

Library/School of Education Focus Group Report

January 16, 2008

Overview and Mission

A focus group was held to explore issues related to the relationship between the Library and the School of Education (SOE). The session lasted 1.5 hours and was attended by six members of the SOE faculty, one facilitator, and one co-facilitator. A series of questions were asked related to the following topics:

- SOE faculty's current use of the library
- Library support of SOE faculty and their teaching approaches
- SOE faculty's awareness and use of the library's resources (*including*)
 - Library instruction
 - IMC K-12 textbook collection
 - Children's book collection (fiction & nonfiction)
 - IMC's audiovisual materials collection
 - Library's book & journal collection (print & online; not in the IMC)
 - Media Lab
- Barriers to SOE faculty's use of the library
- Role of the library & formal Department of Public Instruction requirements
- Enhancing communication between the library and SOE faculty
- Methods to continuing the dialogue between the library & SOE faculty

This report, developed from responses to questions related to the topics above, provides information and insights from SOE faculty members regarding their perceptions and accounts surrounding the effectiveness of and opportunities for improvements in Library/IMC resources, services, and accessibility for students. This will be accomplished by first exploring issues related to current use of resources and services, then discussing barriers use of services and resources, and finally offering some recommendations for how to proceed in developing a Library/IMC-SOE collaboration.

Current Use of Library/IMC Resources by SOE Faculty and Students

There are a wide variety of tools and services available to faculty and students in the Library and IMC. To differing degrees of effectiveness, these tools allow SOE faculty and students to conduct research, access curricular materials, develop instructional materials, and complete SOE course assignments.

Library Instructional Sessions

One way in which SOE faculty utilize the Library is through instructional sessions with Library staff members that target specific course objectives or subject matter assignments. One faculty expressed great enthusiasm about her use of this service. She has worked with a member of the LIBRARY a number of times where he provided a tutorial for her students on conducting online research in ERIC. In this session, the LIBRARY staff member does "an incredible job" of showing students not only how to access information, but also explains how to "delimit." She stated,

"While our students can access information on the internet, they are not always wise enough to be able to discern what is good or professional information. And the feedback that I've received from *all* of the majors is, even though they've had in-class tutorials, some of them still don't understand how to use it appropriately."

She feels that "in order to be professional in this day and age, [students] have to have access, ready access, to the most current research on cognition, and learning, in order to be proactive as opposed to reactive." Participants further explained that students have often been "spoon-fed" materials in their classes, so they need to learn how to "cross-reference material or look for publications that are companions, or that may give them a different perspective." Through building these skills and abilities, students enhance their information literacy.

Another important instructional session used by one of the participants was described as being the Kraus curriculum website, which is an index of curriculum-related materials. Faculty recognized that having extensive curriculum collections can "become prohibitively expensive," but still they want students "to know how to access those [documents], and what kind of library support we have." Furthermore, faculty stated that

knowing how to access and use such resources is critical to students' future successes as teachers. The webpage developed by the LIBRARY staff member to accommodate this tutorial was very well received, with the faculty member stating that it is now used with both undergraduate and graduate students in several of her education classes.

In sum, library instruction sessions were highly praised by SOE faculty who used them. However, from the discussion in the session, only a few faculty members appeared to be taking advantage of this service.

K-12 Teaching Material Collection

Some faculty stated that they make a point of having students use materials available in the IMC, though others indicated that they do not. There was agreement that having K-12 teaching materials available is both critical to teacher education and a highly valued resource supporting student learning and faculty teaching approaches. At the same time, several concerns were raised regarding the IMC's current holdings. These largely fell within the issues of how current the materials are and their display/placement in the IMC.

Current holdings in the IMC were described as being "not very up-to-date" and needed to be "beefed up." Participants recommended that the IMC do an inventory of the items it currently has, then to "get rid of a lot of stuff" and "make it more useful." All the participants indicated that they do not maintain personal collections of K-12 curricular materials to share with their students, so they are very interested in enhancing the collection of the IMC. As they explained, there is "no money and no space available [in SOE] to have duplicate resources." The only caveat that came out in the session was that since the holdings in the IMC are not useful in general, they may have personal copies of critical materials that they will take to their classes to show students.

"If anybody watched us go to class, it's really rather comical. Most of us have bought those bag lady carts because we take all kinds of material. How much nicer would it be to take your classes, especially your graduate classes, over to an invitational [or inviting] space and instead of having to empty all of the books in your office, have the IMC collect them and say, 'Okay, these are all the latest books on [a particular subject matter].' Take the group over there and say, 'okay, here's the latest thing.' ... That would be a great service that they could provide."

There was a great interest amongst the participants to have the IMC provide current, relevant, and useful materials so they don't need to keep using their own instructional items.

