

YORK COLLEGE LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT

1998-1999

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Chief Librarian

In the 1998-1999 budget year, the York College Library continued to maintain services to the public while coping with continuing budgetary and staffing challenges. The year began with an unfavorable budget in terms of non-committed dollars, due to accumulated invoices from the previous academic year that had to be paid with this year's allocated budget, leaving a very slight amount of money to be spent to support the academic interests of the college. At the beginning of the budget year, both professional and non-professional staffing were extremely limited, and as the year progressed, one non-professional retired and was not replaced.

With a minimum of professionals supported by a minimum of support staff, the Library has continued to be confronted with a declining materials budget. As compared to two years ago, 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 have not been ordered, thus forcing the Library community to rely more heavily on other Libraries, document delivery, and interlibrary loan services.

The budget year ended on a bright note: a new faculty member was hired to better serve the evening and weekend population. Though the professional staffing is still not what it was only a few years ago, when three professionals left service at York, the additional faculty member will help serve the Library user community in the future. In terms of professionals, the Library is still understaffed; in terms of non-professional

support staff, the Library anticipates the replacement of the retired College Office Assistant in the 1999-2000 budget year.

It is hoped that both the budget and staffing situations will be addressed in the 1999-2000 budget year. This will permit the Library to better fulfill its mission to serve the needs of the York College Library user community.

I. Professional Library Personnel

In the budget year 1998-1999, the professional Library staffing did not change at all. In the budget years prior to this one, the professional Library staff decreased by 3 (33%) and not one faculty member was hired. At the end of the budget year, however, a full time faculty member was hired to serve the evening / weekend user population.

Table 1 shows the number of professional Librarians at York College since the 1985-1986 budget year.

Librarians at York	
85/86	10
87/88	7
88/89	9
89/90	8
90/91	7
91/92	8
92/93	8
93/94	8
94/95	7
95/96	7
96/97	6
97/98	6
98/99	6

Table 1

This information can be seen graphically on Chart 1. Notably, the professional staffing of the Library has decreased significantly over the past 13 years. At the same time, the ratio of full time equivalent students to Library faculty has increased, as can be seen in Table 2.

FTE's per Librarian	
85/86	310
86/87	345
87/88	363
88/89	387
89/90	471
90/91	505
91/92	563
92/93	685
93/94	739
94/95	737
95/96	737
96/97	785
97/98	737
98/99	679

Table 2

Table 2's information can be viewed graphically 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 Library user community

At York it is significant to examine not only the ratio of full time equivalent students to Librarians, but also the ratio of potential Library users to Librarians using the headcount of students. This is particularly significant at the Library at York because a Librarian must be prepared to perform individual Library instruction with each student who uses the Library. To accomplish this, the headcount at York can be used, as seen in Table 3, and graphically in Chart 3.

Headcount per Librarian	
89/90	654
90/91	716
91/92	786
92/93	926
93/94	981
94/95	984
95/96	927
96/97	1061
97/98	1006
98/99	942

Table 3

The Library faculty at York continues to emphasize public service at the expense of other professional activities, even though the professional Library faculty is limited. Thus, each professional Librarian spent a great deal of his or her time staffing one of the two reference desks. The average amount of time each Librarian spent at one of the reference desks can be seen in Table 4, and graphically on Chart 4.

Reference /Librarian	Desk Time (hours per week)
85/86	13.8
86/76	15.3
87/88	19.7
88/89	15.3
89/90	17.3
90/91	15.7
91/92	15.7
92/93	15.7
93/94	15.7
94/95	15.7
95/96	15.7
96/97	18.3
97/98	18.3
98/99	18.3

Table 4

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, a voluntary termination, and a non-reappointment. Unlike other academic departments at York, the Library is unable to hire adjuncts to make up for the loss of full time members of the faculty.

Though the reference desk hours have been maintained during the past nine 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.

Due to a different method in counting reference queries, direct comparison with years past is impossible. Instead, a study of the activity at the Reference desks by the week (Chart 5a) and by time of day (Chart 5b) has been completed. It can be seen that the activity, though varying, is high throughout the day and throughout the weeks of classes during the academic year.

II. Budget

The Library materials budget (OTPS) can be viewed in many different ways. One way to look at it is the percent of the budget spent on books and journals (including microforms). These two primary parts are related because if the total Library budget remains the same or decreases, which it has done in the past few 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 per year, the Library has been forced to cancel selected periodical subscriptions and acquire fewer much-needed books with the remaining dollars. In the budget year that has just started, the Library faculty is making decisions on which indexing and abstracting tools, as well as journal subscriptions and annual publications should be cancelled.

The breakdown of books and journals (including microforms) can be seen in Table 6. Graphically, this breakdown can be seen in Chart 6.

Percentage of Library OTPS Budget

Academic Year	Books	Journal
1987/1988	37	55
1988/1989	33	54
1989/1990	33	67
1990/1991	31	58
1991/1992	36	63
1992/1993	35	64
1993/1994	31	69
1994/1995	19	62
1995/1996	26	69
1996/1997	20	59
1997/1998	30	61
1998/1999	4	47

Table 6

A more detailed view of the Library OTPS budget for the academic year 1998-1999 can be seen in Table 7 and Chart 7.

1998-1999
Library
Budget

Periodicals	40%
Books	4%
Microforms	7%
OCLC	6%
Other	43%

Table 7

As can be clearly seen, the Library has been unable to purchase books to adequately support the needs of the York College Library users. Taken together, the expenditures for journals and microforms require approximately half the entire OTPS Library budget.

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 or Communications Technology 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 (OTPS) 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.

In past budget years an overwhelming majority of the Library's OTPS budget had been committed to the acquisition of journals. Unlike other budget years, this year the Library has been unable to pay for the upcoming journal subscriptions in the current budget year. Because of this, the Library will have to devote nearly its entire OTPS budget for necessary journal subscriptions.

A. Books

Table 8 and Chart 8 illustrate 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 or declining 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 electronic data sources.

Books Acquired	
1985-86	3544
1986-87	3004
1987-88	2785
1988-89	3189
1989-90	3085
1990-91	2951
1991-92	2519
1992-93	2437
1993-94	2356
1994-95	1420
1995-96	1301
1996-97	902
1997-98	642
1998-99	304

Table 8

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. According to the records of CUNYPLUS, the York College Library collection can be more realistically estimated at 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.

It should be noted that although the Library only purchased 304 books during the academic year, the Library catalogued 941 items. These items include a backlog in cataloging that has accumulated for several years, many gifts, and largesse acquired from other Libraries.

B. Journals

Table 9 and Chart 9 show the number of periodicals subscribed to by the York College Library. The number of subscriptions has remained approximately the same in the past two years, though the number of subscriptions has declined noticeably since the 1987-1988 academic year. The subscriptions do not include those information sources available electronically.

Year	Periodicals
1987/1988	1327
1988/1989	1316
1989/1990	1264
1990/1991	1234
1991/1992	889
1992/1993	889
1993/1994	893
1994/1995	964
1995/1996	925
1996/1997	963
1997/1998	726
1998/1999	731

Table 9

It must be noted that 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 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 relatively high. Some of the journals that used to be used in print or on microfilm are now used on the World Wide Web. In addition, the use of a microform collection (the Human Relations Area File) is no longer as necessary as it was

in the past, as it is also partially available on the World Wide Web. The use of journals and microforms can be seen in Table 10 and Chart 10.

Current Periodicals/ Microforms	Requests
1985/1986	12123
1986/1987	13876
1987/1988	19142
1988/1989	19248
1989/1990	27280
1990/1991	30506
1991/1992	46420
1992/1993	48161
1993/1994	48970
1994/1995	32195
1995/1996	29661
1996/1997	24903
1997/1998	23134
1998/1999	20033

Table 10

II. Use of the Library

A. Books

The use of the Library can be examined in terms of the circulation of Library materials, including the use of reserve materials in the Library. Table 11 and Chart 11 detail the use of the Library materials of the York College Library.

