

## **External Review of the University Library, CSU Stanislaus**

**July 21 2008**

by Brian Duggan, M.A., Director of Learning Services and

Dr. Barbara Butler, Dean, University Library, Sonoma State University

With contributions by Dr. Katherine Royer, Dr. Brenda Betts, and Ms. Crystal Villanueva

### **Overview**

The University Library Support Unit Review Self Study Report [April 2008] provides a comprehensive description of the Library's functions and organization. It places the Library within the context of the Stanislaus campus community and elucidates the current mission and strategic planning efforts to achieve this mission. Further, it outlines present trends and forecasts in academic libraries and existing conditions within the CSU that are particularly affecting the University Library at Stanislaus as well as its benchmark campuses. The executive summary, in bullet format, is a useful, succinct statement of those environmental factors.

According to Site Visit interviews, the review Self Study Review may not have much input from staff. It does not address areas for improvement within the organization, other than lean staffing (due to funding) and internal communication issues, although it does touch upon possible change in strategic emphases to respond to changing conditions. The Dean describes a campus climate, especially the academic discipline faculty who are positively disposed toward the library – but this does not translate into adequate funding.

### **The Review Process**

#### **List of team members**

Brian Duggan, M.A., Director of Learning Services, Office of Information Technology (Chair)

Dr. Barbara Butler, Dean, University Library, Sonoma State University

Dr. Brenda Betts, faculty, Education

Dr. Katherine Royer, faculty, History

Ms. Crystal Villanueva, undergraduate student

#### **External Review Activities**

The team met on Friday April 25th to discuss reactions to and impressions of the self-study report and formulate a strategic plan for the site visit on Friday, May 2, 2008.

The site visit consisted of a Library tour, and then meetings with Carl Bengston, Dean of Library Services, Technical Services, Circulation & Interlibrary Loan, Library Faculty, Special Collections, Systems, Student Focus Group, a second interview with the Dean, and a final team debriefing. On Tuesday, May 27, a site visit was made to the Stockton Library Access Center.

#### **SSR Supporting Materials Provided to the Review Team are available at:**

<http://library.csustan.edu/cbengston/LibrarySUR/LibrarySUR.htm>

- University Library Support Unit Review Self-Study Report & Executive Summary, April 2008

- University Library Strategic Plan, October 2007
- Library Strategic Plan 1999-2004
- Annual Action Plans, 2002/3, 2003/4, 2004/5, 2005/6, 2006/7
- Classified Collection Analysis
- Classified Collection Circulation by Subject
- Total Circulation by Major
- Graduating Senior Surveys (Executive Summary) 2002/3, 2003/4, 2006/7
- LibQual+™ Library Service Quality Survey, 2005 & 2007 Executive Summary & Results
- Graduate School Exit Survey, 2005/06 & 2006/07 Executive Summary
- Support Unit Review Policies & Procedures
- Organization Chart
- Misc. comments from Library faculty and staff submitted via email.

### **Site Visit Group Session Participants**

Dean of Library Services: Carl Bengston, MLS, MBA

Technical Services: Annie Hor, Charlene Brock, Olga Camarillo, Lana Iversen, Christina Minjarez, Yuki Sicheneder, and Kim Valenzuela.

Circulation: Dwayne Machado, Huong Armstrong, Lydia Campos, and Matt Hayes

Interlibrary Loan: Julie Reuben and Deb Childers

Library Faculty: Kenneth Potts, Warren Jacobs, Priscilla Peters, Arthur Buell, Tim Held, Andre Garza, and Annie Hor.

Special Collections: Kenneth Potts, Rosemary Mann

Systems: Priscilla Peters, Rick Dietz, and Guillermo Vargas

Student Focus Group: (randomly selected with anonymity preserved to insure candid responses)

Library Access Center, Stockton Campus: Mary Hernandez (student worker)

### **External Review Process Overview**

#### **Site Visit Comments**

The preparations by Library Dean and his support staff for an effective site visit were very good. Documentation and auxiliary data were provided in advance to assist the process. The review team toured the physical facilities and met with the Dean, representatives of all major library units and a student patron focus group. Although there were time constraints arising from spirited and sincere discussions, the Site Visit afforded a good overview of the library's functions as well as of the physical space. All departments made candid observations – although comfort levels varied. After it became apparent that more time for comment was needed, Library faculty and staff were given opportunities beyond the Site Visit to submit confidential comments and observations to the Review Team. Several employees took advantage of that opportunity and these have been incorporated into this report.