This idea of having a place where current resources are all together was brought up again later in the session when faculty said it would be interesting to have some of their classes in the LIBRARY, especially graduate-level classes. Some faculty do already have classes that meet for a class session in the IMC. One participant said, "The nice thing is that it's one time when they're all physically there and, when they're there, I do point out the other things that the IMC has to offer. I think it, hopefully, gets them back there more often." If the curriculum materials were more current, other faculty would also bring their students. On the other hand, the lack of materials deemed by SOE faculty to be relevant and current has led other faculty to no longer make such trips with their students (though they had done so in the past).

Similarly, the participants talked about how each has curriculum that they have created or found that could be useful to others.

"At each of our meetings, I hear you say if you have students who want to look at curriculum, I have curriculum. You have curriculum. Other people have curriculum. Is there a way that if we have something that can be put up online that we could have [a repository], either physically or online, with resources? I mean I've got so much material I'm willing to share, and make them available, but I think my office is a little scary."

An add-on to the K-12 instructional material holdings, the IMC could provide a clearinghouse service whereby, in print or electronically, members of SOE could access materials made available by their colleagues.

To spur on the process of updating curricular materials, faculty members expressed that they are very interested in having materials that represent what students are likely to encounter when they take jobs after graduating. One faculty member explained that, as a group, they want curriculum materials,

"that are used in the school districts, *in* the central Wisconsin area, because our students complain that they don't know how to do their [subject-specific or class] instruction. We provide the strategies, the assessment, the philosophy behind it, but what *they* [the students] need to do is see how it's *implemented in the real world.*"

It was agreed that this is an issue across teaching subjects (math, reading, etc.). Having students get “hands-on” experience with the “kinds of textbooks and teaching materials you’re going to have in the classroom” is crucial training for how to actually teach K-12 students. One method recommended toward accomplishing this goal was developing stronger ties and fostering relations with local school districts, particularly curriculum coordinators. One participant shared, “I just happened to get a call from the curriculum coordinator for Stevens Point who said, ‘We just did a review of textbooks and purchased new textbooks for Social Studies K-12. We’ve got all these sample copies, review copies, that we don’t have anyplace to put. Do you want them?’” She stated that a member of the IMC staff quickly arranged to transport the materials and “all of a sudden I had wonderful sets of current, up-to-date curriculum, and some of it was even the curriculum that Stevens Point was using.” Creating those relationships and making school districts aware of both the interest and willingness to shelve these items may go a long way toward maintaining more current instructional materials.

Another type of material SOE faculty would like the IMC to maintain are the policies of local school districts, as they are available.

“A lot of school districts have hard copies of curriculum. They give them to incoming teachers, but there are other school districts that don’t have anything. ... [having] a directory that says we have hard copies, we have all the Wisconsin Rapids, or that Wausau doesn’t have, curriculum. ... I tell my students this, within a job interview, to take a look at the curriculum as a really good indicator of whether or not you want to work in this school district. How supportive is this group of people going to be to an incoming teacher, or new teacher.”

These kinds of materials, again, could be acquired if members of the IMC staff developed collaborations or networked with receptive officials working in the school districts. Even though this might not be possible for all districts, it would be very worthwhile if this process yielded even some such items.

Book Reserve and E-Reserve Services

A third way in which the LIBRARY supports SOE faculty is through the E-Reserve services at the LIBRARY. There was widespread praise for this service and the person that manages it. Talking about the person who manages the Reserves, one participant stated, “Oh my G__, she couldn’t do enough for me.” Another person talked about how she needs to have a lot of books available to her students. She explained, “She [Reserves manager] is tremendous, and the library is very helpful with that, just books, people getting their hands on books and having them on reserve.” All faculty who had taken advantage of reserve services available in the LRC were very complimentary of both the process of putting materials on reserve and the positive experiences they had working with staff associated with this service.

Online Reference and Researching Tools

Currently, faculty reported they use the online Mental Measurements Yearbook, ERIC online, and other internet sources to gain access to “supportive materials when [students are] devising units.” Because these resources are available online, faculty can teach students to use these resources without having to visit the library. A participant offered, “it’s much easier to show [students specific tools and] materials online [in the classroom] and take them to the various state indexes and show them what’s available than it is for me to drag them over to the library. So I haven’t done that for about six years.” The participants reported that working online to access curricular and assignment-oriented materials better reflects students’ preferences to be able to access LRC resources than having students actually visit the LRC.