Circulation	
1985/1986	14480
1986/1987	13116
1987/1988	14897
1988/1989	15965
1989/1990	16048
1990/1991	16397
1991/1992	20873
1992/1993	25300
1993/1994	29127
1994/1995	30483
1995/1996	32094
1996/1997	70491
1997/1998	63118
1998/1999	68178

Table 11

Since the 1996-1997 academic year, the figures for circulation and reserve have been combined because the CUNYPLUS system is not able to separate the two. This makes comparison with the earlier figures difficult. Though the F.T.E. and headcount of students at York has declined in the past few years, the number of circulation and reserve transactions has been maintained.

B. Periodicals

The use of periodicals, for this section of the annual report including current periodicals, backfiles, storage, the business collection, and microforms, has declined, as can be seen in Table 10 (repeated here for convenience) and Chart 10.

Current Periodicals/ Microforms	Requests
1985/1986	12123
1986/1987	13876
1987/1988	19142
1988/1989	19248
1989/1990	27280
1990/1991	30506
1991/1992	46420
1992/1993	48161
1993/1994	48970
1994/1995	32195
1995/1996	29661
1996/1997	24903
1997/1998	23134
1998/1999	20033

Table 10

The decline reflects the fact that many of the information sources that were accessed in the Library in the past are now available on the World Wide Web. This includes a limited number of current periodicals, newspapers, backfiles, and the Human Relations Area File (HRAF).

C. Interlibrary Loan

Some Library services are available primarily to the faculty and staff of the college. One of these services is Interlibrary Loan. Though technically it is available to all Library users, the average amount of time to obtain interlibrary loan materials is too long for most students. Table 12 and Chart 12 detail the Interlibrary Loan activity for the 1998-1999 academic year.

Interlibrary Loans Year	Total	Requests From York	Borrowed From York
85/86	714	392	322
86/87	506	348	158
87/88	1043	745	298
88/89	907	630	277
89/90	915	649	266
90/91	730	534	196
91/92	907	733	174
92/93	1215	1098	117
93/94	1358	1257	101
94/95	1437	1354	83
95/96	1635	1464	171
96/97	1346	1269	77
97/98	1467	1364	103
98/99	1507	1411	96

Table 12

As the Table reveals, the total activity of the Interlibrary Loan division has increased, with the majority of the activity being requests made by the York College Library user community for materials not owned by the York College Library. Some of the activity

has been unnecessary as a large amount of formerly requested information is now available on the World Wide Web and through FTP (file transfer protocol).

D. Other Library Services

Database searching is only available to the faculty and staff of York College. Due to the retirement of several faculty researchers and the availability and accessibility of the World Wide Web, the need for database searching has dramatically decreased in the past few years. This decrease can be seen in Table 13 and Chart 13.

Database Searches Year	Number of Requesters
85/86	41
86/87	41
87/88	47
88/89	45
89/90	41
90/91	33
91/92	33
92/93	27
93/94	29
94/95	17
95/96	5
96/97	6
97/98	6
98/99	4

Table 13

E. Other Library Services

During the past few academic years, the Library's H-wing has remained open from 8:30 till 11:00 o'clock at night (Monday through Thursday on regular class days during the Fall and Spring semesters) for late study, supervised by a security officer. During this period, the Library has been used by between 30 and 70 individuals each night. The number varies with the time of the semester and the day of the week.

The Library was open 2 Sundays at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters during the 1998-1999 academic year. The use of the professional services of the Library was somewhat limited, as can be seen in Table 14 and Chart 14, which detail the number of reference questions asked during the 6 hours each day the Library was open.

Sunday Reference Questions

	G Wing	H Wing
12/08/98	12	5
12/13/98	12	11
05/16/99	10	10
05/23/99	14	14

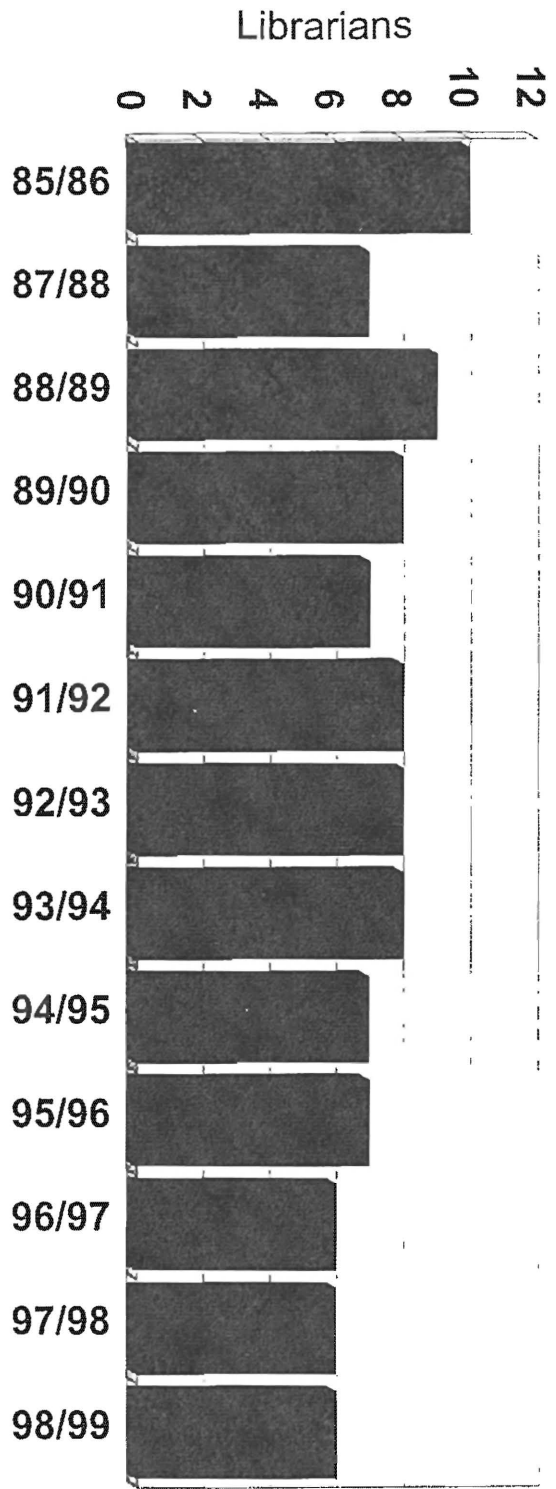
Table 14

In terms of turnstile statistics, it can be seen that the Library was used mostly for study purposes. Though figures are not available for the Fall semester, during the Spring semester 196 were recorded by the turnstile the first Sunday and 317 the second. Use of the World Wide Web computers was also noted on these Sundays.

