

## Self-study Library Summary

### Introduction:

Brief summaries of self-study reports from Library departments, areas, and special committees follow this Library Summary. For additional summary comments, please see the overall Library SWOT. It should be noted that while there is general agreement on the summary and SWOT points, the narrative and analysis may not represent the viewpoints of all staff on all points.

### Library Summary:

The UWSP Library staff is proud of the Library's long tradition of service. Service orientation appeared repeatedly as a strength in self-study SWOT reports from various departments and areas. The needs of users are central as hours are established, reference desks are staffed, databases are selected, the collection is built and organized, and the website is designed. Service desks on five of the six floors allow for staff assistance at user point of need. February 2008 self-study surveys revealed high satisfaction rates for service received at the Library by faculty (94%). Total satisfaction rates for students (with N/A responses removed) were 85%.

An experienced, dedicated staff is dealing with a number of retirements--with both the negative and positive aspects this brings. The loss of years of knowledge, institutional history, and sometimes loss of the position itself can undermine staff stability. New hires bring new ideas, enthusiasm, and provide the Library with the opportunity to evaluate and reconfigure positions.

The process of enabling students to do better research has become increasingly complex. To meet this need, library instruction is strongly supported. Sessions or presentations totaled 455 in 2007-2008 (adding sessions of bibliographic instruction for campus courses, the one-credit Library Resources 101, and an archival principles course). Nearly all library faculty teach and all recent hires have teaching as a part of their position description. Library faculty are increasingly stretched between the increased demand and need for teaching and the many other responsibilities their positions require.

In this time of fiscal austerity, conscientiously developing the collection in collaboration with campus departments continues as a priority. The campus self-study for the 1998 North Central Accreditation Report stated: "The hub of the University is the University Library, which probably does more with less than any other unit or major resource on the UWSP campus. The library has solid—and some exceptional—collections." While the Library still prides itself on doing "more with less" and has excellent collections in some areas both print and online, the Library collection is aging and becoming less than solid in other areas. The campus self-study for the 2008 Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association accreditation stated: "faculty purchasing budget is at an all time low" and "this dilemma coincides with the launch of several new academic programs." It should be noted that during the self-study the Provost added \$100,000 to the base Library budget starting in 2008-2009. The Library anticipates using this in part to address collection needs.

The Learning Resources Center, which houses the Library and other units, has great visibility and a central location on campus. A recent first floor remodel, second floor updating, and addition of the Food for Thought Café have added to the positive appearance of the facility. However, much of the remaining space is in serious need of renovation. Not only would this provide for a more welcoming atmosphere and allow for new uses of space, but in some cases would remedy unsafe conditions (trip-factor carpet and malfunctioning compact storage) and fully meet ADA standards. Sustainability initiatives are being explored and will continue to be of importance.

As the self-study progressed, the need for a systematic approach to short- and long-term planning of services, collections, staffing, technology, and space utilization became clear. In planning for future directions and change, more extensive assessment of user and nonuser wants and needs is essential.

### **Department/Area Summaries:**

#### **Access Services:**

Operating under a new Access Services Librarian, the department will soon have a new classified staff supervisor of Interlibrary Loan (following a retirement) and is changing the space utilization behind the main circulation desk and the reserve area. Universal borrowing (patron initiated borrowing of books from other UW System libraries) is a heavily used service. ILL for articles and other non-UB materials continues as an appreciated and efficiently run service. E-reserve continues to develop, and circulating laptops are nearly always checked out.

In the department SWOT report, strengths included the services provided and the spirit in which they are provided. In the December 'point of service' survey at the main circulation desk, various services provided had satisfaction rates of 83-99%.

A note about the main circulation desk and true of all units hiring student employees: Most new work study students receive about six hours work per week, making it difficult to get the level of training needed for their jobs.

#### **Administration Office:**

Administrative staff members describe one of their strengths as their commitment to the success of the Library and its services. In addition to managing budget, personnel procedures, and building maintenance, they provide services for a number of other units housed in the Learning Resource Center (LRC). There are expressed needs for long-range planning, a more visible location than the current fifth floor, and enhanced technology training for the staff.

#### **Archives and Area Research Center:**

The Archives houses and provides reference service for three major collections: UWSP records, Area Research Center (Wisconsin Historical Society) materials, and Portage County Historical Society collections. It also provides records management services to the entire campus. Undergraduate research in the Archives has grown in recent years, and staff continue to serve campus administrators, faculty, and staff as well as genealogists and other area users. The Archives self-study report delineates staffing, facility, and technology concerns.