Additional Recommendation: Offer Freshman Students an Orientation on Library and Researching Basics

A recommendation that came up through the participants’ discussion of library utilization was that all incoming freshman, during their first year on campus, receive an orientation to using the library and its reference resources. For example, there was strong general agreement with the statement made by one participant, “I think anybody in the 21st century needs to know how to delimit a search.” As a point in case, one participant shared,

“I had a graduate student this semester, and it was like a drop-jaw moment... She had to research American psychologists and their impact on curriculum, within a particular historic time period.... This woman put in their names and she didn’t come up with anything. She didn’t put any pluses. She didn’t put any ‘ands.’ She didn’t put any hyphens, or parentheses around it, etcetera. And

she's not the first student that I've had, I mean it's rare, but she expected the computer to spit out why all of these people were important in one magnificent document, as opposed to doing a little leg work. And it, it's that delimitation process that's part of the critical thinking element, that you've got to be an online detective."

Others in the session voiced their agreement that this was a major concern and not uncommon in their experiences either.

Another suggested component of such an orientation would focus on explaining the use of in-text citations for material that comes from another source and how to reference those sources at the end of the paper. "Because it's [the source material] readily available, they don't think documentation is important," explained a participant. She went on to say,

"I talk to them about the fact that citations... you have to be responsible in your research and the fact that you have to be able to find your way back to the original source. That's basically what the citation is all about. *Every major* at this university would benefit by some sort of orientation process, whereby students are taught how to delimit searches and critical appraisal of information. "

Being able to recognize the need for giving credit to a source, as well as properly citing material in text, were viewed as being core skills necessary for students to possess, regardless of their particular majors.

Also in this orientation, it would be very helpful to have a discussion of plagiarism, especially in terms of internet research. "We have lots of trouble with people just taking passages or paragraphs off the internet and thinking, well, this is free to the world so I'm going to use it without giving [credit to the source]. I think university-wide that needs to be addressed." Others agreed, including one person who stated, "It's a nightmare! I don't think students understand the basic concept of it. You know, I think they're missing it, because they think it's like TV or something." Another person pointed out, "They don't understand that it's *stealing*." They agreed that students fail to recognize the ethical problems associated with taking material directly from the web, whether it's from online sources or even, in some cases, when it's other students' work that is posted online.

Barriers to SOE faculty's use of the library

Several important barriers were identified in the focus group session. These barriers result from both LRC-specific practices and concerns related to students' abilities to use the library as a result of our campus being designed largely to accommodate traditional students. In both cases, participants felt strongly that the issues should be taken under serious consideration due to the negative impact they have upon quality of instruction, they signal a less-than-welcoming learning environment, and limit the accessibility of campus services to part of our student population.

UWSP Online Library

Participants indicated in the session that the LRC website/online library is difficult to use. One issue is that students have difficulty using the online library for conducting research. One faculty who teaches online courses with graduate students expressed that her students have a difficult time accessing online research tools. She said she asks students to do online research and use the UWSP online library. "That stops them, right there... Just finding the journals has been very daunting for some," even though she offers them her own short online tutorial for how to get into the library website, find the fulltext journals, and the use of APA referencing. She stated, "I don't know if there's a way to make it more direct, like 'JOURNALS HERE,' or something, point the finger... [and] make it more efficient for students who are totally online, that we never see." The discussion suggested that some students are apprehensive about the online library services and quickly abandon their efforts when they are unsuccessful in a search.

One facet of this problem revolves around the perception that there is a lack of "library support that's online friendly." This was explained in terms of the structure of the website. As one participant stated, "We have web designs that have been designed by students or people in IT, with very little input from users. We have gobs and gobs and gobs of pages [with accessibility issues taken into consideration]. But the actual usability of material by students... who the heck knows where to go to use them." An example given by one faculty member, though admittedly not LRC-related, was the changes recently implemented to the process for accessing class lists. It appeared from the discussion that some faculty (and students) are frustrated by the many layers of links

that must be navigated in order to find teaching and researching resources. Likewise, there is the perception that changes to the structuring of these links occur with little explanation or forewarning. Participants suggested that LRC/IMC members “remind SOE faculty about the website pages that are up,” so they can provide links for their students to access these pages through faculty web pages, be those personal, professional, or class-oriented.

Another facet relates to the vast differences in student backgrounds/cultures and their familiarity with the tools like those provided by the LRC. One participant pointed out that she has students from other countries taking some of her graduate courses. Another responded to the first, “You’re talking about students in another country, but I’m thinking of some of my teacher students who are in Antigo or Rhinelander... They *don’t* understand, and it’s really culturally very different for them.” They apparently are capable of downloading and printing materials from the indexes, but they become lost when the materials are not available fulltext. There appears to be a disconnect in the process for many students, and even some faculty, as they proceed to checking the library/online catalog and using Interlibrary Loan services to access the materials they are seeking.