## Findings

### 1. Mission & Organization

The University Library has an appropriate, well-focused mission statement regarding access to and encouragement of teaching, learning, and research activities as well as providing an environment that fosters intellectual, cultural, and artistic endeavors. Well-established lending/borrowing relationships exist within a network of other libraries and these help to mitigate gaps in the collection.

Serving almost exclusively teaching faculty and students, the number of career or casual staff that use Library resources in the course of their duties is negligible, but there is demonstrable use by the community. Some staff perceive that the Provost's directive for University departments to work towards "definition and distinction" to be at odds with the published mission statement but with funding cutbacks for collections and staff, the unique material in Special Collections (despite their own funding challenges) is seen as the best candidate to achieve this for the Library. While a logical choice to meet the goal of definition and distinction, properly developing Special Collections may draw limited resources away from general Library operations that support teaching and learning in the six Colleges.

Each functional unit in the Library had a very clear picture of how their work supports the mission of the Library, and most staff had a reasonable (if not detailed) idea of the functions of the other Library units and the interconnection between them. Some staff were unclear about an aspect or two of the Library's role in the University – such as the obligation to serve as a repository of campus history through the archiving of Course Catalogs, Class Schedules, master's theses (the highly specialized processing of which must be handled by outside Special Consultants hired for that purpose), the student newspaper, staff bulletin, and other print and electronic documents.

According to the published organization chart, the reporting structure is fairly flat, with all ten library faculty, one Administrative Support Coordinator, and a dotted line tie to a Library Asst. III in Special Collections, reporting directly to the Library Dean. A librarian supervises each department, and depth of staff occurs only in Technical Services, Systems, Circulation, and Interlibrary Loan. Special Collections has but one staff member and Electronic Resources has none. There are four Reference/Instruction faculty that all report directly to the Library Dean. Student assistants are employed chiefly in Circulation, Technical Services, and Interlibrary Loan.

The structure of unit functions and staffing make sense for the Library's current situation and up to now has been able to accommodate both reduced numbers of staff and changing demands from patrons. It is functional at present, but substantial changes from either of these two directions in the future may well require a restructuring of the Library organization and shifting of priorities.

## **2. Role within the University & Relationship to other Units**

As is appropriate for a university center of learning, the Dean reports directly to the Provost and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Additionally, participation in the Council of Deans and Academic Affairs Council allows the Library's voice to be heard at the highest academic levels on campus. While the Library directly supports instruction, research, and student academic success, the perception that the campus conveys seems to be that the Library is a service unit outside the academic structure of the Colleges and this view may affect the library's ability to fulfill its mission.

The principal administrative/staff unit on campus that relies on the success of the Library's mission to accomplish its own, is the President's Office through requests for information and research. While most campus units have a solid working relationship with the Library (Athletics may be the one exception), as noted above, the needs of individual campus staff for Library information appears negligible.

An integral partner in teaching and learning, the Library enjoys close working relationships with various components of the Academic Affairs Division – from the Colleges, Departments, Programs, and Graduate School, to the individual members of the faculty. Collection development begins with requests from faculty in departments and programs for Library materials to support their teaching or to arrange hands-on sessions on Library research, formats of scholarly papers, citation style, academic integrity and plagiarism. Certain units within Student Affairs, such as Disability Services Department, Academic Resource Center, and the Tutoring Center, and Associated Students, rely on mutual support with the Library for their various endeavors that support teaching and learning.

Other units closely associated with helping the Library achieve its mission are University Advancement which handles gifts and fund-raising opportunities; Auxiliary and Business Services for assistance with Foundation funds, Library ID cards, and externally funded programs and activities; and the office of Information Technology to provide the network infrastructure needed to make electronic resources available to its patrons.