Conclusion

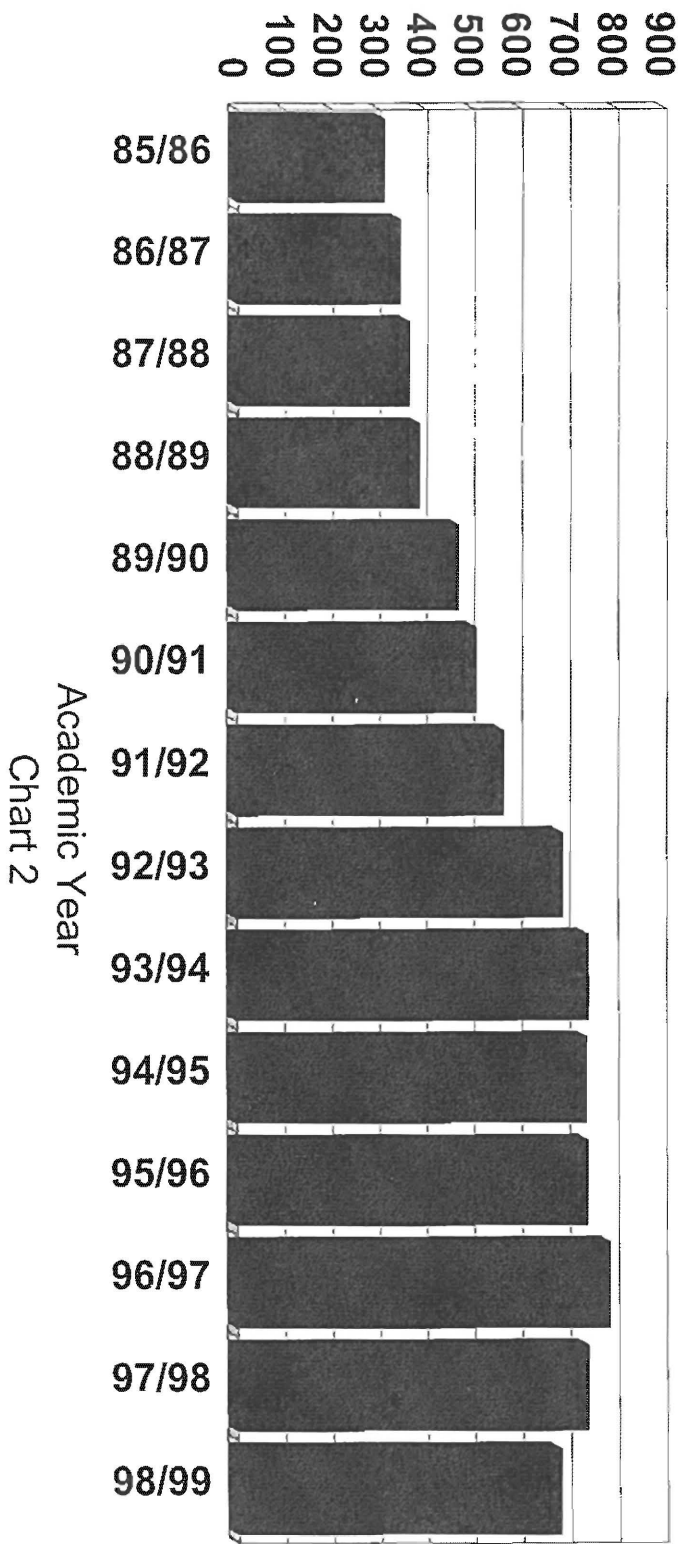
Though the Library continues to suffer from shortages in both personnel and dollars, the use of the Library has continued to remain strong. The Library faculty continues to be concerned about the cumulative impact of budget cuts on the quality of the services offered to the York College Community as 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



