

I have been in the state system for 30 years, and with the library for 21. So I was here for the organizational meetings that founded CCLA and LINCC. We were struggling with a locally written, inventory control system that was creaking along with monthly breakdowns and crashes. It was like we were in a lifeboat and we were taking on water and bailing as fast as we could and then...along comes the QE 2. CCLA has brought us forward from the early 20th century library that we were (we were still typing catalog cards on an IBM Selectric in 1988) to a real 21st century library.

I tell our students in their orientation, we used to be a little community college with about 100 magazine and journal subscriptions. Now we are a library with 65,000 E-books, and hundreds of thousands of full text articles. What our students in Dixie County need is not what is at the University of Florida but what is on their computers at home, provided through CCLA.

What works well??

As a small library, one of the smallest in the state college system, what works well for us is access to a world class library system, Aleph from Ex Libris...the system used by institutions like Harvard and Notre Dame.

Without CCLA we would have at best a PC based inventory control system with very little capability. We couldn't keep the statistics required for federal reporting standards...we would not be an academic library in any meaningful sense of the word. We would certainly not meet SACS standards. We just passed our offsite SACS review, by the way, with flying colors.

We value the personal tech support that we get from CCLA...we know the service desk folks by their first names, and the response is always fast. We don't have the tech support on our campus that would be needed to operate within such a complex system.

We value and need the databases provided through CCLA...and chosen collectively by all 28 of us in a remarkable, annual process of cooperation and compromise...a group decision based on what meets the most and greatest needs of the entire group, from giant Miami Dade to tiny Key West. Without these databases our students would be reduced to using Google and Wikipedia...fine resources but not adequate for the purposes of academic work, even at the two year level.

We value and need the interlibrary loan system through LINCC and Aleph, which gets books into the hands of our students usually within a week's time, leveling the access to resources from the largest schools to the smallest.

What more do we need?

Only what increased funding for CCLA would provide...

More databases and electronic book collections that address our expensive vocational programs, such as nursing. An information literacy program developed at the statewide level, with assessment capability

Single sign on capability for our students

More training for staff, provided locally, regionally, and online in virtual format.

All of these needs require more funding. In the absence of that funding, we are doing quite well, but only because of CCLA.

How do I think the Proviso will affect us at Lake City, and by the way, the other small schools?

I think that we will be lost in such a huge conglomeration of institutions with such radically different missions. Sometimes, one size does not fit all...sometimes one size fits no one. This could be one of those times. And the argument that merging systems will save money is always a selling point, but seldom the reality. When the legislature mandated that the colleges and universities find a single library system, and we all went with Aleph, it turned out to be a wonderful and powerful toolbox system, but it certainly was not less expensive ...in fact it was quite a bit more from the start.

Without the needed tech support at the local level, and thrown into a pool struggling for resources with U of F, FSU, and the other big institutions, I fear for our fate in such an environment. We have already consolidated systems, when CCLA took 28 divergent libraries and brought us together as a family. It was a theme in our early trainings and meetings...remember, we're all in this together...we're all one family. At Lake City, we just don't want to end up in a foster home. Thank you, and I will try to answer any questions you might have.