The relationship with OIT is particularly healthy with OIT providing the campus broadband and wireless networks throughout the Library, and in a more focused aspect – the recent shared venture of the Collaboratory – a 46 station computing area located near the Reference Desk. While the Library Systems staff handles most desktop troubleshooting and computer set ups for their own staff, OIT remains available to assist Systems staff as needed.

As a client, the Library uses regularly the services of the Business & Finance Division, Financial Services, and Auxiliary Business Services, University Police Department, Human Resources, and Facilities Services. Career Development Services provides the student workers that are key to staffing the Library. With the exceptions noted above, interactions with the Student Affairs Division are generally confined to

issues of student discipline resulting from behavior within the Library (Judicial Affairs and Counseling Depts.).

### **3. Plans & Planning Process**

Library planning processes have been established in response to the WASC Accreditation Review recommendations of 1998. The first strategic planning process was implemented for the years 1999 – 2004. Formal planning now occurs on an annual or semi-annual basis with the *University Library Strategic Plan 2007* being the most current version incorporating goals and objectives for 2008 through 2013. With goals derived from the strategic plans of the CSU Libraries (2005) and the CSU Stanislaus University (current), the Library Dean undertakes planning in concert with the Library faculty to meet short and long term needs in each Library unit as well as anticipate technology trends and changing needs of patrons. Assessment data is incorporated into the planning process. Unit specific action plans (addressing particular themes) are developed to guide faculty and staff for a five-year period, but are re-visited and renewed annually. Themes or areas of concern are identified as follows: Partnership & Collaboration; Information Fluency; Collections: Technology; Library Building; Public Relations; Environmental Scan; Assessment; Continuous Improvement; and Funding – the last concern being paramount as it provides both the staffing and financial resources to implement actions identified in the other themes as they fulfill the mission statement.

According to the Self Study Report, the Library faculty and Dean of the University Library are the chief planners and some planning may originate within the units. However, it was noted by staff during the Review Team’s site visit that there does not seem to be a standard mechanism for staff to contribute to the planning process and thereby become stakeholders in the Library’s forward movement. The staff shortage may affect the ability to gather useful data for planning processes. Statistics are kept and used for planning purposes but may not provide enough useable details – for instance the reported total of 164,653 connections to databases in 2006/07 does not have sub-categories of in-house and off-campus connections and Reference Desk questions are only categorized as either Library-related or general informational (directions, campus information, etc.).

Concurrent with the regular planning is the work being done to prepare for a long delayed, major renovation and expansion of the existing Library facilities scheduled to begin in 2012. During the Site Visit, Library Faculty and staff expressed desire for early involvement or representation in the planning and design process and, indeed, to be involved at some level in any physical renovations of the current Library space.

### **4. Assessment Processes**

The Library evaluates its effectiveness through data gained from user satisfaction surveys, primarily administered to graduating seniors by the Office of Institutional Research on an annual basis. The web-based survey is a general look at areas of their experience on campus but one category is specifically devoted to the Library. Participation is entirely voluntary with no incentives offered, and the 2006/07 surveys

had a return rate of 15%. Additionally, the Library itself administers LibQUAL+™ a commercial survey product developed by Texas A&M and the Association of Research Libraries. This survey focuses on levels of service and satisfaction in various areas and also gathers demographic data about the respondents. The LibQUAL+™ survey was offered to approximately 7,000 members of the campus community (faculty, students, and staff) in 2005 and in 2007 to a random selection of 1,134 sophomores and juniors. The return rate for both surveys was approximately 6%. As noted previously, University staff are not regular patrons of the Library and faculty are not surveyed independently on a regular basis, so this may be their only chance to contribute user data based on their teaching needs. Lastly, a Suggestion Box had been available to Library patrons for comments and questions. The Dean's responses to these were posted on a bulletin board at the front entrance to the Library. Due to increasing disuse, the physical box has recently been replaced by a comment link on the Library's "Contact Us" page.

Results of the 2007 Graduating Senior survey show an increase in overall satisfaction with the Library (helpfulness of staff, use of collection, study areas, reference librarians, workshops, etc.) as well as the need for various resources, such as electronic databases. Both the 2005 and 2007 LibQUAL+™ surveys reveals no areas where patron's perception of library service was perceived to be below the minimum acceptable level. Both surveys however, revealed gaps in expectations of information availability suggesting that further study is needed to identify solutions to this need. Finally, the 2005 survey suggested that students are unaware of or not fully utilizing the Library's efforts to increase information literacy.