Hours of Operation Mean Lack of Access for Students and Faculty

Access to the LRC and other campus services (including access to computer labs, the bookstore, and all “support services”) is very limited to many of the students in the SOE. There were two main issues to contend with in this discussion. The first concerned the extremely limited hours of operation during winterim, interim, and summer instructional sessions, “that are not conducive” to student and faculty schedules. Many non-traditional students cannot make it to the library during the scheduled weekday or weekend hours.

More discussion, though closely related, was focused on the second issue of library accessibility and “user-ability” for graduate students and faculty in SOE. Many of the SOE graduate courses taught on campus finish at 5pm, the same time the library closes on Saturday, according to those in the focus group. Though this was not put in the context of the winterim, interim, and summer schedules, this may have been the case or participants may not be aware that the LRC has Saturday hours from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.. “We have the largest graduate program on campus and we’re basically shut out of a lot of the facilities and they don’t make it very easy for the folks to use,” one participant pointed out. Another continued,

“What we’re saying is that we want the library to be aware of our students and our students are not campus people living here all the time. They’re non-trads, they have jobs, they have families, so you need an ID card to check out things in the library, but the ID office closes at 4:45. They teach in Medford. They can’t get down here to get that, so those kinds of things are really obstacles.”

These same concerns carried over into discussion of serving students in the online environment. “For the online students who never get to campus, it’s even more of an obstacle. They feel daunted, it’s very daunting. A lot of us don’t have time to do our own little ‘I-movies’ and things like that about ‘how do you do this.’” The participants expressed frustration with having to try to ‘make it work’ for graduate students when so many of the resources designed to assist students are unavailable.

Alternate Approach to the Shelving Arrangement for K-12 and Teaching Instructional Materials

An issue that received a lot of discussion in the session surrounded the layout of the IMC. On the one hand, the participants had very strong feelings about how materials in the IMC are shelved. Each of these concerns is addressed in this section.

SOE faculty stated the way in which materials are placed on the shelves in the IMC does not support students’ efforts to become familiar with and actively engaged in their subject matter. Unlike other teacher libraries faculty were familiar with, the IMC does not shelve books together with others on the same subject. The IMC shelves its books all over the library so that students and faculty must know what they are specifically looking for and use the library/online catalog to find particular titles and authors, “but that’s really not inviting.” “You can’t just browse through the books, you need a name and author” so it’s not about “just piquing someone’s interest,” one faculty member explained. Another added, “Now I don’t know where to find [books I’m interested in], they’re hidden on the shelves.” In its current configuration, “right now there’s no reason for students to come to the IMC, unless they are instructed by their professors to do so because it is not inviting.” Faculty felt certain that moving materials to areas by subject would create a more interesting and engaging experience for students and faculty.

In this discussion, also, faculty recognized that this system might appear to be less systematic or more difficult for some to gain access to materials. However, the Social Studies textbooks were offered as a good example of what grouping materials by subject could offer. They pointed out that this group of texts are shelved together so that students and faculty can browse the holdings and get a general sense of what is available, the breadth of materials they have to choose from, and the similarities and differences among items. Another participant stated, "If the children's or young adolescent literature was housed together in the IMC, like Harry Potter books, you'd be getting our students in the IMC all the time." Another suggested grouping of books could be defined around acquisitions made of "contemporary literature about the rest of the world from the rest of the world... to help the people understand. Especially now, since globalization has become one of the major issues that this campus is now adopting as a major agenda." Getting to materials would be more efficient and more interesting because it would not involve doing multiple catalog searches and needing to visit multiple areas within the IMC or possibly other parts of the LRC, which inevitably turn students (and faculty) off to such exercises.

Another possibility for re-ordering the way in which books are shelved would be to provide faculty with shelves in which they choose what will be included. When there are research or reference materials that faculty refer to or talk a lot about in their classes, it would be beneficial to students and the faculty to have those placed together so they can find them quickly when they visit the library (with or without their instructor). For example, one faculty suggested IMC staff become familiar with faculty interests.

"Knowing what we're [individual faculty members] focusing on or having an idea as to what topical arrays we're involved in, what kind of research we're interested in, etcetera, or what's new in the various school districts, or what are the buzzwords [will allow it] so when there are interrelated books, that they are specifically housed in the IMC, not dispersed according to author or title throughout the library. "

Besides instructional materials and books related to their research interests, faculty could also include children's and adolescent literature that complement other teaching/curricular items so that there is greater sense of connectedness between teaching items and the materials on which K-12 students are taught.