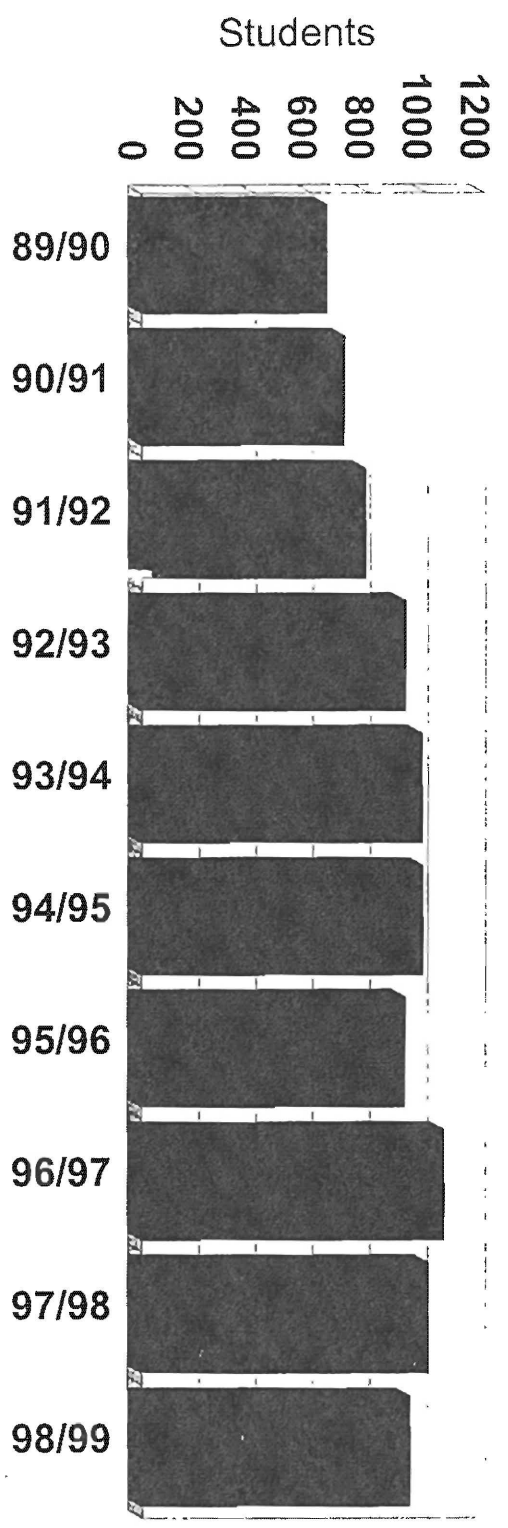
Academic Year
Chart 1

F.T.E.'s per Librarian



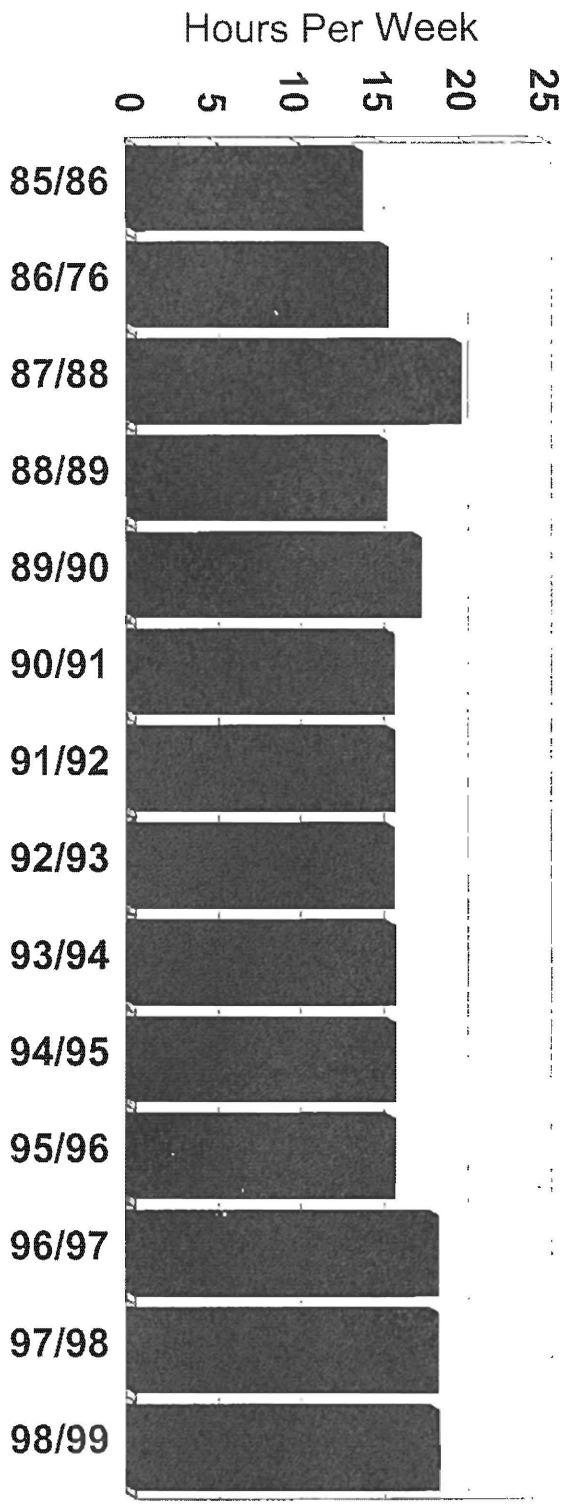
Academic Year
Chart 2

Students Per Librarian Based on Headcount



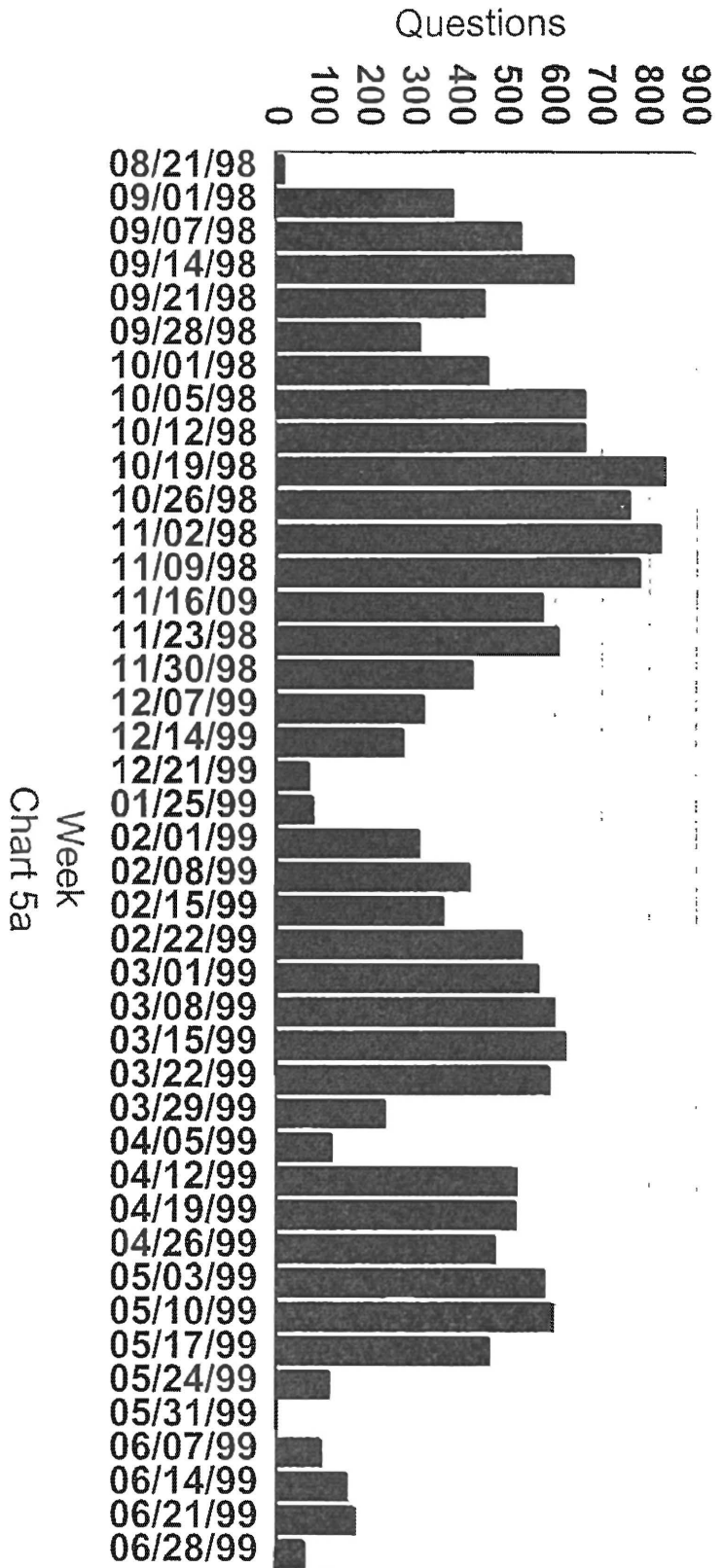
Academic Year
Chart 3

