

Prof. Dr. Dres. h.c. Werner Schaal
Auf dem Schaumrück 28
D-35041 Marburg/Lahn

Tel.: +49-(0)6421-83177
Fax +49-(0)6421-886320
E-mail:schaal@staff.uni-marburg.de

**Begrüßungsworte anlässlich der Eröffnung
der Universitätsbibliothek in Hermannstadt
am 12. Mai 2009**

Representatives of the Romanian Government and the County,
Magnifizenz Oprean,
Mayor Johannis,
dear Director Dr. Volovici,
ladies and gentlemen

Libraries always were the backbone and the traditional stronghold of a cultivated society. Since script was invented people started to found libraries. Most of our European societies had and still have famous libraries. When such a library was destroyed or devastated mostly by fire and often enough by war this meant a mayor loss and desaster for the culture of the people hit by such a severe blow.

Since the existence of universities libraries became the center and the core around which research developed and in which all kinds of scholars, professors, students and others, found the basis of their academic work.

While up to about twenty years ago libraries mainly contained monographs, scientific journals and textbooks this situation has changed considerably. Of course, books and journals are still essential and indispensable but other "tools" if I may say so have been added and have become important. These new means have changed the character of a library essentially. A modern library nowadays is a center of information in

the broadest sense and it therefore needs all the techniques and technologies which are available today.

This requires first of all an adequate building which can offer all the necessary facilities: Rooms to sit and to study in quietness, working places which give access to the internet, rooms with access to the electronic catalogue and many things more. Lucian-Blaga-University is very lucky to offer all of these prerequisites in high quality right now, even a nice cafeteria to recover from the hiking through cyber space.

Being deeply convinced that a university on its way up to the top research and learning institutions of this country cannot succeed without an excellent library Rector, Academic Senate and the Director of the university library have grasped a sudden rare chance to erect such a building. Things began as we all know exactly three years ago and thanks to very fast and effective decisions of the top of this university this project could be finished in a possibly record-breaking time.

But now that we have this beautiful library with all its modern equipment we should not stop short of looking at it and admiring it. Instead, we should look into the future and should also think thoroughly about what is needed to make this achievement even more effective and fruitful. First of all it is necessary that faculty and staff tell their students that it is of utmost importance not to learn and to study according to some scripts and handouts but to gain information from books, journals, data banks and other tools. Teaching should be structured in such a way that it directs and leads students to these modern aids and tell them how to use it with profit. That means they have to go to the university library. Empty chairs in such an excellent library are wasted money and indicate that teaching needs some reform. Moreover, this library must be given enough autonomy to decide independently about its acquisitions without depending on the okay of the university executive in every detail. This requires an own budget given to the library at the beginning of each year. Of course, the library should ask for scientific assistance. This could be

achieved by installing a Scientific Library Board with members coming from the professors, competent library staff and also students. This board may have the right to decide in certain bounds, mainly it should make suggestions for improving library equipment and library conditions. More autonomy also implies that one has to think about an effective structure of the library personnel requiring a director, deputy director and a group of specialists for being responsible for the various fields belonging to the university. Many of these demands are already fulfilled but there is always room for improvement.

This is not the place to go into too many details. I am convinced that most of these problems will be discussed in the various workshops following this opening ceremony. I am left only with the nice task to thank all people who had and still have part in the realisation of this wonderful project. I begin with the Rector, the Academic Senate, the Director for Finances and the Director of the university library, and I go on with the architects and building contractors. I shall explicitly mention all those library employees who worked hard to move the old library to the new one many of them postponing their vacations. The university owes many thanks to all of them.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you will find this new library as impressive as I do.