Though this might seem highly complex and not possible since there are multiple professors that would need to be accommodated, the group felt strongly that this alternate structure could work to the IMC's advantage. The question these faculty-centered or topic-centered shelving practices led the facilitator to was how the IMC could facilitate such a system where multiple faculty might want the same materials in their areas. While there could be some overlap, the group acknowledged, "many of the resources [the participants were] referring to are specific to a particular methods area, [so] shelving them together should not be a major problem for students or other faculty." A participant explained, "There are all kinds of professional thread books, which are very popular, and for instance, I don't know where those books are. I keep ordering them, but I don't know where they are." It was then pointed out that this alternate practice might be helpful to students and other faculty because then they, too, would be able to view a variety of similar books that might be helpful to their teaching purposes. One faculty member stated, "My having [the resource] in my area probably isn't going to keep someone else from using it," which was agreed with by several others in the session.

Making the IMC More "Inviting"

In addition to the layout of the holdings in the IMC, the physical arrangement and "look" of the IMC was also identified as a reason why students do not use the Center more. "Physically, it is not an inviting space. Aesthetically, it does not make students want to be there... and there needs to be some attention paid to that." Some of this has to do with the "exhibition of the materials," while the "sterile shelves, outdated furniture, and dated appearance" are also contributors. Furthermore, the space itself, "half an entire floor of the LRC," needs reconfiguring and better use of space.

In part, the faculty point out this barrier as a response to the characterization of their students and what those students need in order to support them in their educational endeavors.

"Many of our students are first-generation college students. Having a place in the library where they feel comfortable to go and familiarize themselves with professional materials would be, and, um... and we require them to read certain books, but a lot of them have never purchased a book that changes their lives or that they want to read that's professionally-focused. I think that a lot of that is due to the lack of 'invitational' feel in the Instructional Media Center. If students were aware that this

was kind of a professionally-focused place where they could browse and handle material, there's part of that that's a tactile..."

This ties in with the previous barrier about an alternative shelving approach. However, the group also asserted that the layout of the IMC's space can be more supportive to the type of work faculty expect students to participate in when completing their assignments.

"Here's a really good match... especially when some of the students get into some of the upper-level methods classes, we often have them doing group kind of projects where they're developing curriculum, peer teaching, and presentations and that kind of thing. To have a place where not only is there a nice work space, where five people can get together, but... to have the materials there then too. Where they can be accessing the materials right as they're sitting and working at their tables, because our students are often looking for a place that will accommodate a group of four or five, where they can talk."

Agreeing, another participant expressed, "We would want our students working in the area where these wonderful treasured resources are, so they can get their hands on them." The current set-up of the IMC, with its study carrels and tables does not foster a sense of developing teaching professionalism in the view of this group.

The faculty members were deeply interested in offering a way to build a learning atmosphere in the IMC similar to what they envision to be the case in their own building.

"It is unfortunate that we're kind of silos... the Library/IMC folks are all in this building, we're all in that building... and we *rarely* interact. I think that we could be good partners, really effective partners, just in terms of maintaining or managing that IMC and keeping current things in there. I just think that... a place of hospitality and warmth that they could go. When I was a student at Madison, a place with 45,000 students, the place I went was that IMC in the 'Teacher Ed' building because it had stuff that I could use. It was kid books and teacher books. It was just a wonderful place and I think that could be what the IMC is here too."

These changes could create a Center with "an atmosphere that encourages interaction and professional inquiry." Along the same lines, another recommendation they made was that the IMC should consider changing its name so that it better 'speaks' to those who would use it. With that in mind, they stressed that the word Teacher be incorporated, such as the Teacher Resource Center

To get a sense of possibilities, the participants suggested that members of the LRC visit other campus' IMC equivalents. Specific exemplars mentioned by the group included UW-Madison, UW-Eau Claire, and UW-Milwaukee. They pointed out there is no need to reinvent the wheel, but rather our IMC might be able to marry some of the best aspects of these other teacher libraries in their own space in the LRC. The participants also offered to assist in 'visioning' the kinds of changes they believe would create an atmosphere in the IMC they were promoting during the session. "If you ever want to do a brainstorming session, people in our group are very creative. We should have us meet at the IMC and do some visioning there. Say, 'Here's a part of the IMC that is never used. We could use it for something else. What would we like for it.' A general wish list." Working with graph paper and their experiences being in other similar teacher library settings, they suggested they might be able to provide ideas that the IMC could work with in their efforts to create a setting where students want to be.

Improving Library Acquisitions through a Proactive Approach

A concern brought up both in preparing for the focus group and by the participants themselves in the session, involves the process used by SOE faculty to request library acquisitions. There was much agreement among participants that the process in place for requesting book acquisitions is very cumbersome and inefficient. One participant captured the sentiment when she said, "One [Library staff member's concern]... is that [she/he] wants us to use our money. You know, as far as book purchases are concerned, that can be facilitated in a much more manageable way, but it's a pain in the neck right now!" Faculty members were very clear that they are interested in purchasing materials and building the library's holdings in areas related to their teaching and researching areas of interest. However, many times the acquisition process itself is a barrier they choose to avoid rather than overcome.