Average Reference Desk Time



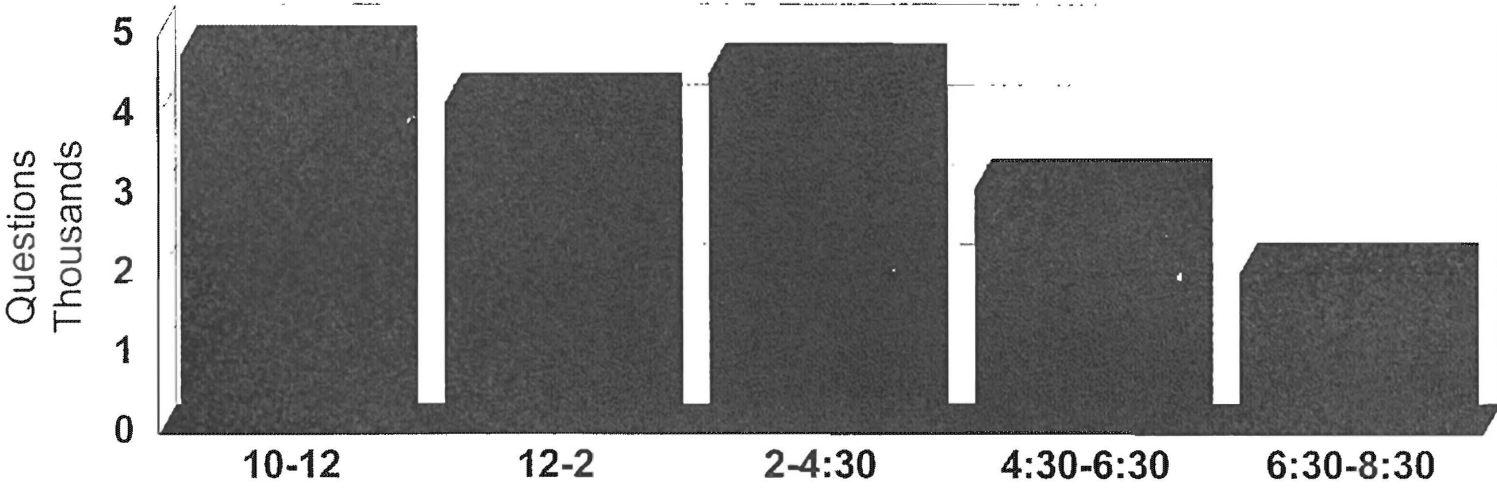
Academic Year
Chart 4

Reference Questions: 1998-1999 Academic Year



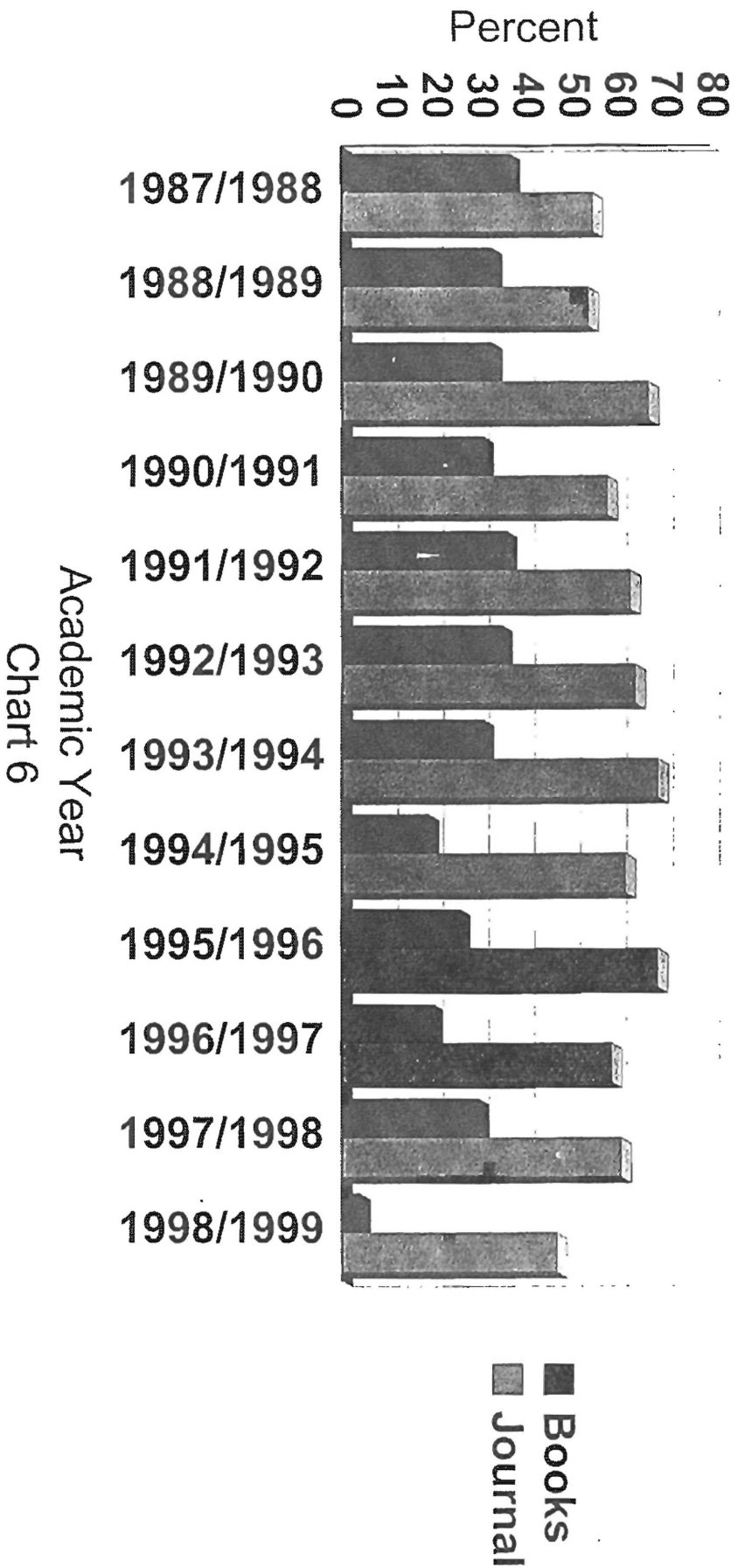
Week
Chart 5a

Reference Questions by Time of Day G and H Wings