The Library's two-pronged method of gaining data to periodically evaluate its effectiveness provides valuable information for planning processes and justification for both preservation and increase of funding to meet patron needs. While the methodology for collecting student opinions is well established, faculty voices are essentially absent from the assessment process.

## **5. Resource Allocation**

A 2006/2007 budget comparison with the other twenty-two CSU libraries places Stanislaus at the middle of its six peer universities (in size and FTE), with the current budget at its highest level – \$2.7 million (approximately 3.2% of the University budget). For the last ten years, the Library has spent roughly one third of its budget on information resources (physical and electronic collections) and two-thirds on salaries. This ratio may shift this year at the cost of the collections due to increases in salaries and wages. Similarly, the ability to pay the same amount of student assistant wages as in previous years has been affected and fewer students will be employed. In the last five years budgetary allocations have not kept pace with increased student FTE numbers (almost 9% in five years). Moreover, for a three-year period (04/05 – 06/07) the Library's budget was reduced to the level of funding in 1999 – 2001. These declines make it difficult to catch up. The Library now functions with the same staffing level as it did in 2002/03. The ability to maintain reasonably current

computing equipment, servers and peripherals is also affected by budget constraints, although one-time university funding was allocated this year to replace the seventeen year-old automated catalog and integrated library system.

Inflation further complicates the budget situation, as the cost of augmenting and supporting library materials (books, periodicals, supplies, and equipment) has risen in the last few years while the Library's budget has remained static. This has necessitated a shift in priority to provision of access to electronic collections at the expense of growing the physical collection. While clearly an immediate survival strategy, it does allow the Library to work towards its goal of making information available to its patrons, albeit in non-traditional formats. While students are very happy to have immediate electronic access to electronic journals and databases which can be downloaded, emailed or printed, the growing reliance on a virtual collection and Interlibrary Loan may actually dissuade some patrons from using the Library. Anecdotal evidence from the Library Faculty suggests that students are discouraged when they learn materials (books, periodicals, and monographs) are not immediately and conveniently available to them in physical form.

It is estimated that the Library is utilizing 83% of its physical space (90% space utilization is considered the maximum for libraries) to house its 372,000 volumes equipment and staff. Even with the reduced rate of collection growth, the Library will outgrow its current capacity within five years and will require the expansion planned by a major capital project due for completion at the end of that same period. At present the Library is a pleasant environment, amply lit during daylight hours with natural light through large windows. Small to medium size sculptures and framed art decorate various areas and there are plans to acquire other works of art and artifacts for display. The recent conversion of an older space into a comfortable reading area seems to be attracting more students to the Library.

At the CSU Stanislaus Stockton Center, Library Access Center, a modest room with two offices is the Library support for students attending classes at that location. As full staffing is not practical, reference librarians keep scheduled hours on certain days of the business week but student assistants run the daily functions (closing for a one hour lunch period each day). Hours are greatly reduced during the summer terms. Basic reference materials are provided, as are course reserves, some circulating material, a few media playback devices and five computers for research or student work. It is a quiet and comfortable area for study, internet access, and basic library functions, yet the impression of Library staff there is that few Stockton faculty or Turlock distance learning faculty make their students aware of this resource. The students who use the facility (many of whom work day time jobs) would like to have the LAC open during evening hours.

During the Site Visit interviews, both Library faculty and staff demonstrated a strong interest in and concern for the Library's budgetary resources, and expressed a desire to be more involved in fiscal planning processes.

## 6. Evaluation of Unit Operations

The Library's organizational structure is flat with nine Library faculty reporting directly to the Library Dean (<http://library.csustan.edu/cbengston/Liborgchart.pdf>). Below this line, three units with staffing report to Librarians. Ultimately, the Dean of Library Services (Library Dean) is responsible for all facets of Library functions – including leadership, program development, collection & facilities planning, management, and budget and operations at both the Turlock and Stockton Library Access Center.

