



Participants: Mindy King, Kathy Davis, Gail Allen, Nerissa Nelson, Cathy Palmini
(Final Library SWOT Committee)

S.W.O.T. Analysis

<p>STRENGTHS (Internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public service orientation• Well-qualified, team-oriented and dedicated staff• Commitment to strong instruction program• Relationship with campus departments, including collaborative collection development• Ongoing goal of building quality collections and providing access to information	<p>WEAKNESSES (Internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact of budget on staff, facilities, equipment, and collections• Lack of consistent short- and long-range planning• Lack of systematic approach to assessment of services, collections and facilities• Continuing need for consistent communication among library units
<p>OPPORTUNITIES (External)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New staff and faculty hires, evaluation and possible reconfigurations of positions• Outreach and marketing library services and collections• Build on and expand external and internal collaboration (UW System, campus departments, IT)• Support innovations in teaching and changes in learners and learning styles across campus with new collections, services, and technologies• Potential for new uses of building space and increased sustainability	<p>THREATS (External)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget cuts/economic uncertainties• Potential loss of further positions• Changing perception of students concerning the role of the Library• Challenge of staying current with rapidly changing technology and difficulty of supporting that technology with limited resources



Strengths:

- **Public service orientation**

The public service attitude of the staff makes the Library a welcoming place despite its rather intimidating structure. Self-study surveys show high satisfaction rates for service received at the library (94% for faculty, 85% for students). Survey respondents frequently added comments such as: "Great service and resources" or "The staff is like really nice." Even the reluctant user often comes to believe the Library is a good place to research (and get help with research), study, and work in groups. A user comment from the December 2007 access services survey: "Libraries scare me, but this one isn't too bad."

- **Well-qualified, team-oriented and dedicated staff**

Library faculty and staff, in addition to their belief in service, bring a high level of education and motivation to their positions. They are committed to providing high quality library service to not only the campus but the community as well. They are active on campus committees and in campus and community organizations.

- **Commitment to strong instruction program**

The library faculty are dedicated to teaching students the research process, which has become increasingly complex and can be daunting to students. Through the Library, students and other users have access to a vast array of print and electronic resources, and their ability to use those resources enhances their research and their education. Numbers of bibliographic instruction sessions and sections of Library Resources 101 continue to rise and library faculty wish, with additional support, to promote them even more.

- **Relationship with campus departments, including collaborative collection development**

Campus departments each spend an annual library materials allocation and are involved in decision-making on databases and journals in their fields. A library liaison is assigned to each department and may help orient new faculty, meet with the department on new products, or address suggestions or concerns. A matching fund program with college deans support new campus faculty. Library faculty membership on campus committees also strengthens the ties with departmental faculty, and a good working relationship is maintained.

- **Ongoing goal of building quality collections and providing access to information**

The Library works hard to maximize limited resources to build print and electronic collections which will support the research needs of students (first priority) and faculty (when possible). The Library, with its U.S. depository status, has built a strong historic and current collection of government publications. As a member of the Area Research Center Network, the Archives provides primary sources to researchers. The affiliation with UW System provides access to a number of databases and electronic collections, and many local purchases are made through consortial arrangements. Universal borrowing, with its quick turnaround time, is very popular on this campus and allows users to borrow directly from other UW System Libraries. The Interlibrary Loan department receives frequent thanks from users needing journal articles and other materials. Library electronic resources are available 24/7 remotely.

Weaknesses:

- **Impact of budget on staff, facilities, equipment, and collections**

Staff: When open positions are not filled, those duties must be realigned or dropped, and the remaining staff feel the burden. The library still feels the loss of one technical librarian position, and the cataloging department lost their supervisor and a classified staff cataloger with recent retirements. Most librarians teach bibliographic instruction sessions and/or Library Resources 101, but the pool is not large enough for the increasing demand.

Facilities: The building is aging and shows its 1970's origins in many un-renovated areas. There is a need to update existing areas and just as importantly to plan and carry out ideas for new utilization of



space. An information commons, which would provide enhanced technology for students to use in group settings, has been under discussion. With additional budget, imaginative ideas could be carried out to support how students work and study today.

Equipment: Funds are insufficient to maintain the old (microfiche readers and photocopiers) and replace and expand the newer (PCs, laptops, scanners) for users and staff. The enhanced and updated Multi-media lab being proposed would require additional funds.

Collections: Huge inflationary increases especially in journals (somewhat less in databases and books) combined with flat library budgets have created serious problems in the library world. Although electronic databases, especially with linked fulltext journals, increase research effectiveness and access, the switch from print indices to electronic databases often incurs a much larger cost.