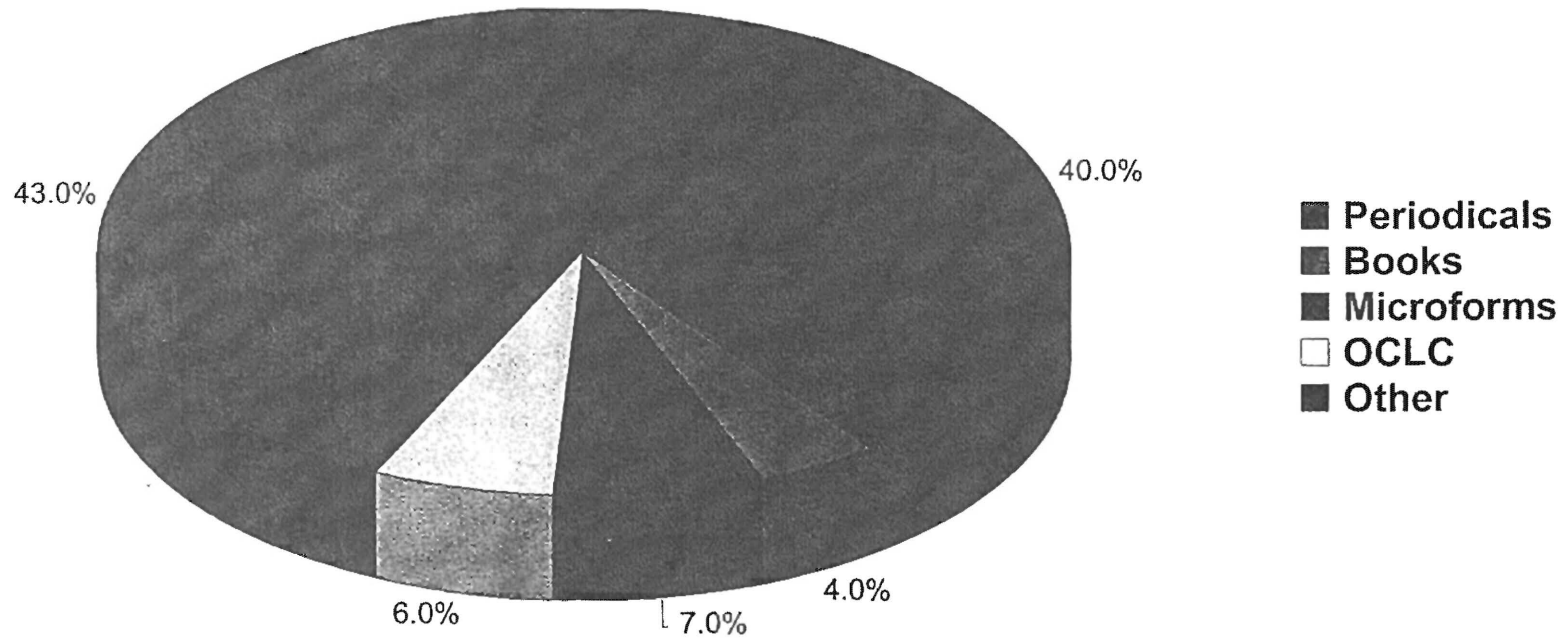
Time
Chart 5b

Library Budget

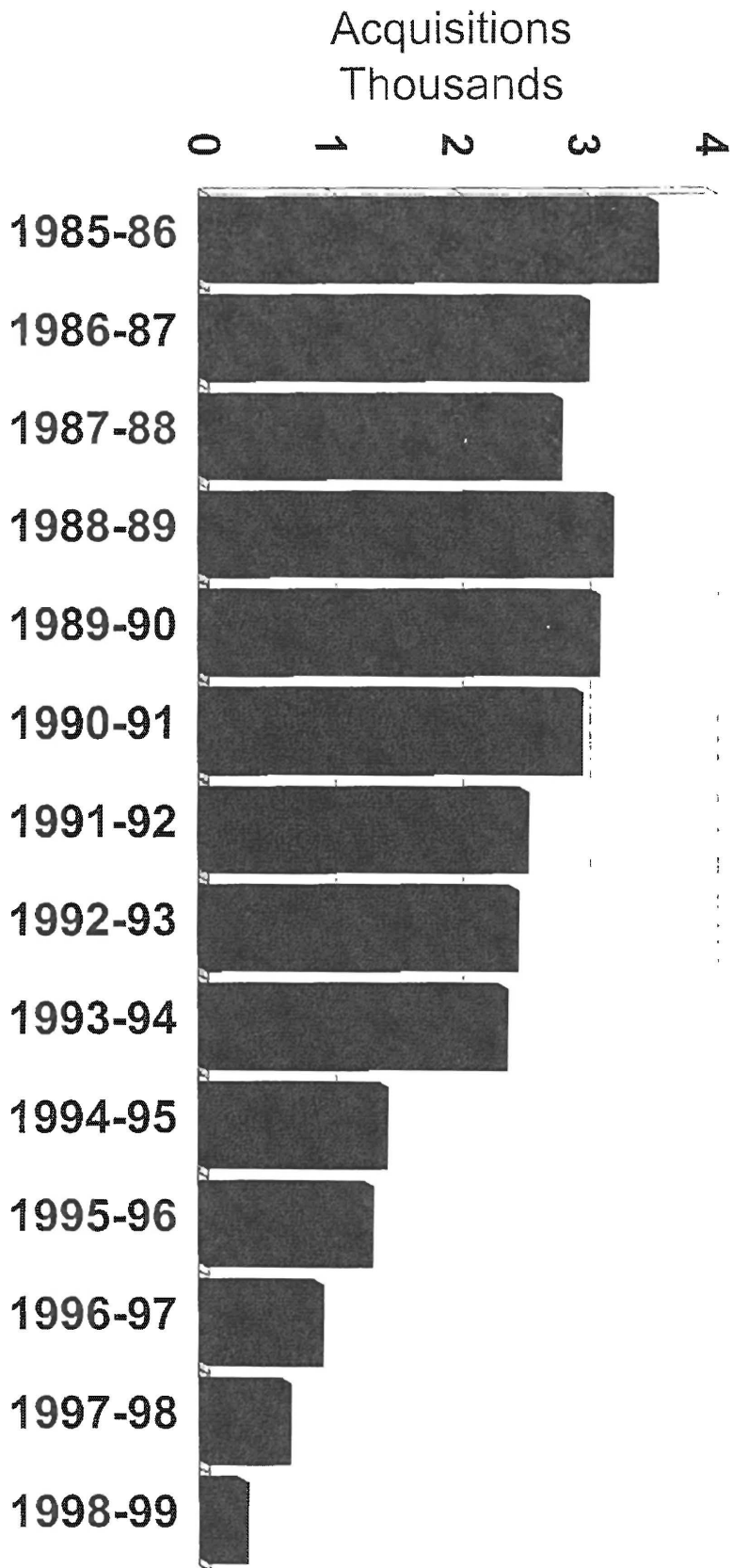


Library OTPS BUDGET

Chart 7

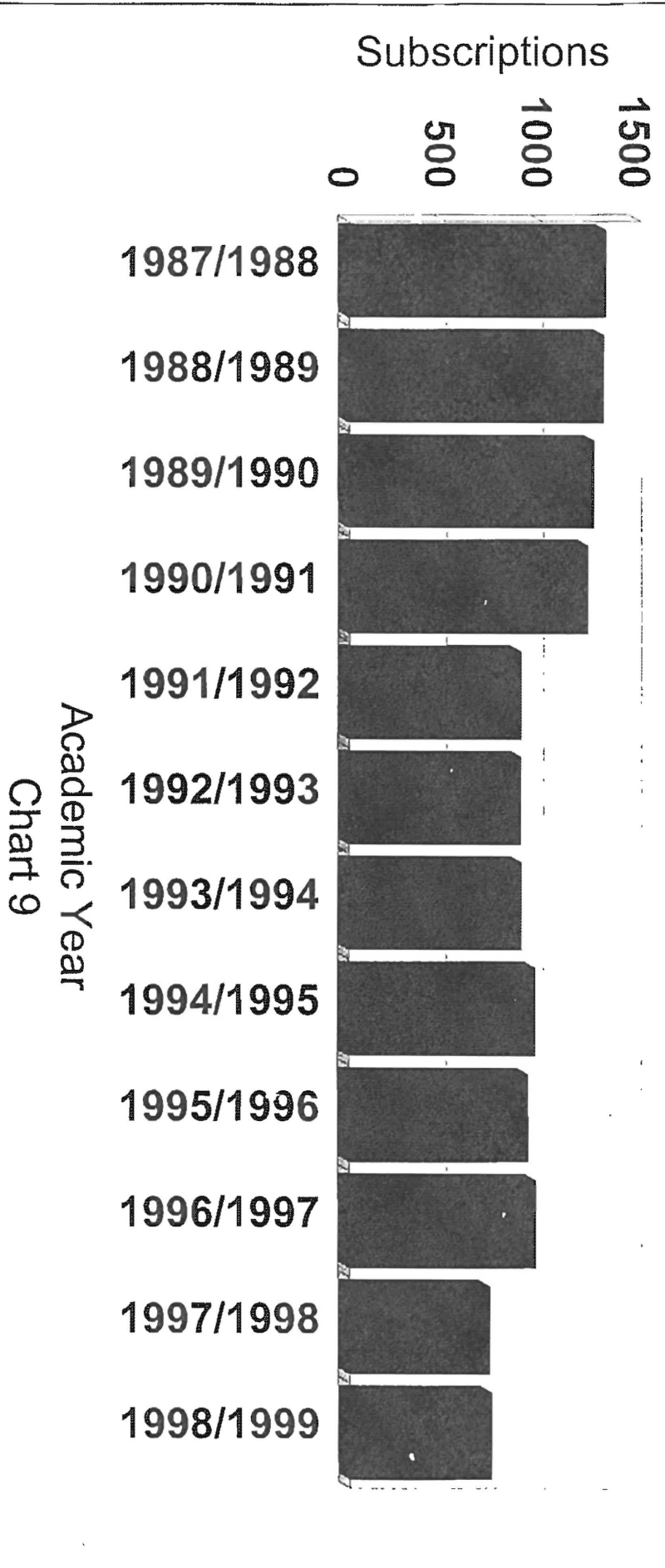


Library Acquisitions



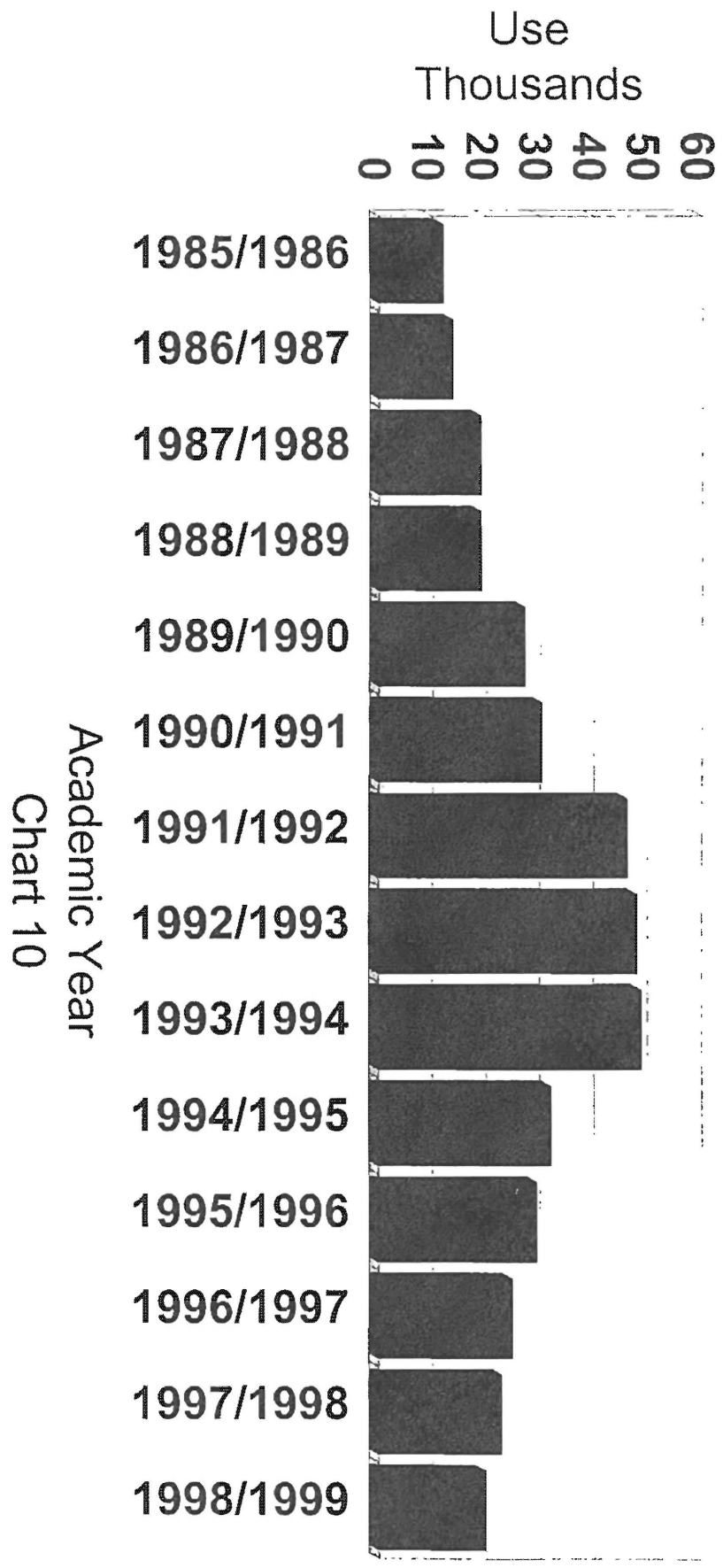
Academic Year
Chart 8

