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## Hip, Hip, Hooray!

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We tip our hats, clap our hands and sing, “For they are jolly good fellows!” to all South Carolina Legislators who made this day possible! **South Carolina legislators have approved a \$2 million initiative for a virtual academic library.**

The most recent legislative session saw an 11 year dream come true. This will go down as the benchmark year for academic libraries in South Carolina. The funds will be used to fashion an environment where every student and faculty member in an institution of higher learning has quick and easy access to information resources regardless of location or institutional affiliation. The South Carolina Academic Virtual library ultimately will comprise a core of electronic resources that includes electronic indexes, journals, reference materials and books, as well as access to all the printed materials from the state’s academic libraries.

Break out the champagne and toast the forward-thinking men and women in the legislature whose votes will make this vision reality, as well our Commissioners of Higher Education, and our College and University Presidents whose support was critical to the dream!

South Carolina academic librarians are a most patient lot, exhibiting, at times, the endurance of Job. For years, the academic libraries in South Carolina saw the need to enhance information resources available at each institution and to improve access for all users. In 2001, they formed the Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries (PASCAL) to address information- access problems.

Today, PASCAL is a consortium of 54 public and private academic libraries, partnering with other entities and dedicated to improving information resources, access and services at each institution’s library. The PASCAL website contains information about programs, links to members and partners, by-laws and mission statement. See <http://pascal.tcl.sc.edu> for more information.

PASCAL seeks to improve the state’s academic libraries with three bold initiatives. It will greatly expand access to electronic information resources while creating a “universal library” of over 11 million books. This union catalog will help South Carolinians reach their potential in academic achievement, economic development and personal growth.

Other states have similar initiatives: Virginia’s VIVA, for example, garnered that state’s highest award for its cost-avoidance efforts that now total \$103 million. Georgia’s GALILEO is also well-known both in and out of library circles. Kentucky, Missouri and North Carolina, to name a few others, all have state-funded library initiatives.

The core programs of this virtual library are:

- **Content Licensing/Purchasing Program** — Licensing or purchase of core

### Introducing PASCAL

### An Academic Virtual Library for South Carolina

## Releasing South Carolina's cultural heritage: The Collaborative Imperative

electronic resources through a sustainable plan which will focus on key academic and research material is the central feature of the SC Academic Virtual library. Both initially, and over time, this program will involve the lion's share of the allocated funds. PASCAL is beginning discussion with major academic content providers, and is fleshing out its purchasing plan. In order to husband the State's resources, selection of materials will be made with several factors in mind. These include a focus on common academic needs, cost-avoidance, and coordinating with the State Library's DISCUS program. **We expect our first titles to become available no later than January 2005.**

■ **Union Catalog/Portal Purchase/Materials Delivery** — Providing access to these electronic resources, *as well as to all the printed materials* from the state's academic libraries in an effective and cost-efficient way, is a critical dimension of the SC Academic Virtual Library. The system's infrastructure for the virtual library is being built through a series of ground-breaking collaborations. The technical base is the procurement of a *shared* library system at USC, Clemson, CofC, SCSU, FMU, The Citadel, Florence-Darlington Tech and Aiken Tech. Selection of the vendor for this system is immanent. These institutions will contribute roughly \$1.5 million to the development of this system in FY 2004-5. The RFP requires that the vendor also supply the capability to support research and delivery connections to the technical college system and the state's other public and independent four year and research institutions. A portion of the state funding to will be used to make these connections. **We seek to bring up the first statewide element of the system (the information portal) in January 2005.**

■ **SC Digital Library Initiative** – PASCAL also seeks to expand access to historical, cultural and educational resources through collaboration and digitization. Much of this material, now tucked away in archives all across the state, would be brought to light, showcasing our rich culture and history for all citizens of the state to see and use. **Federal LSTA funding has been made available by the State Library for planning and a pilot project into FY 2005-6 (FFY 2004-5).**

While intensive planning is going on at all levels, our first major event will be a state-wide forum involving four days of collaboration and learning about the possibilities of a state-wide digital library for South Carolina. (See the bullet directly above.) Participants will meet some of the leaders in the cultural heritage digitization movement and learn from their experiences. For more information, please visit this link:

[http://pascal.tcl.sc.edu/programs/digilib/Forum\\_announce\\_040716.html](http://pascal.tcl.sc.edu/programs/digilib/Forum_announce_040716.html).

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