- **Lack of consistent short- and long-range planning**

While there are continuing efforts to provide excellent services and collections, the Library has no recent short- or long-range plans. Services would benefit from organized planning now, and the Library could develop strategies for change based on this planning. The Library needs an organized response to how libraries and user needs are changing. Planning for staff changes, services provided, facility utilization, and future directions is needed. In addition, the Library mission statement, years old, needs to reflect what the Library strives for now.

- **Lack of systemic approach to assessment of services, collections and facilities**

The Library takes traditional counts of acquisitions, circulations, gate counts, and other Academic Library Survey data, some of which are dropping (typical of the library world). However, assessment falls short with regard to crucial questions, such as asking: how services match with student information needs, how well we are doing promoting current services, whether our bibliographic instruction sessions are effective, how our facility could better meet needs. Listening to evolving user wants and needs is essential.

- **Continuing need for consistent communication among library units**

No library unit or department works in isolation, and what one group does may affect other parts of the Library, sometimes in unexpected ways. The sharing of new projects, policy changes, new services, committee minutes, and news benefits the whole Library.

Opportunities:

- **New staff and faculty hires, evaluation and possible reconfigurations of positions**

Although loss of experience and knowledge is a concern, new hires bring new ideas and fresh perspectives. Retirements also afford the Library the opportunity to evaluate the overall staffing patterns and workflow and change positions as the Library's needs have changed. The Library can propose positions to fit the increasingly electronic world and to fit the changes in how students relate to the Library.

- **Outreach and marketing library services and collections**

Faculty and students feel relatively un-informed about new library services (February self-study surveys). The Library does not have a history of promoting its services in a systematic manner, although marketing has always been carried out, with an increased emphasis in the recent past. With vast and changing Library resources available for use, outreach to the campus and larger community would increase awareness and use of these resources. Assessment of what our users and nonusers need and want could lead to targeted marketing.

- **Build on and expand external and internal collaboration (UW System, campus departments, IT)**

Our collaboration with UW System has already provided a shared electronic collection and other advantages for local users. As active participants within the new UW System Libraries committee structure, we contribute to the discussion and decision-making on new shared resources and initiatives. Our collaboration with campus departments and units could lead to more integration of the Library into



the educational process—e.g. library links on D2L pages, multi-media production assistance for students, an expanded library instruction program, and a further enhanced e-reserve system. Successful proposals by the Library for student technical fees have purchased new electronic resources to support the curriculum. A closer tie with the IT department has benefited the Library, e.g. with public computers and computer support, and building on this relationship would prove beneficial.

- **Support innovations in teaching and changes in learners across campus with new collections, services, and technologies**

Libraries are evolving from repositories to active partners in the teaching mission of the university. Today's learners need services and spaces that support their collaborative learning styles. Living in a world of almost constant communication and social networking, students would benefit from Library assistance in learning and evaluating new methods of researching. The Library could assume a leading role in helping students conduct research using Web 2.0 technologies.

- **Potential for new uses of building space and increased sustainability**

There is potential to provide more building areas and support for collaborative group work (groups often requesting computers and presentation capacity). The space utilized by units other than the Library in the LRC could be analyzed and changes made. The Library is exploring how to promote the conservation of energy and fully participate in UWSP's goal to be a sustainable campus.

Threats:

- **Budget cuts/economic uncertainties**

Lack of sufficient funding has already affected many areas of the Library as detailed under 'Weaknesses' above. The dwindling support for higher education in the state and the history of cuts undermine the development of long-range plans.

- **Potential loss of further positions**

When position cuts are considered, stress lines in the staffing structure of the Library widen. Many library faculty feel on the run from the everyday demands of their jobs, as well as the scholarship and service required for faculty status. Pressure on individuals has increased as the number of library faculty positions has dropped, leaving little time for developing new initiatives or further developing the instruction program. Further loss of faculty or classified staff would increase stress and burnout for the remaining individuals.

- **Changing perception of students concerning the role of the Library**

The Library is not the first stop (even virtually) for just over half of students doing research (51%). The February 2008 student survey pointed to web search engines (Google, Yahoo, etc.) as the main source for research assignments, although 85% of students agreed the Library and its resources were 'helpful' for doing research. Students see the Library differently than they have in the past, especially with the advent of the Web, and the information seeking process is confusing for some.

- **Challenge of staying current with rapidly changing technology and difficulty of supporting that technology with limited resources**

Given the accelerating rate of technical change, it is becoming increasingly difficult for staff to stay informed and become proficient in working with new information technology resources. Electronic resources coordination has become more complex and time-consuming. Changing technology requires hardware and software replacements with the concomitant budget increases and staff retraining.