Periodical Subscriptions Does Not Include Non-Print Subscriptions

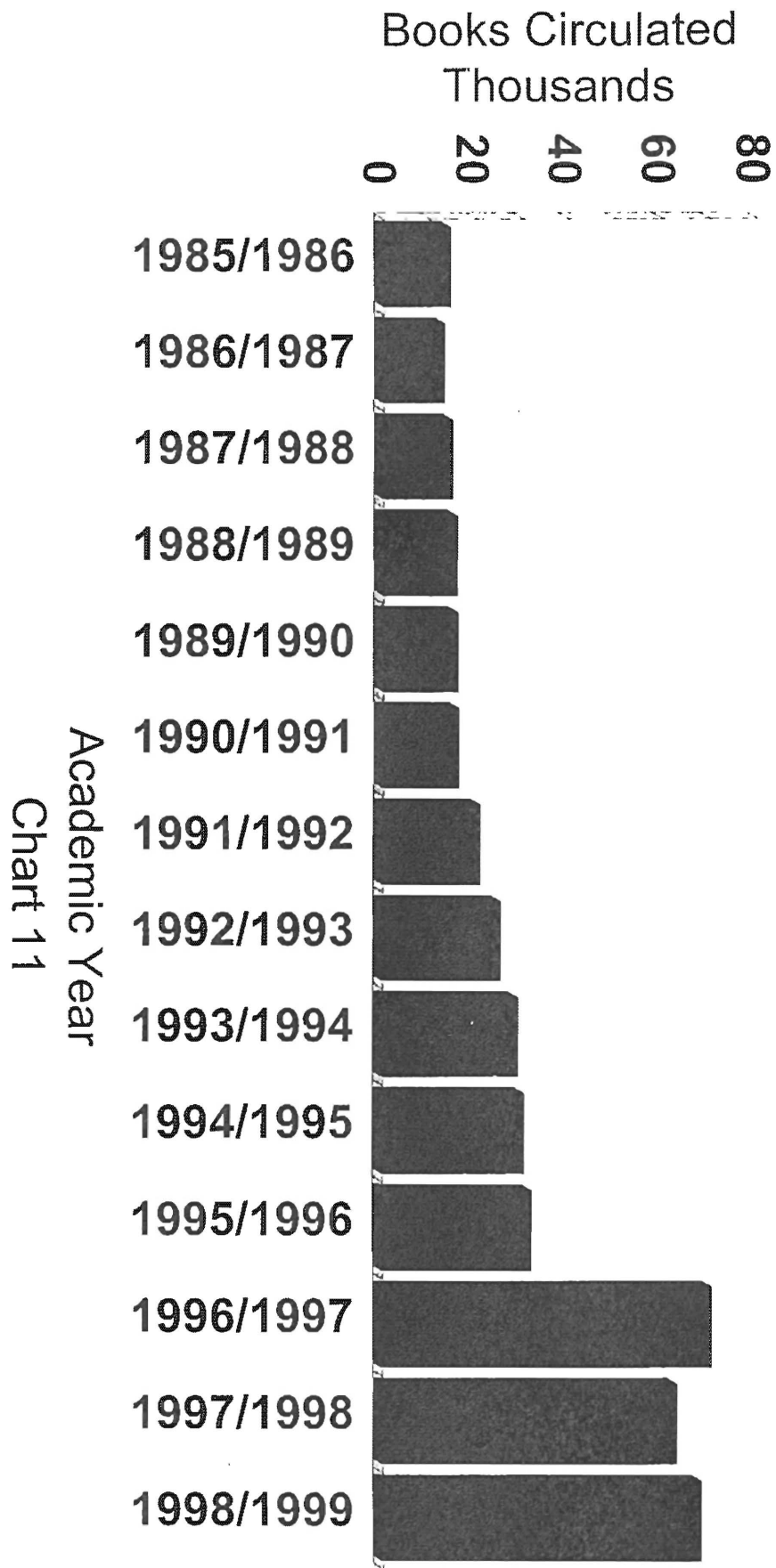


Academic Year
Chart 9

Use of Periodicals Includes Current Periodicals and Microforms

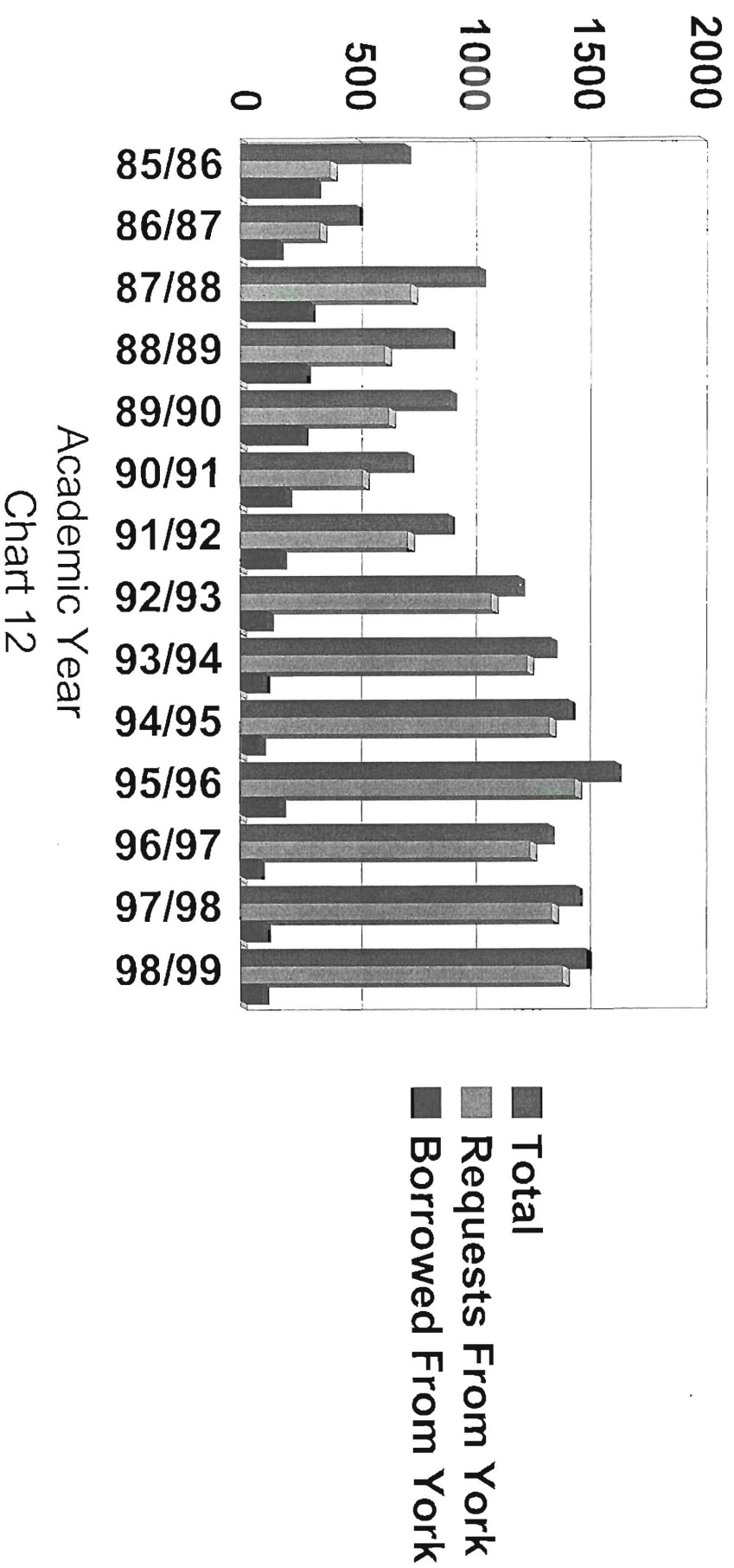


Circulation of Books



