

Library Self-study Reports from Departments

Instructional Material Center (IMC)
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Name of reporting department
Name of coordinator
Names of other staff involved in unit self-study

1) Description of department or service

The Instructional Material Center (IMC) maintains an extensive selection of K-12 curriculum-related materials (some 17,000 individual items), including textbooks, teachers' and students' guides, assessment tools, instructional kits, multimedia materials and a print collection of children's and young adult literature (fiction and non-fiction). The IMC also houses the library's non-print collection which includes, among others, some 6,700 videos, 1,400 DVDs, 1,800 CDs and 200 pieces of software. Carrels and rooms with AV equipment, such as CD players, video players and film projectors, are available to individuals or small groups to use the various materials. Ample space permits classes to meet and work in small or large groups. Staff is available to assist students to find materials suitable to their projects (a light form of reference service).

2) Who is served

With its K-12 curriculum-related materials, the IMC serves primarily students in the School of Education (SOE). Other user groups (including SOE graduates, teachers, parents and patrons at other UW libraries) make occasional use of the materials. The non-print collection is used by students and faculty across campus, as well as by members of the community at large and users affiliated with other UW campuses.

3) Staffing

a. Levels and numbers

- One Supervisor (faculty)—PhD in Education, MLIS in Library Science, MS in Special Education; four years of college-level teaching in educational foundations.
- One full-time staff member in charge of the daily operation (LSA Advanced Lead)—All-but-thesis graduate course work in Library Science; 20 years of work experience in the IMC.
- One part-time (7.5 hours/week) back-up for the staff in charge (Librarian Objective)—at Library (mostly technical service) since 1968.
- Eight part-time Student Assistants—trained in-house

b. Sufficient to meet service needs?

For the most part, yes. Through cooperation with the nearby Media Lab, and the flexibility that comes with the cross-training of some of the student workers, adequate service level is being maintained even during periods of staff shortages (break-time, annual and sick leave). Only at times of turn-over among the student workers (typically at the beginning of the academic year) might services and hours be temporarily reduced.

c. Well-qualified and trained?

See under 3) a. above.

4) Facilities – Adequate for users and staff?

Yes—with some exceptions: carpet and some of the furniture are old and in need of replacement; the back room that houses the AV materials is too small to keep up with the collection's growth; work area for processing materials is too small.

5) Technology

Hardware and software is adequate. Tech support is very good. The IMC maintains a brief web page with basic information about the IMC and its services.

6) Supporting statistics -- see attachment 1 and also # 10 Other information).

7) Results of recent assessment activities

- (a) Data on users, usage, and user satisfaction (point-of-service survey, Dec. 2007): The vast majority of respondents identified themselves as UWSP students; only one fifth of them majored in education. For only 5% of the students, this was a first time visit. About half of the students had been in the IMC more than 10 times during the past years. The main reasons for students' (repeat) visits include checking out a video/DVD/CD (29%), watching video/DVD/CD (21%), browsing the K-12 instructional material/children's literature area (20%) and studying (30%). Only 9% came to check out a book from the IMC. Not surprisingly, education students are more likely to come for browsing and checking out books (in addition to checking out AV materials). Students visiting the IMC frequently gave high ratings for promptness of service, friendliness of staff, and the overall quality of the service (83% "very satisfied," 15% "quite satisfied"). Of those who chose to respond to the open ended questions, 33% commented positively on the staff and 22% on the AV selection and watching/listening facilities; 10% liked the fact that the IMC was not a quiet study area. No particular theme stood out among the suggested improvements.
- (b) The IMC and students: According to the Library's campus-wide student survey (Feb 2008):
- Few students (4%) consider the 3rd floor (including the IMC) as their favorite place to study.
 - 49% never set foot in the IMC at all.
 - An additional 7% did not even know about it.
 - 61% do not consider the IMC when looking for a CD or movie; an additional 14% do so only rarely.
- (c) The IMC and faculty: According to the Library's campus-wide faculty survey (Feb 2008):
- 75% of the faculty use the IMC at least once over the course of a semester; 32% use it 2-5 times; and 21% use it more than five times.
 - About half of the faculty (46%) is very aware of the IMC's AV collection; another 38% is somewhat aware of it. The remaining faculty members (16 %) are hardly aware of it, or they don't know about it at all.
 - The percentages pertaining to awareness about the IMC's AV reserve are similar.
- (d) The IMC and the School of Education (SOE): A focus group, initiated by the IMC Head and attended by six SOE faculty members in January 2008, probed into the reasons why not more SOE faculty members take advantage of the Library's offerings, including the IMC's resources. In recent years, only two SOE instructors request library sessions in connection with student assignments; the SOE typically does not exhaust its allocated book budget; and only three SOE instructors bring their students to the IMC to work with its K-12 curriculum materials. The focus

