the Library. To accomplish this, the headcount at York can be used, as illustrated in Chart 5.

The Library continues to emphasize public service even though the professional faculty is very limited. Thus, each professional must spend a great deal of time staffing one of the two Reference desks. Other professional responsibilities, such as collection development, are accomplished as much as possible when the Librarians are not scheduled at one of the Reference desks. The average amount of time each professional Librarian spends in public service at one of the Reference desks can be seen on Chart 6.

It should be noted that the increase in average reference time could be accounted for by the decrease in the number of professional Librarians due to an early retirement. Unlike other academic departments at York, the Library is unable to hire adjuncts to make up for the loss of a full time member of the faculty.

Though the reference desk hours have been maintained during the past eight years because of the Library's emphasis on public services, the hours that the reference desks have been staffed have been slightly decreased due to the lack of professional staff. The hours that the Reference desks have been staffed have been selected after a study of usage patterns for several years. As Chart 7 shows, the shortened reference desk hours have not significantly impacted on the use of reference services.

II Budget

The Library has, in effect, two budgets: Library materials (OTPS) and temporary services budgets. This portion of the annual report will discuss the Library materials portion of the budget; the following section will briefly deal with the temporary services portion of the Library budget.

The Library other than personnel services portion of the budget can be examined from various interrelated points of view, including books and periodicals. These two primary parts are related because if the total budget remains constant or decreases, which it has done in the past number of years, as the cost of one increases there is less money left to purchase the other. Recently, as the cost of periodicals has increased by approximately ten percent a year, the Library has been forced to cancel periodical subscriptions and acquire fewer books with the remaining dollars. In addition to the increase in the cost of journals, there has been an increase in the cost of books as well.

Further complicating the equation is that as the college redefines its curriculum, the Library must redefine its acquisitions. In most cases, the newer fields that have been added or discussed have been ones with more costly materials than those that have been discontinued or discussed for discontinuation. For example, materials to support a Physician's Assistants program will be significantly more costly than those to support Italian.

In addition, Library supplies and contracts are taken from the Library other than personnel services portion of the budget, which further reduces the amount of money to purchase books and journals. In the past, this was not the practice at York College. Now, not

only supplies, contracts and materials come from the Library materials budget, so do computer equipment and software.

Chart 8 illustrates the Library OTPS budget for the 1997-1998 academic year. In past budget years an overwhelming majority of the Library's OTPS budget had been committed to the acquisition of journals. Chart 8 shows that this year's budget was slightly different. Unlike other budget years, this year the Library has been unable to pay for the upcoming journal subscriptions in the current year. Because of this, the Library will have to devote nearly its entire OTPS budget for necessary journal subscriptions. As Chart 9 illustrates, the Library's budget has been spent primarily for journal subscriptions.

Books

Chart 10 illustrates that the book buying ability of the Library has shown a general trend downward during the recent past. This can be accounted for by a number of factors, including:

- A relatively constant budget eroded in recent years by the necessity of paying for equipment and supplies from the budget formerly reserved for books and serials;
- The rising cost of journal subscriptions;
- The inflation of book prices in general;
- The necessity to support new, expensive technology. These technologies include the World Wide Web and database services.

According to the standards of the Association of College and Research Libraries, the York College Library should have a total of over 200,000 volumes, based on the number of faculty and students at the college as well as the number of majors. At the present time, the Library has a collection estimated to be at approximately 170,000 volumes, though this estimate is an extremely high one, as it is based on a guess made approximately twenty years ago. As the complete York College Library catalog gets put into CUNYPLUS, a more realistic number will be available, but it is likely that the collection contains little more than 100,000 volumes.

In addition, an inventory of the collection has never been performed, and this would help to indicate the true size of the collection. An inventory would require a large number of temporary workers, something that is not likely to be permitted given the College's and the Library's on going budget shortages.

B. Journals

Chart 11 shows that the number of journals subscribed to by the York College Library has significantly decreased in the past few years. Subscriptions were cancelled based on use by the York College community. At the present time, a major study of the use of journals is continuing. Subscriptions for journals that have not been used in any format (print, microfilm, or microfiche) by the Library community in the past three years have been discussed for possible cancellation.

In spite of the fact that several hundred journal subscriptions have been cancelled, the use of journals in the Library is high. This can be seen in Chart 12.

III. Temporary Services Budget

The temporary services portion of the budget for the Library has been maintained for the past few years. As in the past, the Library faculty decided to maintain Library services during the fall and spring semesters, but to shorten hours during the summer session. The effect on Library users has been minimal, as evidenced by the continued light use of the facility during the summer as well as the minimum number of complaints about the Library's shortened hours. Last summer, no complaints at all were received about the Library's hours.

IV. Use of the Library

A. Books

The use of the book collection of the Library in terms of volumes circulated has remained high. This can be seen on Chart 13. It should be noted that as most circulation transactions are now recorded on CUNYPLUS, the on-line Library system, both Circulation and Reserve transactions are combined for the past two years, though not before that. This will make a comparison difficult. The combination of Circulation and Reserve transaction statistics will be continued.

B. Periodicals

Periodicals, for the purpose of this annual report, includes current periodicals, backfiles, storage, the business collection, and microforms. The use of periodicals has continued to decline in the past few years, as can be seen in Chart 12. This decrease can be accounted for by the fact that a portion of the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) is now accessible on the campus VAX network; thus the microfilms collection has been less heavily used.

C. Other Library Services

Some Library services are available primarily to faculty and staff of the College. These services include interlibrary loans and database services. It should be noted that interlibrary loan services are currently available to all Library users, though student use is limited by the time interlibrary loans usually take and the students' desire for instant retrieval.

Interlibrary loan service has increased, probably due to the shortage of appropriate materials here at York. Not only is interlibrary loan available, but document delivery has become possible through funding by the Central Office of CUNY. Chart 14 details the activities of the interlibrary loan division.

Database services were used by a few of the York College faculty and staff, as can be seen in Chart 15. The continuing decrease from the high in 1987-1988 can be attributed to increased patron use of World Wide Web and CUNYPLUS databases as well as a decrease in the number of full time faculty. It should be noted that database searching was discouraged during the past few academic years.

This academic year, the Library was open two Sundays prior to final exams in both the fall and spring semesters. The use of the Library was not heavy in terms of students asking for professional help (between 6 and 20 reference questions were asked each day), though the facility was used for study (body count between 20 and 80 at a time with a total of between 175 and 212 each Sunday).

This academic year, the Library's late study hours were extended significantly during the final two weeks of each semester. The facility was not heavily used, though there were a number of users here.

Conclusion

Though the Library continues to suffer from shortages in both personnel and dollars, the use of the Library has continued to remain strong. The Library faculty continues to be concerned about the cumulative impact of budget cuts on the quality of the services offered to the York College Community as well as on the collection. At the present time, the Library's staffing level and collection have significantly slipped below the level of the Association for College and Research Libraries' minimum standards for a college of this size in terms of faculty, students, and courses offered.