One way in which the process is a barrier is in the steps themselves that faculty must take to make requests. Participants stated that procedures change, they don't always remember where the form is, or how to make requests. They also stated that filling in all the fields often means needing to look up the item in several

places to complete the form. Sometimes requests are denied because the library already has the title listed as part of the holdings, but the Library staff fail to recognize that the request is for a new edition. "Acquisition is blocked if they see the title is there," though many titles are coming out with new editions every few years. Time is the issue, not that faculty members are not interested.

With the current acquisition process, you also don't know the progress the library has made toward actually acquiring the books requested. They described the old process that "used those little cards" that you got back so you "had all these damn little cards all over the place." Others chimed in amused agreement. Still, they agreed that it would be helpful to know the status of their requests and when resources they ordered are available.

In some cases, reported the group, the problem is that the item(s) the faculty person wants to acquire is more than \$100 so it too expensive, as can often be the case if they want to buy a text. The faculty members pointed out that \$100 is often not enough, "it will only buy a book and a half." They listed several of the books and explained that they cost anywhere from \$65 to \$100 dollars for just one book.

Another problem is that there is a limit of one copy of a book, even though the request may be for several copies of the same text. Multiple copies make sense to these participants because there are cases where a book is popular or because a faculty person wants to put a copy on reserve. They felt that there should be a mechanism by which special requests could be made for multiple copies of a book when circumstances were such that additional copies were justifiable.

There needs to be a way between the SOE and the Library to streamline the process.

The fact that faculty don't know which resources they have already ordered or make assumptions that another faculty member is sure to have already submitted a request has led some in the focus group to not make requests themselves. Faculty wondered if there is a way to track the books that have been ordered, by faculty member who ordered the item and/or by department, that could be accessed by others in the department.

"I know that if I go one by one I can check, but if I just did 'search [faculty name] books ordered' I could just see which books I've gotten. That's kind of stood in my way because I put one aside then [wonder] did I order this one or not? Then I think, 'if I have to go through it all...' and rolled her eyes."

Several other participants agreed that this would be helpful and likely improve their acquisition request rates.

It was pointed out that it would be helpful to have copies of the textbooks used in SOE courses available in the IMC, not just in the bookstore. Because not all courses are taught every semester and not all faculty request to have their course textbooks be bought, it would be good practice for the IMC to work with the bookstore to ensure that there is at least one copy of all current textbooks used by SOE professors in their courses housed in the IMC. This is particularly important when there is a book for purchase so that students have access to a resource required for their class. The group felt that it would be much more efficient for one member of the IMC staff to go through course textbook requests submitted to the bookstore rather than having every faculty member of the SOE submit requests individually.

It was also suggested that IMC staff be more proactive in recommending materials to faculty that align with their professional, research, and teaching pursuits/activities/interests. When they receive book catalogs or become aware of curricular resources from the school districts or online, the suggestion was made that a member of the IMC staff forward information about these potential acquisitions to those who may be interested in them.

The question was raised about the possibility of someone from the IMC meet with each faculty member "to find out [about them], what kinds of resources [they] need or use, how can we [Library/IMC] be helpful? on an individual faculty basis." Another participant suggested that "we [faculty members] could do that in a faculty meeting where we create a directory of our areas of interest, professional interests... because there'd be overlap." With these interest areas identified, again, IMC staff could make suggestions of new materials to see if faculty are interested in submitting those as library acquisitions.

Another way in which IMC staff could actively suggest books for SOE library acquisitions would involve the staff member looking through the lists of sources faculty suggest to their students. Faculty teaching courses, especially the online courses, often have very detailed bibliographies on their websites. These references provide another means of identifying materials to be considered for purposes of acquisition. "Why can't the library go in and say, 'Hey, this is a really cool wish list.'"

Other methods of identifying books and resources that could be done within the department were also explored. For example, faculty could highlight books and resources they are interested in within a single catalog, then either have a graduate student submit the list or send the catalog to the Library in lieu of the electronic form.

Confusion about the Media Lab and Extent of Services Available

There were differences of opinion expressed in the session regarding what services were available to faculty and students in relation to the development or manipulation of materials. Some believed that it is possible to bring in old media (audiotapes and videotapes) and have them digitized or placed in more current technological formats, while others did not. There were some strong beliefs that IT is the provider of services related to transferring technologies, such as digitizing recordings so they can be transmitted online or made available to students in online courses.