Library faculty have appropriate responsibility for the day to day operations of the Library with focus on their respective expertise (Reference, Systems, Information Literacy, Special Collections, etc.) and coordinate work or projects with other librarians and their units. They work closely with the Dean on planning issues, but their chief responsibility is to ensure that the print and virtual collection meet the needs of faculty and students.

Support, technical, and service staff (all under the supervision of Librarian Faculty) carry out their respective functions and also may supervise student assistants. It is at the unit level that planning for operational needs, procedure refinements, and new proposals may begin. As do the faculty, staff may also work with other units on issues or projects of mutual concern or responsibility.

The Self Study notes that occasional difficulties within the Library may be attributed to lack of information/communication and/or conflicting priorities. Further it acknowledges that improving communications, making known priorities, and giving faculty and staff opportunities for participation in an internal “council” for discourse on topical issues may help to reduce internal strife and stress. Staff acknowledged the essential “reactive” nature of their jobs (reacting to new technologies, patron needs, budget cuts, under-staffing, etc.) and expressed the desire to anticipate some of these challenges and work towards solving them before they become crises. The reactive nature of their jobs and worries about funding and further cuts, do seem to affect morale in some areas, although it must be said, there was a universal pride in the role that they play in educating students.

Comments from staff pointed out various impediments to meeting their responsibilities – such as Special Collection's lack of a scanner and server storage to digitally store the ever-expanding amount of University historical material mandated for preservation (both physical and, more increasingly, digital). Interlibrary Loan also expressed the need for a high-end digital scanner such as the other CSU ILL units have to more efficiently accommodate digital loan requests by eliminating time consuming intermediate photocopying steps. At the Library Access Center in Stockton, there are electrical safety hazards and the typewriter and printer are out of order. As to the working environment, concern was expressed for areas of the Library where the physical surroundings are showing signs of wear and tear as well as potential safety hazards.

**Circulation and Interlibrary Loan** have benefited from cross training and developed a good working relationship between the two areas. While understaffed, their morale remains generally high and they feel able to cope with unforeseen occurrences. However, concern was expressed over staffing needs to handle the increasing workload and complexity of resource sharing with respect to copyright, licensing, and system-wide partnerships such as LINK (the ILL loans more material than it borrows) as well as student and faculty expectations for immediate responses to requests.

**Technical Services** maintains a high standard of proficiency and pride in their work and the ability to continually adapt to new print and digital cataloging needs. Due to both their physical isolation from the rest of the staff and highly specialized nature of their duties, they have difficulty feeling that their work is understood and valued by rest of the staff – and consequently inter-unit camaraderie remains elusive. In a gesture of team work, staff suggested that they might handle the maintenance of the University web site, thereby freeing up one of the Library Faculty for more specialized duties.

As virtually every aspect of Library operations involves computer technology of one sort or another, the **Library Systems** unit feels torn between the larger issues of security, online catalogs and databases, and the requests for desktop technical support by staff and patrons at both the Turlock and Stockton sites. Systems staff noted that most of the other faculty and staff had little understanding of how long the “behind the scenes” processes and work actually takes. Any and all directions that the Library may take will impact the Systems team. As with other Library units, the feeling is that they are so busy putting out fires, that there is no time to plan fire prevention. Rapidly changing technology, expanding demand for e-resources and web services, and competing priorities place demands on limited staff resources that affect the unit’s ability to move forward and plan for future technology needs – the gap between what they are doing and what they could be doing.

**Library Faculty** stated clearly that their mission is policy formation, priority setting, and service and research support to patrons at the point of need. They expressed a desire for leadership to set direction and effect change while noting frustration with the inertia in their current decision making processes. They expressed openness to change in the interest of progress. Static resources are a problem and the necessary “reactive” culture interferes with the ability to determine the future direction of the Library and its services. Also noted was a certain gap between Library Faculty and staff, although it was generally agreed that relations were good. Further it was noted that the RPT process for tenure-track faculty tends to detract from group efforts as it encourages and values individual achievement.