Librarians at York

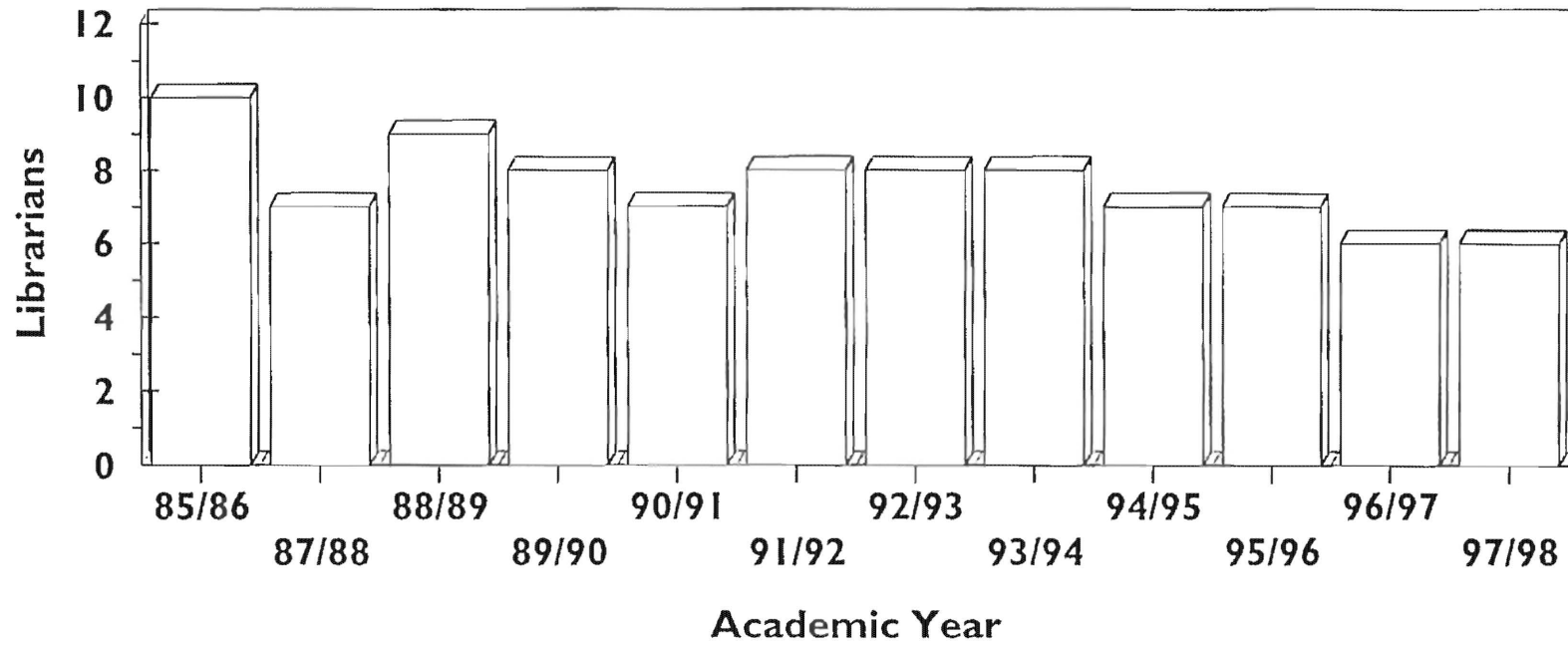


Chart I

Librarians Per FTE

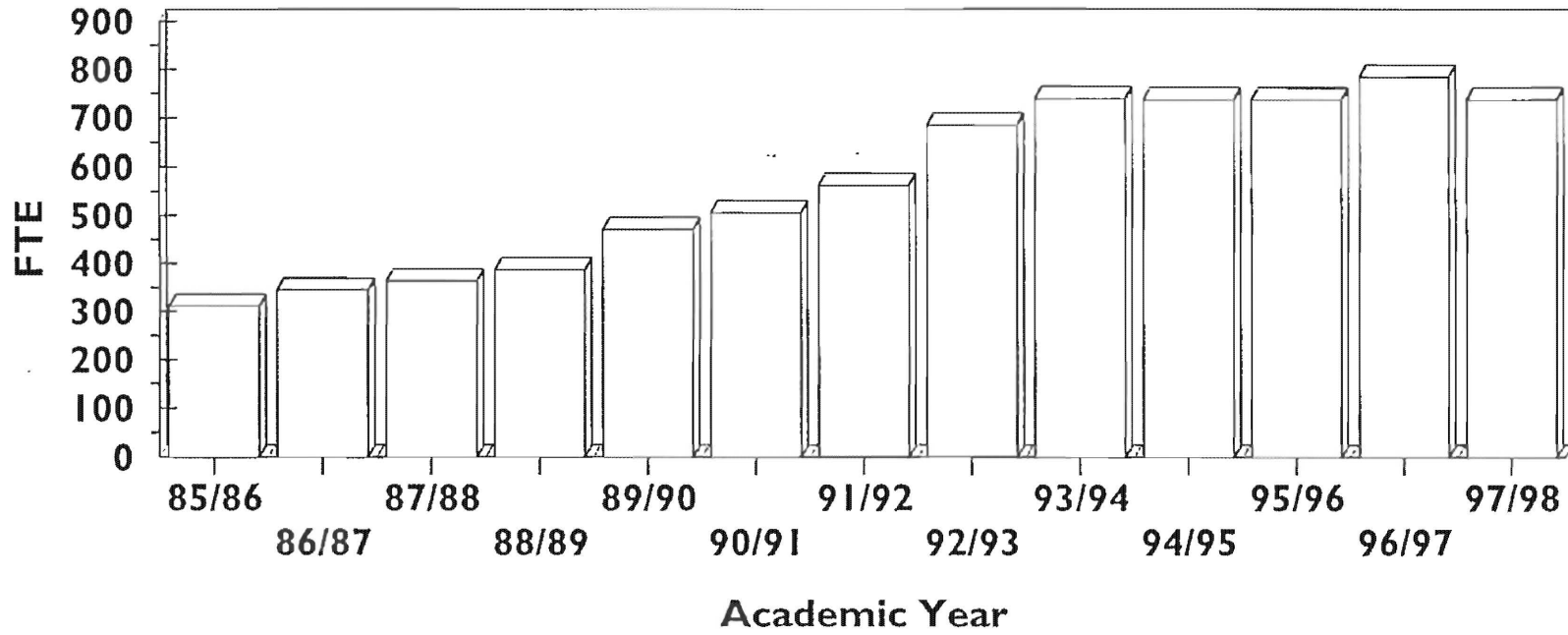


Chart 2