Also related to the delivery of online course materials, the issue of copyright infringement came up several times. Of greatest concern was the question of how to interpret "fair use" in making materials available to students enrolled in online courses. One participant stated that he does "need help with some of the guidelines, downloading materials, digitizing some of the case studies and putting them online for reserve." Another participant then explained, "the people at the IMC... they're more than welcoming and happy to help. In fact, I saw them [recently] and they confirmed that to me. 'Just tell us what you want.' And that's what I like about them." The service of transferring media in order to make those materials available for student use, either through checking it out or placing it online was very well received. One person summed it up for the group when he stated, "Wow, that would be awesome, that would be dynamic." From the session it was clear that SOE faculty need clarification about what services are available via the Media Lab, what services are not, and if these services are done by the faculty member or an Library staff member.

IMC Audio/Visual Materials

In terms of the A/V materials, the participants agreed in general that they are "exceedingly dated." They conveyed that it would be beneficial to weed out materials that are getting no use, but be sure to involve SOE faculty in the process because "there are several choice videos" they believe are excellent that they use every semester. It was reported in the session that Library staff have contacted some faculty about disposing of materials that are very old ("1969 copyright"), but the group was unsure how often that happened in general.

Library Orientation for New Faculty Members and Instructors

A barrier that was brought up specifically related to faculty is that there is no formal orientation strategy for new faculty to apprise them of the resources, services, and layout of the Library. One participant expressed, "When I came to UWSP... I had two days of orientation, but I never came into the library." Another added, "nor were you told what they could offer unless you went and asked someone." Several told the group about different approaches they had taken to getting themselves familiarized with what the Library offers and their frustration that this was not done more formally.

This process, however, may have changed for the better in more recent times. One recently hired faculty member in the session indicated that an IMC staff member has been very diligent and went "above and beyond duty" to try to set up introductory sessions to the library for him. When he was able to fit it into his schedule, he was very impressed with the thoroughness of the Library tour and explanation of services available he was given. Others in the session said that they did not have similar experiences when they were new to UWSP, but they were very pleased and impressed with the proactive approach demonstrated in this recent example. They believe that this approach will be highly beneficial in both enhancing the use of Library resources and services and in furthering the collaborative efforts between the Library/IMC and SOE faculty. Furthermore, they reinforced the idea that this orientation not be given in the first semester, or at least not right away, when a person is new. The recently hired faculty participant described the first semester as being in "survival mode" while others emphasized that it is a period when faculty and instructors are truly overwhelmed so they may not be able to fully accommodate what they are told and shown.

Enhancing Collaboration and Communication between Library/IMC & SOE Members

As indicated at the outset of this report, the tone of the focus group was very upbeat, enthusiastic, constructive, and collegial. Both those in the Library/IMC and those in the focus group itself made statements about wanting to continue this conversation and enhance the collaboration between the library and members of SOE. As members of the focus group pointed out that there were no concerns raised about the Library in terms of it meeting DPI requirements, the discussion moved on to discuss how this review process should go forward collaboratively. As one faculty pointed out, “[it] sounds like the library wants to be more of a partner with us, and that would be magnificent. Right now we’re going in parallel lines.” This section of the report first focuses upon strategies suggested by participants that they can contribute toward gathering information about changing student and faculty needs that can be shared with members of the Library/IMC. The second part identifies the kinds of information and channels that should be used in order to facilitate communication between the two groups and continue the dialogue about improving how they work together.

SOE Faculty-Driven Strategies to Enhance Collaboration with the Library/IMC

In addition to talking about ways in which the Library/IMC could assist them in both their student learning-focused and their own professional endeavors, participants in the focus group also pointed out ways that their department could assist in enhancing the Library/IMC. Some of these have been worked into the narrative around particular resources and services or barriers to using the Library/IMC. The following are additional insights that could prove helpful.

Wish List for Development of Tool to Assist Students in Finding and Using Library Resources and Services

There was agreement among the participants that members of the SOE could facilitate and offer suggestions to the Library regarding areas of common interest or common problems faced by their students.

“It would be helpful, I would think, if we, as a department, looked at the kinds of things our students are doing at the library. You know, the research, the asset [ERIC & other indexes] access, the EBSCO, delimitations, and I am sure there’s information but it’s all in separate pages and in separate places. If we could, you know, make a kind of wish list, maybe someone could create a kind of index page or a page that is specific to our population. [there was agreement around a site map] Right, because people use different search terms and your train of thought is not the same. Things have multiple descriptors. If we could come up with a basic wish list, then someone could translate that into a directory, I think that would be very helpful.”