**Special Collections & Archives** acknowledges great potential for being a primary vehicle for community outreach and the most likely area of the Library to achieve the directive of “definition and distinction.” The collection of county records, historical

photographs and letters is a unique resource for the geographical area but has not reached its full potential due to lack of resources to catalog and digitize the collection in order to make it accessible. Priorities for this within the Library seem unclear and due to lack of staffing, no further donations to Special Collections are being accepted as of this writing. Opportunities may be lost due to inadequate outreach. University master's theses must also be archived and these need specialized handling during specific months of the year. They are processed by outside Special Consultants. The requirement to house campus history with documents such as Course Catalogs, Class Schedules, the student newspaper, staff bulletin, and other print and electronic documents is also a workload and storage issue. The University trend of producing not only print but digital versions of these documents presents unique challenges for a small archive.

### **Miscellaneous**

By mutual agreement with the Disability Resource Services (<http://web.csustan.edu/DRS/index.html>), the Library houses the University's solitary Kurzweil reading machine (text to speech conversion for visually impaired students) in order to provide more access hours to disabled students. Support and instruction on its use is an additional workload for staff.

### **Summary of Library Faculty & Staff Concerns:**

Aside from the almost unanimous opinion that lack of funding resources is affecting service and the ability to move forward, four themes clearly heard during the Site Visit were: A) The desire of both Library Faculty and staff to better understand, if not participate at some level in, the Library's decision-making, budgeting, and planning processes; B) The need for improved communication (both vertical and lateral), whether a real or perceived problem does need to be addressed. It may be that the current organization structure does not allow for efficient dissemination of information. A multi-pronged approach using techniques such as regular email bulletins, a web page repository of documents, and unit staff delegates could ease this difficulty; C) With static or decreased staffing levels, cross training was widely thought to be a solution to the lack of depth in any one area and also would promote better understanding of other unit's functions as well as a better sense of community. Professional development and technical training were also suggested as real needs for staff; and D) Student distance from and their unfamiliarity with the Library and its services.

**Library Access Center, Stockton** (<http://library.csustan.edu/stockton/>): Ornamented with paintings, the Center is a quiet and pleasant place to research. It is an open room with one area designated for group study. Available to students are reserves (some of which are duplicated in Turlock) self paced instructional modules, software programs & instructional manuals, and periodicals that are stored for one year. A modicum of technology is available with five computer stations, one OIT provided computer and one station for disabled users. For media playback there are three VHS, one DVD, two CD/tape players, and a tape dubbing station. Students are happy with the personal

service they get there but are impatient with the two–three day wait for ordered books or periodicals. Similarly, they dislike the telephone consulting service with Librarians in Turlock. Staff on site identified the need for WiFi access, more attention to technology needs and maintenance of existing equipment, more computers, and a group study room with some sound isolation. Further, it was the considered opinion of staff that most students are unaware of the LAC and its resources – which may in turn result from a lack of faculty awareness or advocacy of the LAC.

## **7. Special Issues to be Addressed**

The Self Study identified three areas of concern: Contribution to University Student Learning Outcomes, Changing Nature of Libraries and Library Collections, and the Proposed Library Building Expansion and Renovation.

Admittedly, it is difficult, if not impossible, to directly measure the Library's contribution to student success and therefore ancillary evidence such as statistics, comparisons with data from other libraries, Library faculty testimony, and student opinion surveys, must be gathered and synthesized to get a sense of how effective the Library is in terms of student learning. As noted in the study, constructing a meaningful longitudinal assessment to quantify this factor could provide relevant data, but there may be no practical models in use by other libraries to jump-start such a project. It may be worthwhile to discover if course instructors are able to contribute data that can further augment the ancillary evidence.

The Changing Nature of Libraries and their Collections is identified in the study as a chief concern and interviews with Library faculty and staff during the site visit echo this challenge. With the rapid changes in technology and growing dependence on electronic rather than physical collections, the Library in its current state is compelled to remain reactive to user trends and technological innovations rather than become a leader or early adopter of paradigm shifts. A further and equally important aspect is the shift from libraries as mere repositories of information to social spaces that fill more students' needs and attract them with inviting and comfortable facilities.