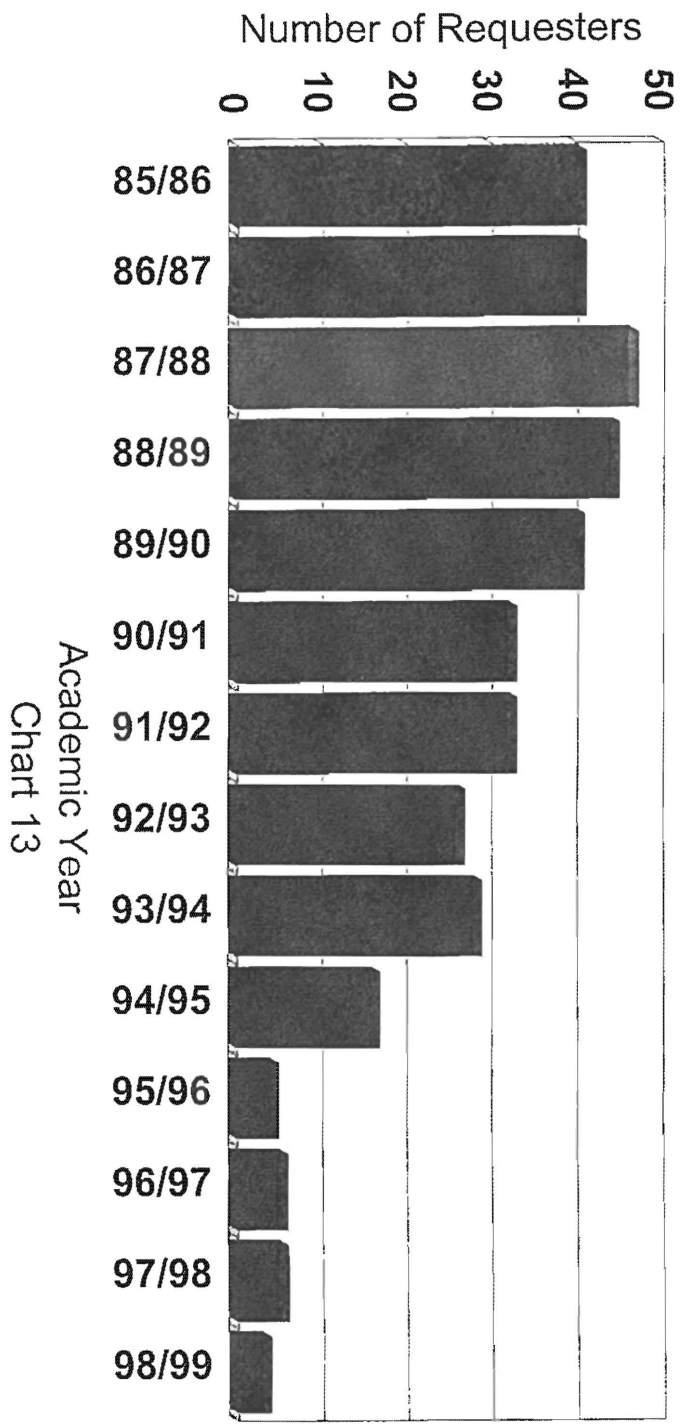
Academic Year
Chart 11

Interlibrary Loans



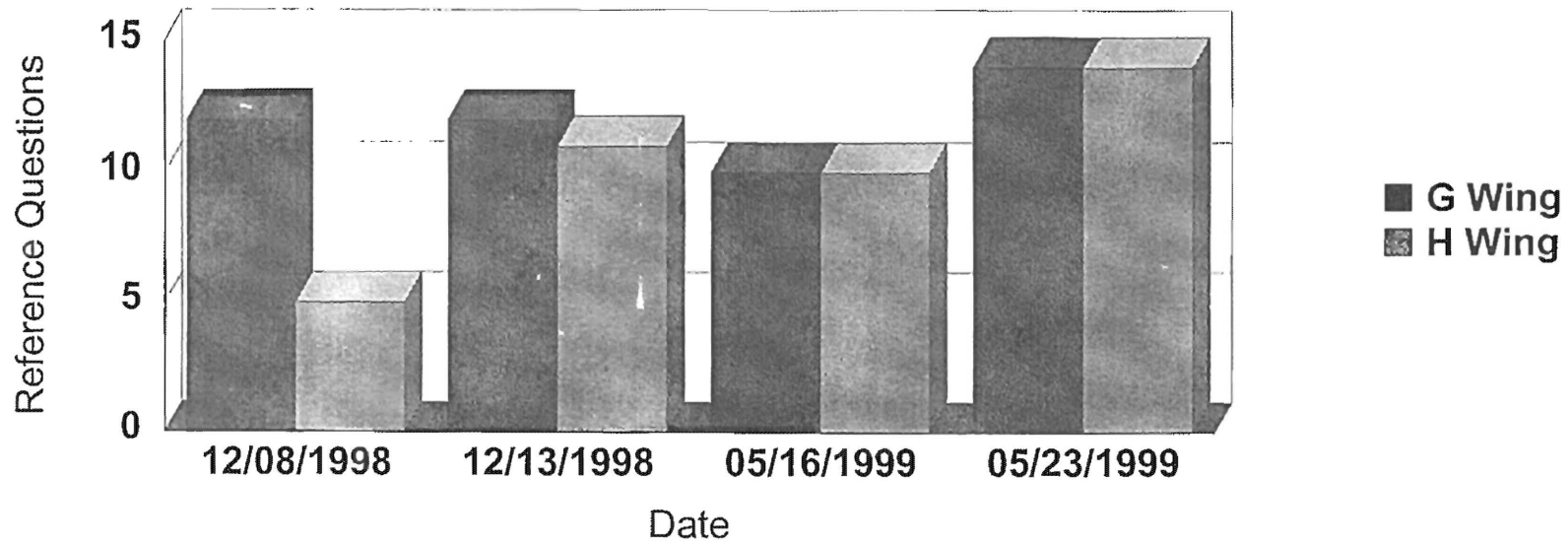
Academic Year
Chart 12

Librarian Performed Database Searches



Academic Year
Chart 13

Sundays Use of Reference Services



Date
Chart 14