I. WHY ARE YOU READING THIS MANUAL?

Traditionally, academic libraries rely heavily on a large number of student employees to attend to many of the routine tasks that keep the library running. The ISU Library employs more than 100 students! You shelve, check out library materials, assist technical services staff in maintaining the library online catalog, provide information assistance to library users, and help librarians with special projects.

To many people, anyone working in a library is a librarian, or at least someone who knows more about the library than they do. Some library users will ask the first library staff person they can identify any question, from where is the pencil sharpener? or what do you have on the mating habits of Siberian warthogs? Other users are hesitant to ask for assistance and just wander around the Library.

It is not the intention or purpose of this manual to turn you into a library expert. The skills that one needs in working with a library user take time and practice. However, student employees, as representatives of the Library, can help make the Library more pleasant and understandable to library users if the student assistants are not only trained in their specific duties, but also are introduced to the inner workings of the whole Library.

We hope you do not think of your time here as just a job, or as what I have to do just because I am on work-study. Whether you are employed by the Library for one semester or stay with us the whole time you are a student here at ISU, the more you know about the Library, the better you will be able to understand where your specific duties fit in. Also, you will be able to better represent the Library, both on the job and when you might be discussing the Library with other students.

The general guidelines in this manual have been prepared to help you understand what is expected of all student assistants in the Library.

Departments and units may have additional standards and guidelines as well as specific procedures for the many tasks you will be performing.
In general this manual and any departmental/unit manuals should help you to:

--develop a philosophy of service
--develop a friendly service-oriented attitude
--fulfill all designated tasks
--become aware of the nature of the library users' needs
--ensure that library users receive adequate assistance
--make clear the student worker's limitations in assisting library users

The staff appreciates your contribution and hopes that your library employment will be a positive experience. Many of the policies and procedures listed here reflect those you may find in the career world. The Library attempts to employ students who maintain a better than average scholastic standing. If you find your experiences as a library student assistant to be worthwhile, you may wish to recommend other students to us as potential library employees. In the long run, you may even consider a career in libraries!