The Archives staff states as goals: to improve our facility and increase our staff to better meet current and future needs as an archival repository and resource.

#### **Bibliographic Instruction:**

In the 2007-2008 academic year, 290 bibliographic instruction sessions were given, most to specific classes with instruction tailored to class assignments. This reflects a more than doubling in the past ten years. Still, only about one third of campus teaching faculty take advantage of library sessions according to the self-study faculty survey.

Based on the conviction that library instruction is crucial to student success, librarians would like more extensive promotion of library instruction. All recently hired librarians have a teaching component to their positions, but increasing demand is already stretching busy librarians. The creation of an Instruction and Multimedia Librarian position is being proposed.

#### **Cataloging and Acquisitions:**

This unit has as a goal the acquisition and organization of materials in a timely fashion. For years a knowledgeable and experienced staff effectively searched for the lowest price when purchasing

and maintained high quality bibliographic records in the catalog. Retirements and a long-term disability leave in the past two years are straining remaining staff. The retiring faculty departmental coordinator was not replaced in cataloging and only one of the two retiring classified staff in cataloging has been replaced. The remaining two faculty members also have responsibilities in reference, instruction, supervision, and collection development. The newly hired classified staff cataloger, after training, will be contributing to the workflow.

As in other units, the classified staff computers used for department (acquisitions and cataloging) procedures can be frustratingly slow.

### **Collection Development:**

Collection development is a collaborative effort between library faculty and campus departmental faculty under the management of the Collection Development Coordinator. The Library has made and continues to make conscientious efforts to develop the electronic, book, non-print, and journal collection to meet the needs of students and faculty. However, as the cost of resources, especially periodicals, has increased the acquisitions budget has remained flat some years and been cut others. This is reflected in the February 2008 survey of campus department chairs and library representatives: only 57% found their departmental library allocation satisfactory. The monographic print collection is aging with inadequate funds to update the collection. Of respondents from the same survey, 61% rate the book and other print collection as satisfactory or very satisfactory.

As part of UW System, the Library gains access to a number of databases, many with full-text journals, and other electronic resources. A new system-funded collection analysis tool will be used to identify collection strengths and weaknesses, suggest areas to weed, and inform collection building decisions.

### **Government Publications:**

The UWSP Library holds one of the largest historic and current U.S. government documents collections in the state. Approximately 75% of available federal document items are selected and catalog records loaded in the Library online catalog. As government publications have gone increasingly electronic (although not consistently across agencies and departments), a vast number have been made accessible through the Library's Virtual Reference Desk. Electronic items that are part of the federal depository program are added to the online catalog in the same way print items are added. The Library also serves as a regional depository for Wisconsin documents, which have entries in the online catalog.

With the move to electronic, circulation of the in-house print collection has been dropping while reference questions asked in the department have retained their often complex nature. While fewer instruction sessions on documents have been given recently (as the librarian neared retirement), a rise in classes can be expected with a new hire.

Last spring, following an announced retirement date, the library faculty voted unanimously to retain the position—supporting the continued campus and public access to government publications print and electronic resources. In addition, a reconfigured position description was developed to more fully integrate the Government Publications Librarian into the services of the Library. Permission to fill this position is on hold until the completion of the self-study.

### **Instructional Materials Center:**

The IMC maintains a collection of K-12 curriculum-related materials and the Library's non-print collection (video, DVD, CD). The IMC staff offer excellent service including reserve of AV materials and reference aid. The dropping budget for acquisitions is an area of concern. In addition, regular donations of review textbooks from school districts have ceased, so the textbook collection is aging.

A January 2008 focus group with six School of Education faculty probed why SOE faculty do not take more advantage of Library and IMC services. The IMC will be responding to the issues raised.

### **Library Resources 101:**

Demand for the one-credit LR101 course has increased to the present four sections per semester including two hybrid sections (taught partially online). Six library faculty teach sections, with two faculty members off each semester. Library faculty time and availability to teach sections is limited by other duties as it is for general bibliographic instruction sessions.

Feedback from student evaluations has been largely positive with some students suggesting that the course was so valuable that it should be a required course. LR101 instructors state as a goal: to constantly change in response to changing technology and student information needs, to "stay relevant".

### **Marketing:**

The need for more marketing of services or PR is mentioned in several department reports and SWOTs. The Library has a history of effective individual efforts and programs, but has lacked an organized, ongoing marketing program. During the last few years, the Library Director has taken an active role, and one half time faculty member is assigned as coordinator of marketing, in addition to her other job responsibilities.