group brought to light the following barriers to SOE faculty's use of the library (as they were perceived by the focus group attendees):

- The UWSP Library Website with its online resources is not user friendly.
- There is insufficient access to campus and Library resources for non-traditional students.
- The IMC does not shelve books on the same subject together.
- Physically, the IMC is not an inviting place.
- The process for ordering books is cumbersome.

8) Special projects underway or major changes being implemented

- We are planning to consolidate some of the equipment in the current viewing/listening carrels to convert the space thus gained into an additional, more attractive studying area.
- We are about to evaluate the currency of our K-12 textbook collection and to work on a request for the funds needed to bring it up-to-date.
- We are planning to look at the issues and suggestions raised by the SOE-Library focus group and consider appropriate action.

9) Goals or desired directions of the unit

- To continue to serve our primary users groups: SOE students (K-12 materials) and students and faculty across campus (audio-visual materials).
- To establish a closer working relationship with the SOE.
- To make the IMC an attractive studying place for all students.

10) Other information:

- (a) Budget: The allocated collection budget is now about half of what it was in 2002/03 (not factoring in inflation), and textbook donations by local school districts have almost ceased. (More and more K-12 textbook publishers now ask school districts to return review copies.) The combined effect is this: The IMC gets now only one third (!) of the annual resources for its collection that it received five years ago (see attachment 1, Table 1).
- (b) Circulation and users: Of items checked-out at the IMC circulation desk that are from the IMC, the majority (ca. 80%) are audiovisual materials; ca. 20% are K-12 materials, including children's literature (attachment 1, Table 4). The K-12 and audiovisual collections show different use patterns (attachment 1, Tables 2 and 3). While the former is predominately used by undergraduate students, the latter is used heavily by both students and faculty. For the K-12 materials, Portage County Public Library patrons and other community members account for about 10% of the users; for audiovisual material, the respective figure hovers around 5%. Similarly, outbound ILL loan circulation accounts for about 7%, in case of K-12 materials, and for ca. 3%, in case of audiovisual items.

Circulation of IMC items has slowed down moderately over the past years—from 17,600 transactions in 2002 to 14,200 in 2007. The trends vary somewhat by item type: For K-12 instructional materials, 2007 saw an increase in circulation (probably due to moving children's fiction to the IMC)—after a steady drop in the previous years. After an initial increase (2002-2005), circulation of AV materials dropped again in more recent years. However, the circulation of AV items on reserve has been rather steady since 2003.

11) SWOT analysis of the department— see attachment 2.