CUNY Librarians

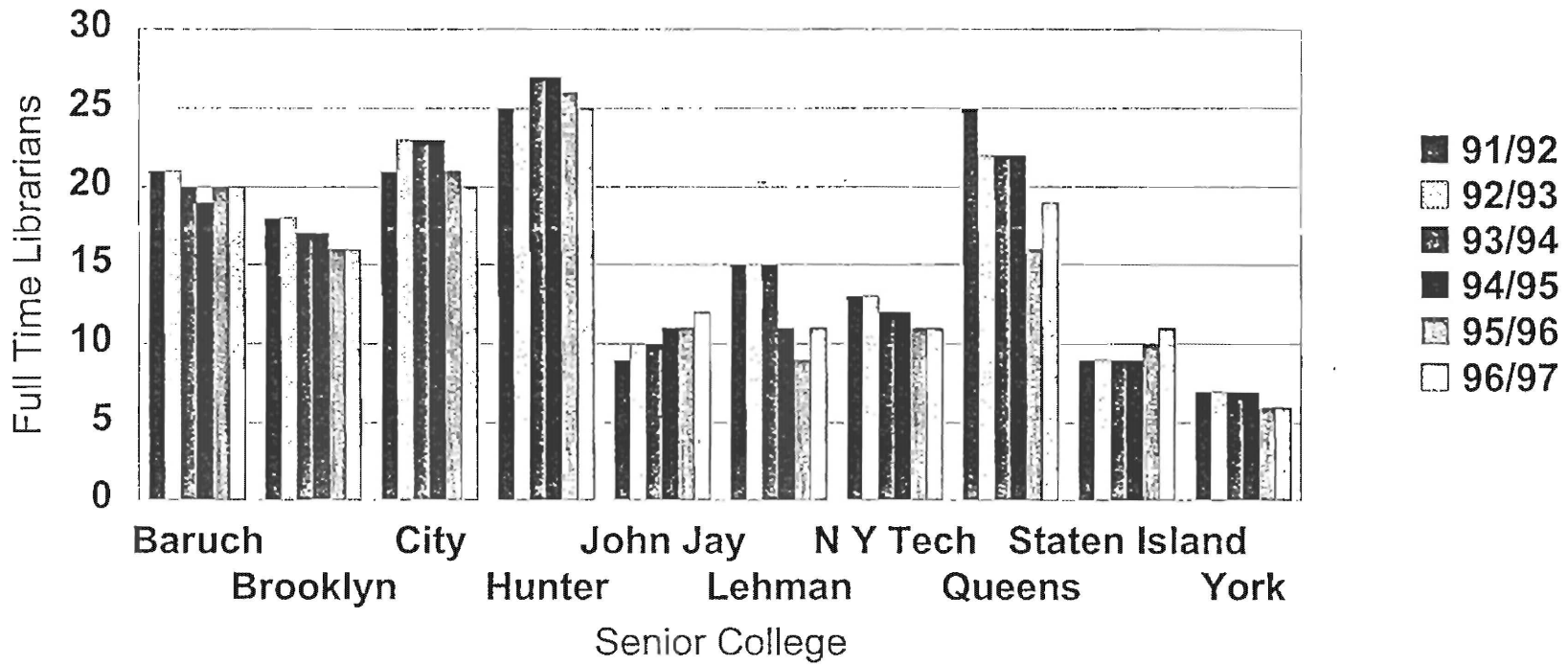


Chart 3

CUNY Librarians Per FTE 1996/97

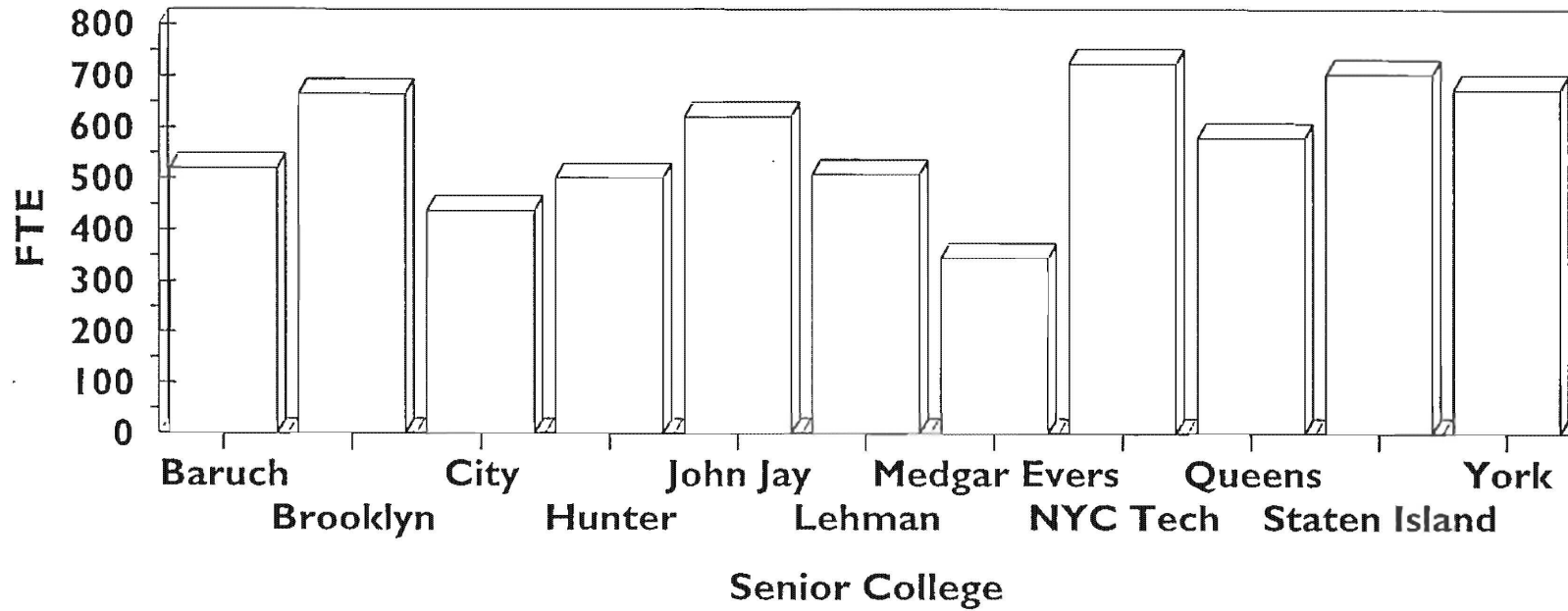