By having SOE faculty pool their insights or query their students to build something like a list of answers to “Frequently Asked Questions” or guides that take students and faculty through the process of conducting their library searches, the Library/IMC could have a common location that SOE students could use. This might also address some of the concerns with the Library webpage brought up earlier in this report.

Administering Student Surveys of Library Use and Their Effectiveness in Using Library Resources

SOE faculty are open to the Library having students fill out a survey to ascertain what materials and services they use, the challenges they have experienced in using the library, and ways in which they would like the library to further assist them in achieving academic and teaching success. As one faculty characterized the survey, “Tell me what worked, what you couldn’t find. It could be that [students] were looking for something that they couldn’t find, that they just gave up on.” In this way, the survey could be helpful in getting some feedback directly from this group of end users. It was suggested that D2L has a survey tool that faculty could use to administer the survey and there could be a set of core questions all of the faculty’s library surveys would include, then a group of questions more directly targeting the particular course or the subject area.

Enhancing communication between Library & SOE faculty

The faculty that participated in the focus group felt strongly that this session was highly useful in exploring issues that are important to both Library/IMC and SOE members. They expressed an interest in continuing to work on improving communication. One way to do so is through identifying critical communication opportunities and defining channels most appropriate for conveying that information.

Instructional sessions or updates about changing resources should “definitely” be held, but they should also be “short and sweet.” Though not limited to these, a participant spoke for the group saying, “We used brown-bag lunch as a format, and sometime schedule faculty meetings to not be business meetings but [rather] some special educational topic.” Their preference, as far as where the sessions are held, would be for IMC personnel to “come to them” when the topic is informational or explaining a new technique. If it’s to view materials, it is very helpful if the IMC sets up several sessions when faculty can attend since their teaching schedules are so varied.

To set up instructional sessions or meetings with SOE faculty, it is best to go through the department chair’s office for scheduling purposes. When the material to be covered in these meetings is informational and does not require materials or resources in the Library/IMC, it is preferable that the meeting be held in the Education Department. In some cases, these may be scheduled during regular SOE business meetings. When materials or resources in the Library/IMC will enhance the presentation, the group requests that there be several sessions available so as to accommodate faculty members’ varied teaching schedules. There was brief talk about developing another committee made up of SOE and Library/IMC members, but it was quickly rejected as the group felt that information could be brought to the entire group directly.

Invitations to instructional sessions should be concise and forthright. As one participant explained, “With notifying us and thinking about how to do that, probably the *least* effective thing to do is send out a blanket kind of email [that says] we’re doing this kind of session if you want to come. We all look at that and say it sounds cool, but I’m too busy. If it sounds like it’s a, “School of Ed, we’ve set this up...” and we can talk about it as a faculty and it’s set at a time say in lieu of a faculty meeting, you’re going to get a much better response.”

These practical tips are likely to improve attendance in the sessions.

Oversight of the library acquisition process is the purview of the SOE library liaison’s position. This is the extent of her role as liaison with the library.

A regularly scheduled yearly forum between the IMC and SOE was viewed by the participants as an excellent means to continue with the conversation begun in this focus group. As one faculty member put it, “This focus group is wonderful, but maybe we need to say at least once a year we’re going to do this. We’re going to sit down and communicate with you and you can communicate with us, so more of that dialogue happens.” The forum should be scheduled in January, just prior to the start of the second semester. It was believed that doing the session at that point, rather than in August, would lead individuals to bring ideas about improvement based on the experiences they encountered still being fresh in their minds from the fall semester.

Conclusion

While clearly this session was not able to come up with strategies (or specific plans) for how to address many of the issues that were raised by the participants, the tone throughout session was very positive and responses were made largely with an undercurrent that encouraged collaboration between members of the Library and SOE in this improvement process. Participants, while at times critical of resources and services, also realized that all members of the university are under budgetary and time constraints. With this in mind, those in the session suggested that the Library and SOE continue these themes in future conversations.

A Few Parting Messages from the Session:

“You have to understand our population. Now, in relation to the university in general, [they are] really a very passive group. A lot of them are very good students, they have very high grade point averages, but they’re not inquisitive learners. And they have very rarely been given an opportunity to discuss, and exchange ideas, in

passionate discourse. That's really how the library could support us, not in teaching passionate discourse certainly, that would be a very loud library, but, in helping get today's students tools to become critical thinkers."

"We love books. We love the library. We'd love to have our students use it more so any way we can just make it work a little bit more smoothly..."

"I am very impressed that they [the Library/IMC] asked us [about our concerns, challenges, and interests in collaborating more fully]. I mean, that is a wonderful gift. They really do care. And I do want to say, everywhere I go in that library, people are always nice. And they don't make you feel stupid, which is also very nice. Every time I'm there, I think, wow, they've really got it down."