ATTACHMENT 1

Table 1: IMC additions to the collection in \$, by source

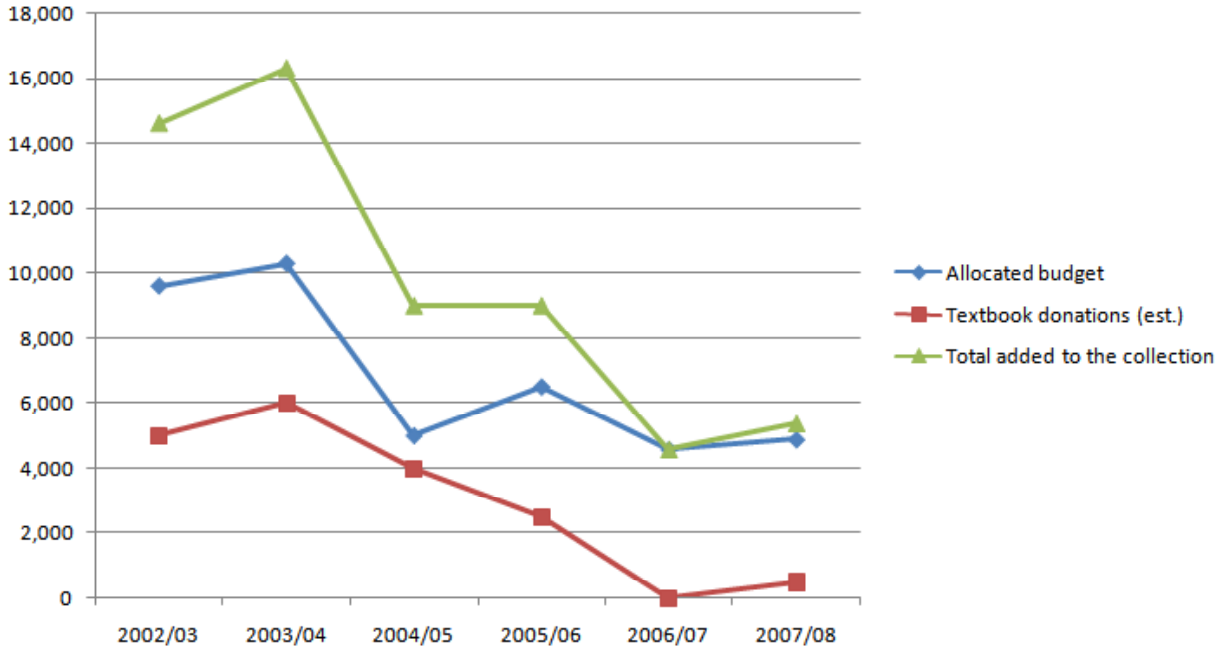


Table 2: Circulation of K-12 instructional materials by user group

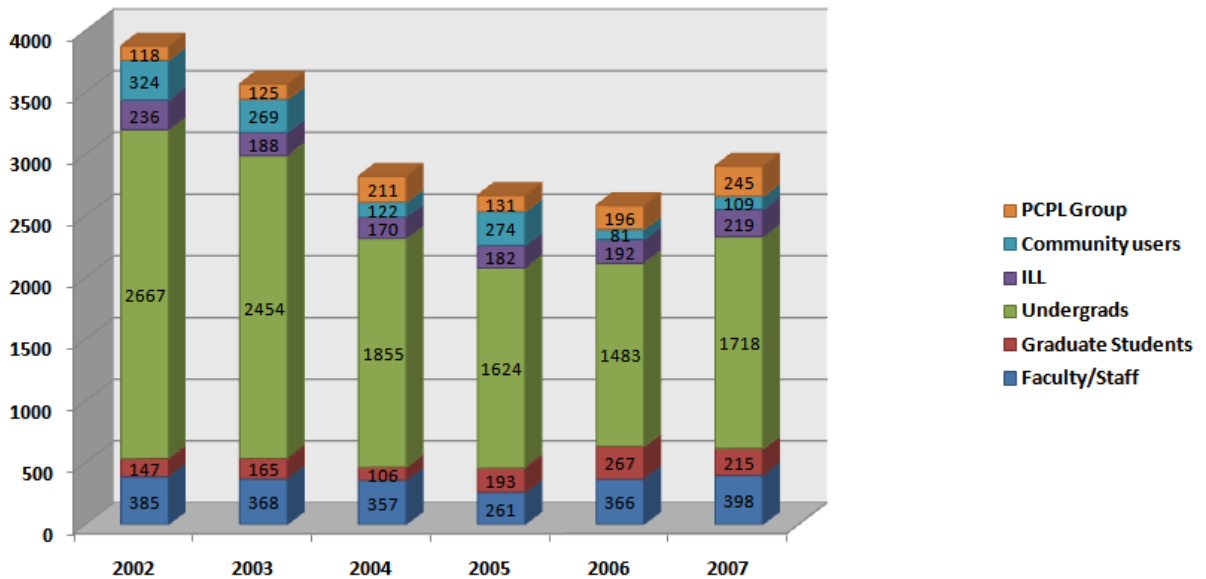


Table 3: Circulation of audiovisual materials (except those on reserve) by user group