Chart 4

Students Per Librarian

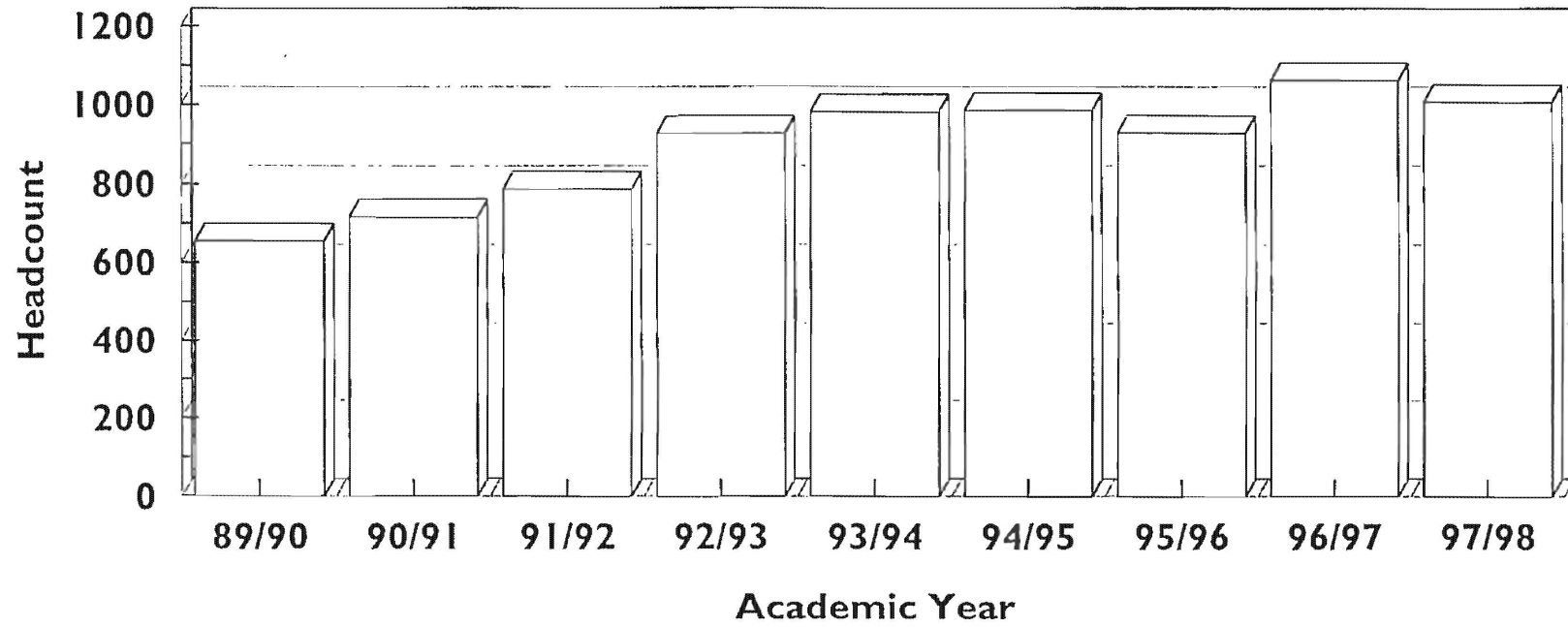


Chart 5

Average Reference Time

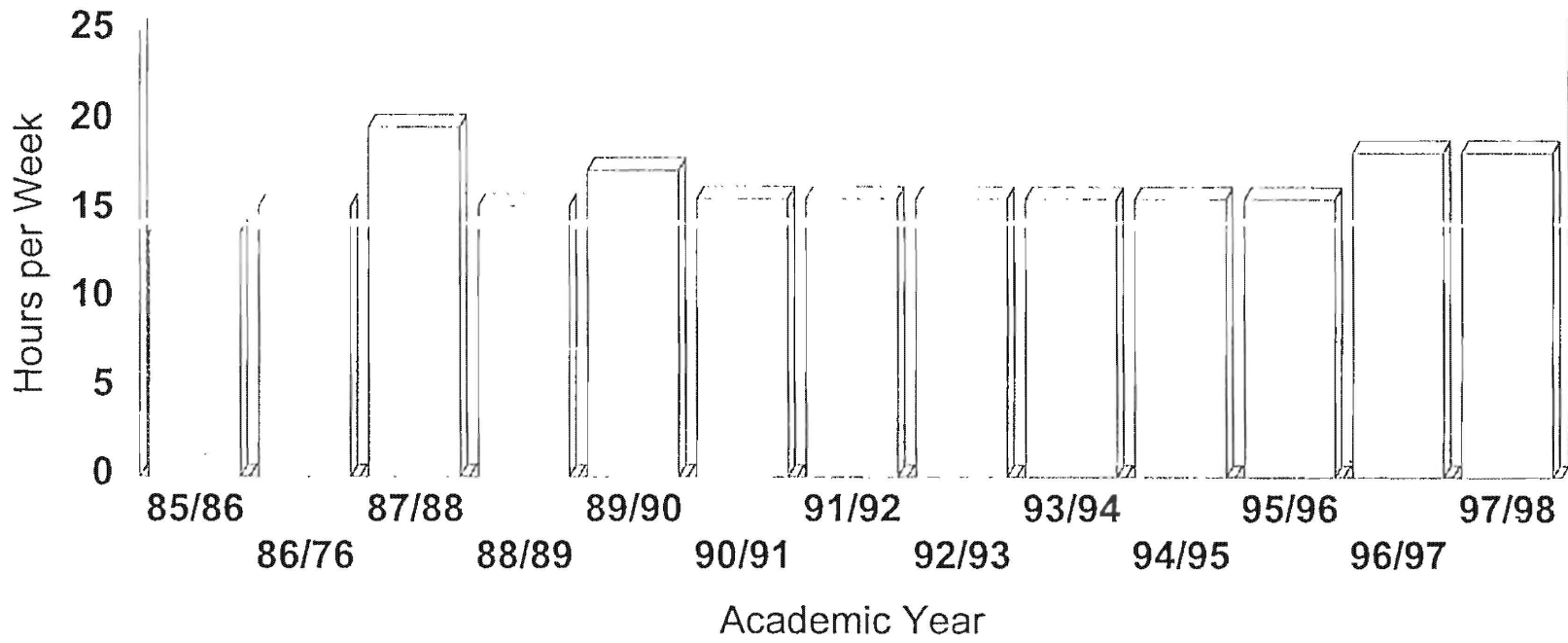


