Volume 2, 2012

Ad Astra per Aspera: Aspiring to Excellence in Challenging Times

Ad Astra per Aspera: Aspiring to Excellence in Challenging Times

Laurel Littrell
CULS President, 2011-2012
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

Building a theme for the 2011 Annual Fall Conference of the Kansas Library Association College and University Libraries Section seemed simple when contemplating the 150th birthday of our state. I thought about our state motto, *Ad Astra per Aspera*, commonly translated as "To the stars through difficulties." I once heard a speaker, regretfully I cannot recall who it was, say that the translation for "aspera" encompasses more than just dealing with difficulties, but more like overcoming difficulties, and *wanting* to overcome those difficulties. This person pointed out that "aspera" contains the same root word as "aspire."

I thought about challenges that academic libraries have faced in the last years and decades, and how we have cleverly managed to navigate those challenges and improve the information flow for our patrons in those years despite the difficulties we have faced. I believe that Kansas academic librarians truly have aspired to excellence, and particularly during these last few years of economic hardships.

A highlight of our conference was having our very own poem written for us by the Poet Lariat, Ron Wilson, of the Lazy T Ranch. This is a special honor for us and we appreciate Ron's creativity and hospitality.

As you read the proceedings from our conference, we hope you will find plenty to inspire you in your journey.

Published by New Prairie Press, 2012