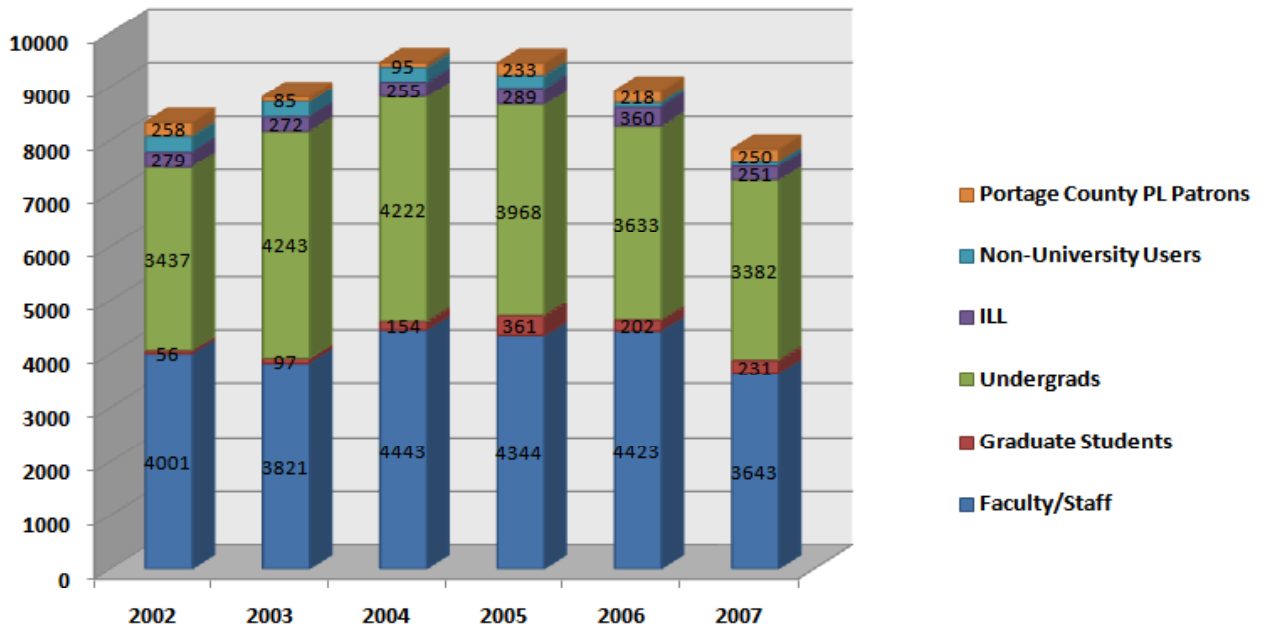
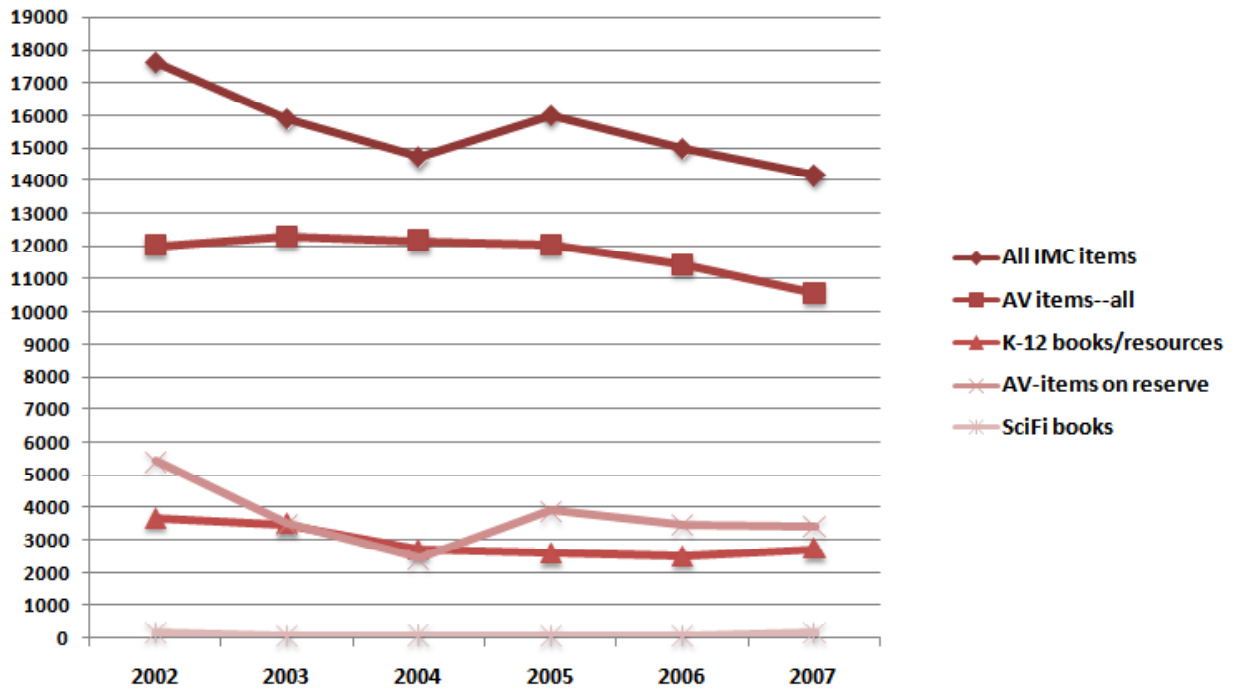