Chart 6

Use of Reference Services

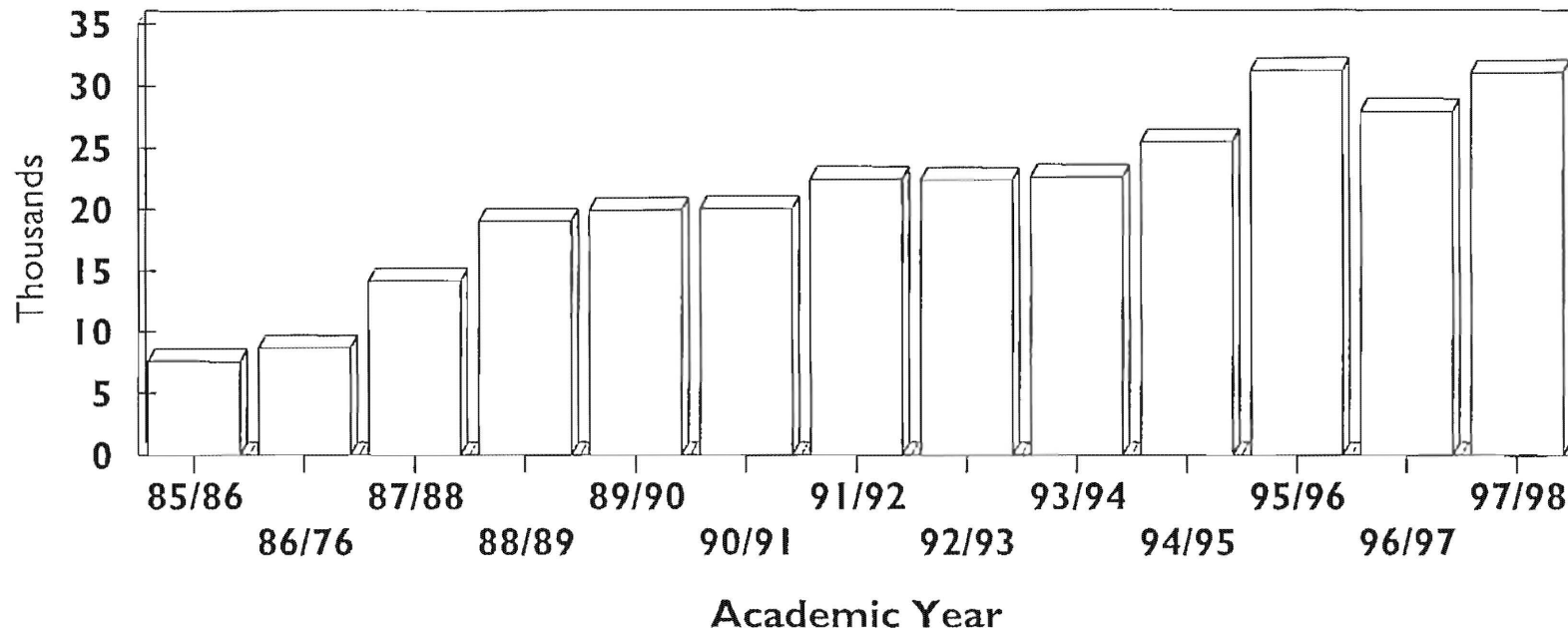


Chart 7

Library Budget 1997/98