Faculty and student surveys conducted for the self-study point to relatively low satisfaction rates for the degree to which the Library makes users aware of new services: faculty report 66% satisfaction (compared to 90% satisfaction overall with collections and services); students report 41% satisfaction (compared to 72% overall). After assessment of user needs, the marketing coordinator urges the formation of a working committee to promote awareness of Library services.

### **Media Lab**

The Media Lab, located in the IMC and sharing the faculty supervisor, provides equipment, space, and assistance for producing media in various formats. With the equipment and processes increasingly out of date and the classified staff manager nearing retirement, the Media Lab is on the cusp of offering new services using the latest production technology. The library faculty are proposing the creation of an Instruction and Multimedia Librarian who, collaborating with a new qualified Media Lab classified manager, would offer multi-media production services and assistance (a campus need identified by a library faculty committee).

### **Periodicals:**

The Periodicals collection has been developed in cooperation with campus faculty, but difficult cancellation decisions have become a fact of life. Costs for periodical subscriptions continue to increase exponentially with static library budgets, and the most often preferred online access to full text often comes with a higher price than print counterparts. Recent cancellations of print journals have concentrated on high cost/low use journals and elimination of duplicate formats (dropping print, keeping online.)

Library users now have access to approximately 15,000 journal titles online, and the Library subscribes to approximately 1000 print journal titles. Despite Library efforts to cut where it is least painful, only 55% of faculty surveyed for the self-study reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the Library's print and online journals. It has been difficult to support new faculty with journal requests, and the always inflating periodicals budget continues to cut into the book budget. Managing the periodicals budget remains a huge challenge.

**Reference:**

The main reference department provides a strong print reference collection, qualified staff to assist users, and a rich array of databases. The reference desk has a visible location on the first floor. The number of reference questions asked last year rose, after dropping for three previous years (based on a week's count each fall). Reference staff have observed that questions are becoming more time-consuming and in-depth. Stated weaknesses include the insufficient number of computers especially during peak hours and a reference room that needs updates. Lack of data on student information needs and student lack of awareness of library resources are challenges to be faced.

**Technology**

The technology team of two faculty librarians (each with additional duties) and two information technology academic staff provide administration and support of library systems, workstations, and library classrooms as well as design and maintenance of the library website. These demands leave inadequate time for planning, development, and keeping up with new technology.

Wireless access is available throughout the Library, and remote access is relatively seamless with the addition of the EZProxy server in 2007. A small majority of surveyed students reported the Library had enough computers. UWSP campus information technology staff work in close collaboration with and provide support for library technology.

The technology SWOT lists affiliation with UW System as both a strength and a weakness. On the plus side is being able to accomplish major projects that we would not be able to afford on our own. On the negative side, system level decision-making leads to loss of local autonomy.

**Special Committees:****Facilities**

The Learning Resources Center is a prominent, well-located building on campus, built in 1970, renovated in 1986, and first floor remodeled in 2002. A café was opened in 2006. The building houses a number of services in addition to the Library, including IT. The Library Director is working with building occupants to meet their diverse needs. A uniform signage project is underway. Multiple service points in the Library are a plus for users, but a staffing expense to the Library.

Several library public and staff areas have been updated, but other areas have been described as unwelcoming and seedy. Progress has been made, but there remain ADA issues that need to be addressed. Problems continue with building maintenance, cleanliness, and there are safety issues in some areas of the Library. In addition to replacing worn carpet and tired furniture on some floors, a plan to redefine the use of space in the building is needed. For example, while the need remains for some individual quiet study areas, more informal small group work areas with computers are needed for student projects.

**Staffing**

The Library staff consists of librarians (also referred to as library faculty), classified staff, academic staff, LTEs, and student assistants. All library faculty hold a parallel position on the organization chart under the Library Director, who reports directly to the Provost/Vice Chancellor (see Organization Chart appendix). Nearly all library faculty supervise a department or coordinate an area. Faculty have nine months contracts, with the exception of the Library Director and the Archivist who have twelve month. Library faculty undergo the tenure process, and scholarship and service expectations are comparable to those for campus departmental faculty. Professional development is supported for all staff, although funds do not stretch to meet all travel requests.

After years of stability, the numbers of librarians and support staff who are retiring have been increasing which results in the loss of expertise and knowledge and sometimes the loss of the position as well. Planning and possible reconfigurations are needed with staffing turnover.