Table 4: IMC Circulation by Item Type



ATTACHMENT 2



University Library
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Department: **Instructional Material Center (IMC)**

Participants: **Axel Schmetzke, Gail Allen**

S.W.O.T. Analysis

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS (Internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable staff • Collection attuned to the needs of its users • Strong service • Collaboration with other UW libraries (UB) 	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES (Internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging textbook collection • Low acquisition budget • Running out of storage space for AV items • Shabby carpet and old furniture (some)
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES (External)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large School of Education (SOE) with additional needs • Administration willing to support changes • Library climate conducive to professional development 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS (External)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty of future budget • Increasing cost of materials • Free textbooks no longer easily available

Strengths:

Thanks to the knowledgeable and experienced staff, the IMC has operated smoothly over the years. The K-12 materials collection and the audio-visual collection have been built up with their primary users in mind (often in collaboration with them). Based on informal feedback, the strong emphasis on service is appreciated by students and faculty alike; not limited to circulation it also includes a light form of reference. Except for items that are regularly put on reserve, the materials circulated freely within the UW system-wide “Universal Borrowing” system.

Weaknesses:

The IMC’s textbook collection is aging and impossible to replace within the limits of the current budget. The storage room for the audio-visual collection is bursting at the seams; work space for processing materials is insufficient. The rather shabby looking carpet, the replacement of which has been requested almost every year, and the age/wear of some of the furniture detract from the IMC’s appeal as a studying place and library hang-out.

Opportunities:

Only a part of the rather large SOE faculty seems to take advantage of the IMC’s offerings (and other Library services). The administration appears supportive of changes and innovations. Professional development is considered important and supported by the administration.

Threats:

Regular donations of text books (review copies) by area school districts have come to a halt in recent years and are unlikely to pick up again within the near future. The IMC budget, reduced by almost half since 2006/07 and already struggling, is inadequate to replace the aging collection. Further cuts may worsen the situation. Steady increases in the cost of library materials are compounding the problem.