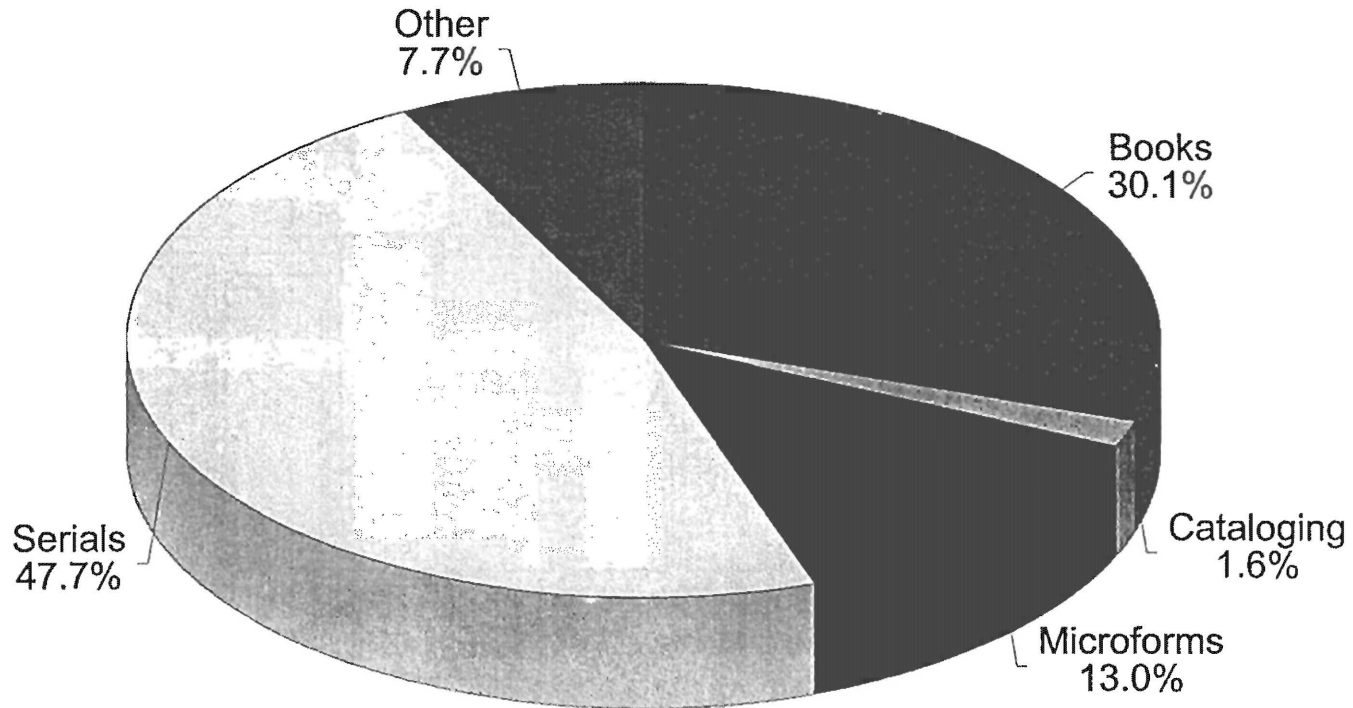


Chart 8

Library Budget

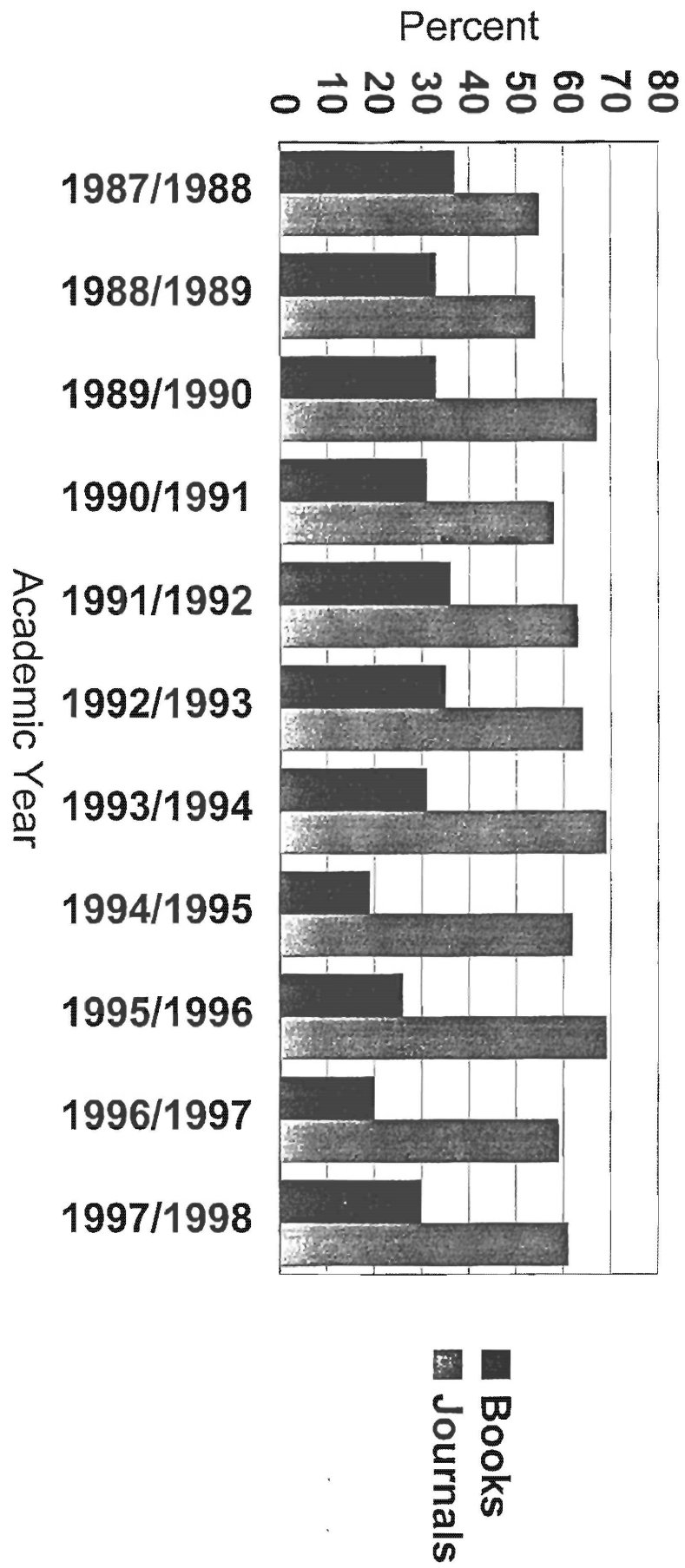
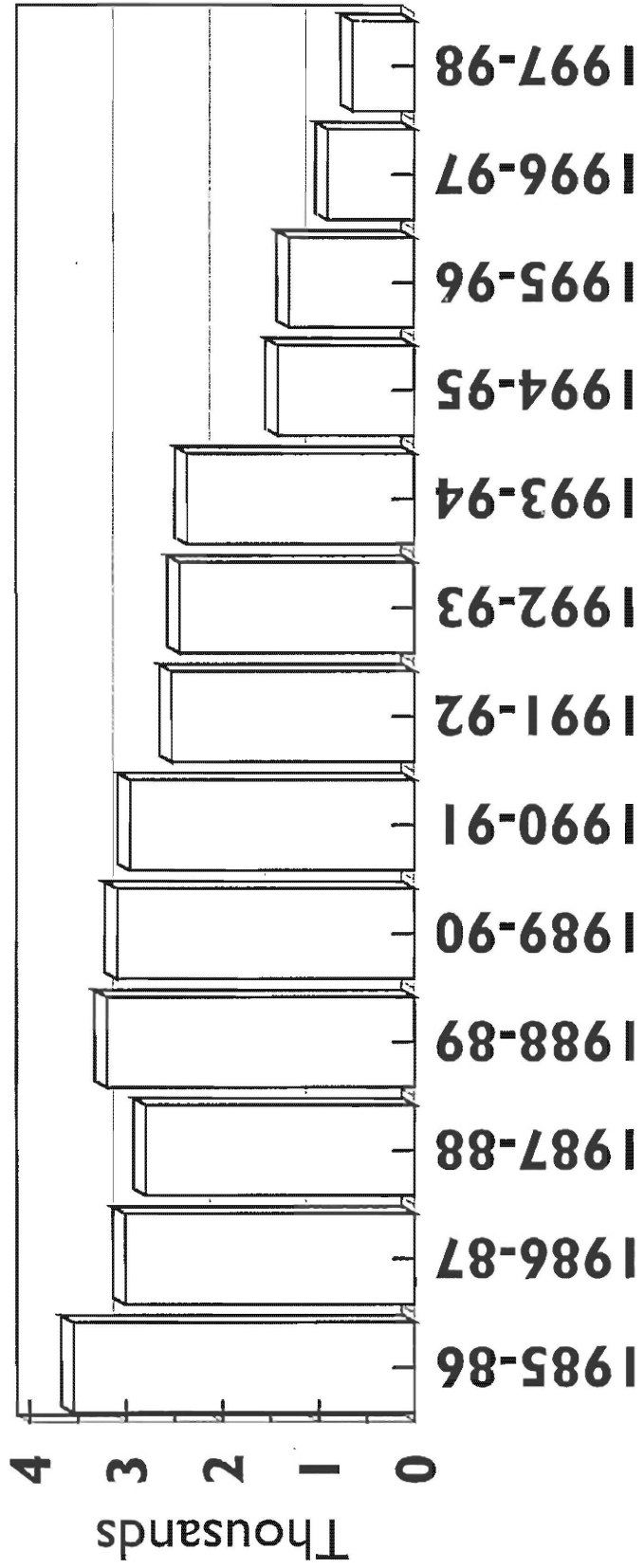


Chart 9

Library Acquisitions



Academic Year

Chart 10

Periodical Subscriptions

Note: Does Not Include Business Collection

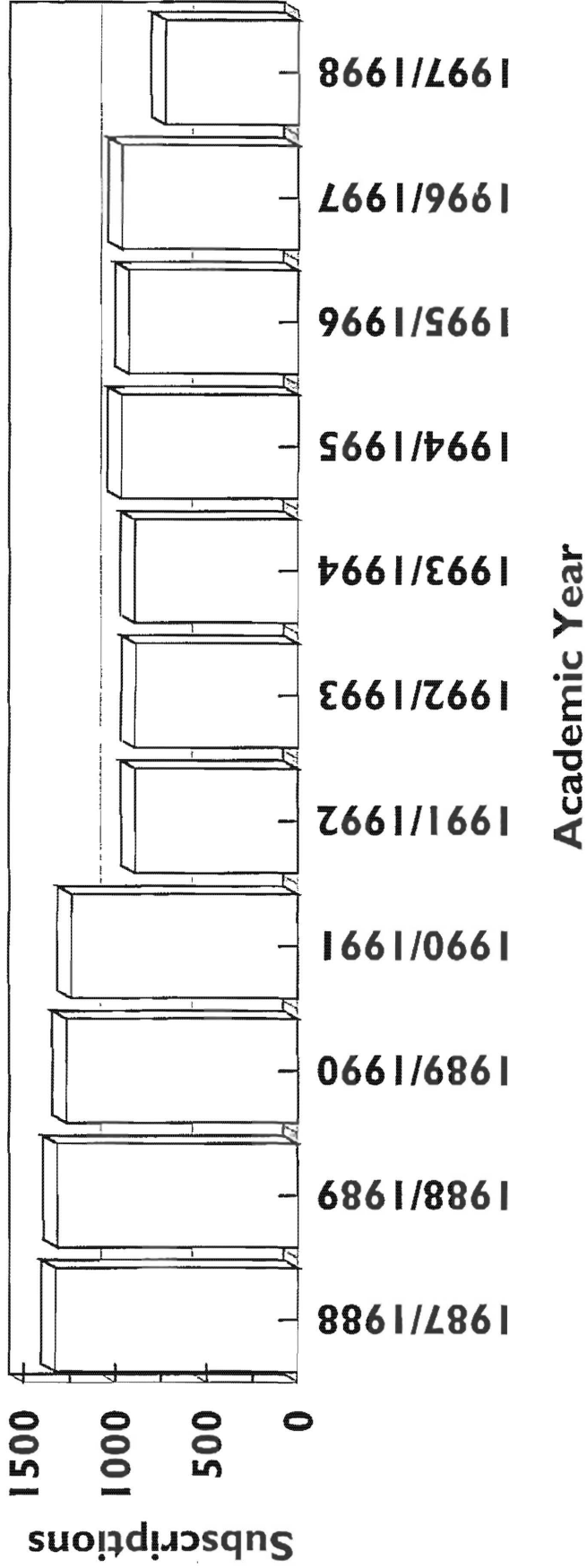
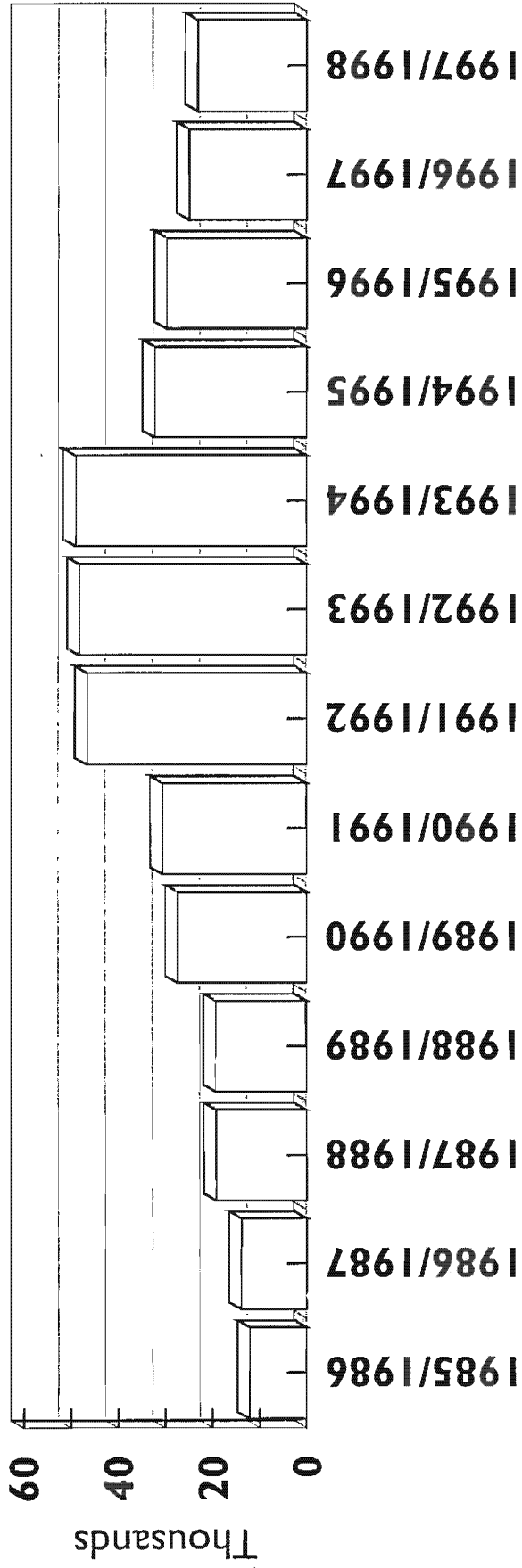


Chart II

Use of Periodicals

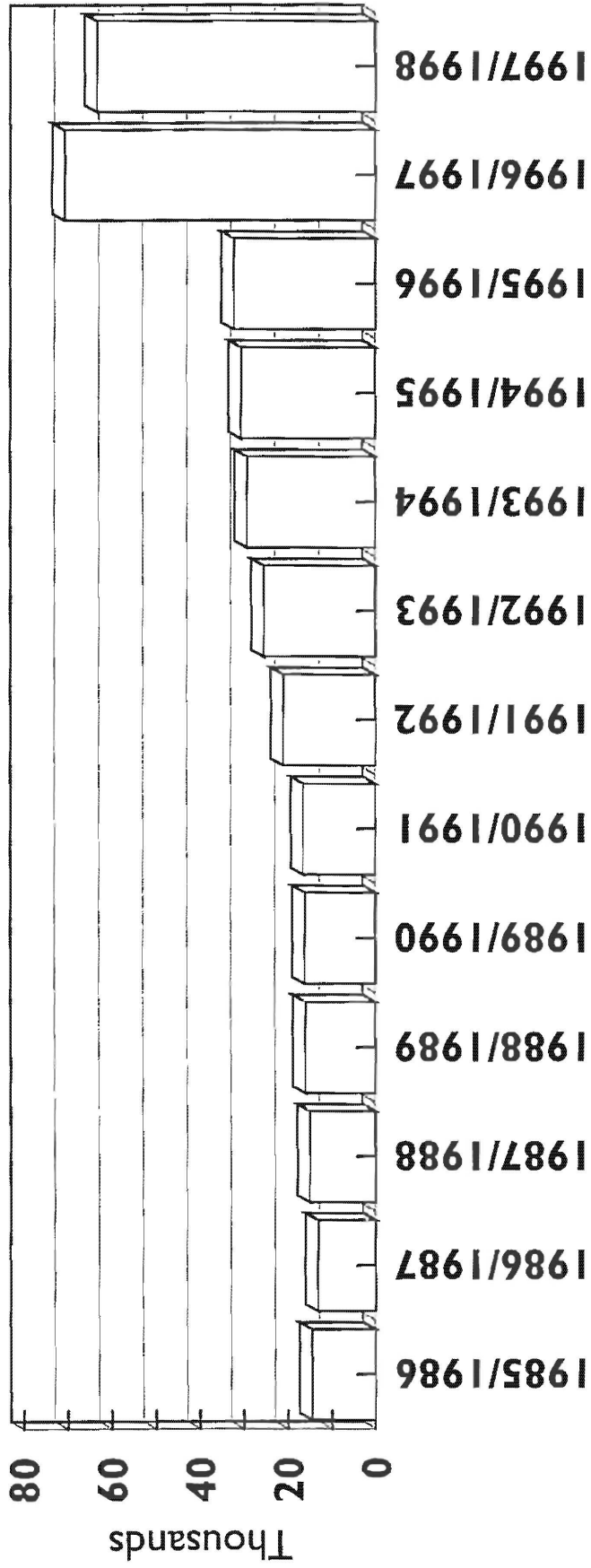
Note: Includes Current Periodicals and Microforms



Academic Year

Chart 12

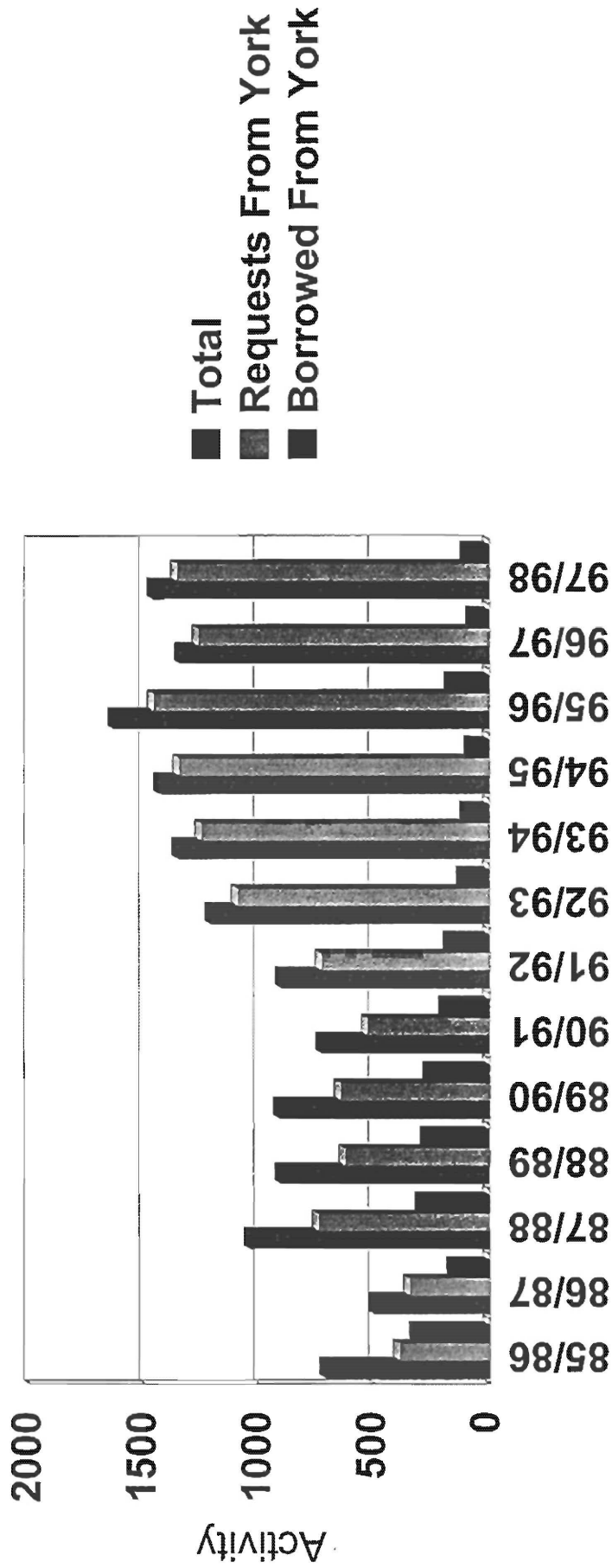
Circulation of Books



Academic Year

Chart 13

Interlibrary Loans



Academic Year

Chart 14

Database Services Faculty and Staff Utilization

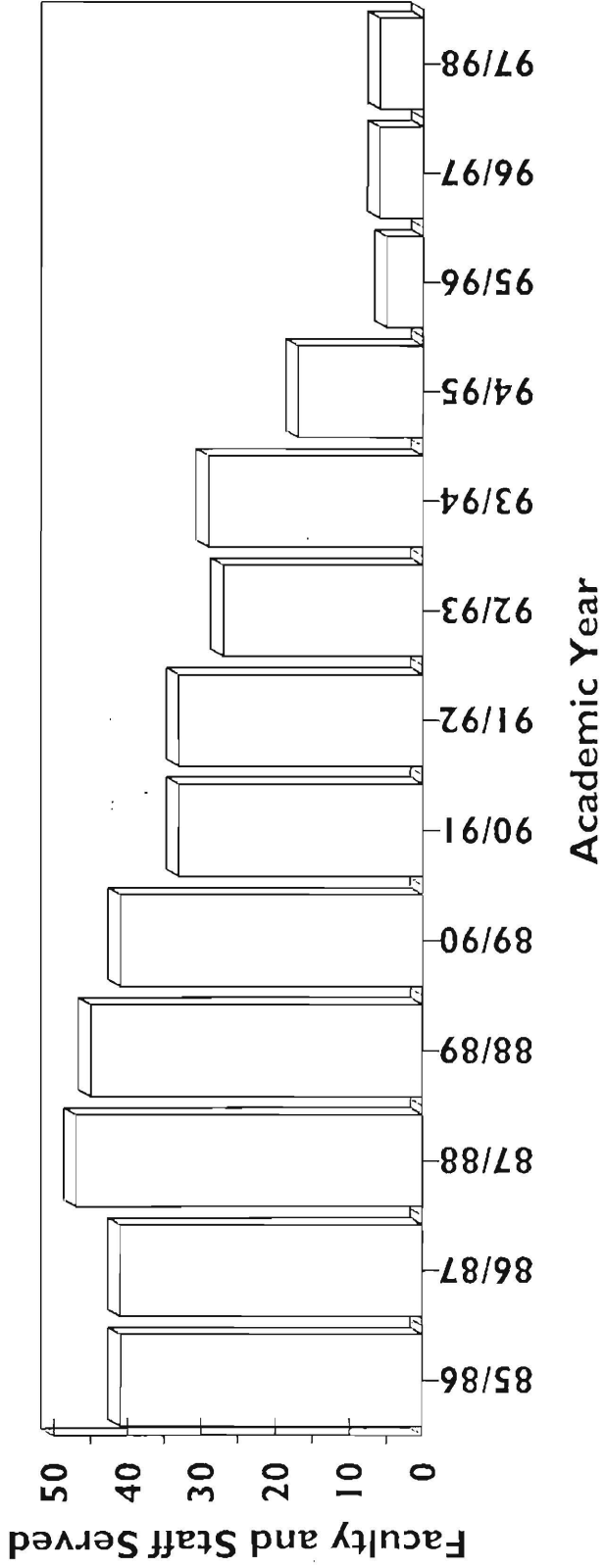


Chart 15

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