The Self Study noted that the Library would be running out of physical space for its collections (staff space is not mentioned) between 2011 and 2013. The first phase of the Proposed Library Expansion and Renovation is scheduled for completion in 2013 – seemingly leaving no margin for the usual project and construction delays. Space to house the collection will almost certainly be a pressing problem by 2013 and the Library may need to seek temporary storage until such time as the project is complete. As the issue of physical space for collections, staff, patrons, equipment and technology, is likely to become a major stress factor, it will be important to involve staff in all of the planning stages to benefit from their experience and ideas in developing both temporary and long-term solutions for physical space challenges.

## **Evaluation of Quality & Effectiveness of Unit**

It comes as no surprise that the University Library is confronted with the same environmental challenges that affect other CSU libraries (particularly those within the benchmark range): enrollment growth, budget decline, accelerating technology, a shift to digital resources, decreasing circulation traffic and reference queries, increasing use of e-resources, raised user expectations and the difficulty of determining a clear direction as the information environment and user patterns change. Staffing constraints and limited budget affect the library's response to these drivers.

Within these challenging parameters, the Library is poised to meet its mission in a satisfactory manner. University Library Faculty and staff are clearly dedicated professionals with deep commitment to their work and a desire to do better in service to teaching and learning on campus. All departments are clear about their mission and how it aligns to the overall library and campus mission. Staff also recognize that they are in a climate of disruptive change but are uncertain how to address this. The question was posed "Do we meet the challenge or just do enough?" They are open to change but strongly stated a need for survival strategies and future direction. A murky future with many conditions beyond local control often creates a level of anxiety among staff in any organization and heightens the need for effective communication at all levels. To alleviate this pressure, some attention to organizational health may be helpful – workshops, seminars, readings, experts in organizational theory or some variation of these with a focus on understanding change may be worth putting into place.

The site visit illuminated two over-arching organizational needs that, whether real or perceived, should be given some thought – communication and leadership. Every department conveyed a sense of being un-informed or not included in strategic or tactical conversations and that there does not seem to be a way to float ideas upward or have them taken under serious consideration. All stated a desire for more budget background. Although this perspective may be caused by or exacerbated by anxiety, developing a communication strategy, with broad input, may be a productive remedy. It also seems evident that library staff must be helped to understand that more resources may not be forthcoming or at least not to a degree that would alleviate the pressure they feel. With better understanding, it may be easier for staff to adapt to the notion that the library will likely have to find its own solutions from within.

Every department conveyed a desire for more leadership, although the definition of what that might be varied. There was not enough time to tease out the detail around this notion. The desire for clear direction might be a useful theme for open meetings or some other form of group discussion. The library may benefit from some deeper futures thinking, using both a short-term time frame within current physical constraints and a longer view when they may enjoy the proposed facility renovation and expansion. One observation suggested envisioning the library as social space in order to attract and inform students. Issues that could be examined might be the size and future of the print collection; access versus ownership; use of off-site storage, if necessary; weeding the collection to re-purpose space; and focusing on outreach as a means to augment the Library budget.

## **Specific Recommendations for Improvement**

### **Funding & Resources:**

- Consider a campaign to transform the campus view of the Library from a service unit to an institution of instruction. This may secure enrollment funds based on FTE to augment the current budget.
- Explore other funding possibilities through Outreach to community and alumni (“Library Advancement” and/or “Friends of Library”) and pursuit of appropriate grants.
- Continued collaboration within the CSU library network to make more effective use of limited resources.

### **Planning & Participation:**

- Adopt a goal of making planning processes more transparent and participatory. Involve Library Faculty and staff in:
  - Internal budget allocation process and set a clear delineation of any criteria affecting the various categories of funding and their purpose/use.
  - Planning physical space for collection, staff, and patron planning.
  - Establishing a practice of regular interval monitoring of agreed upon goals, objectives, and milestones to be sure that progress or adjustments are being made as appropriate.
  - Look for ways to promote an “idea culture” within the Library community.

### **Improving Communications:**

- The relatively flat organizational structure and testimony from the Site Visit strongly suggest that it may be difficult for the Library Dean and the Librarians to get information to all levels of the Library and that an improvement in communications both vertical and horizontal would be highly beneficial to all. For effectiveness, a multi-pronged approach to communications is recommended and could include these and/or other strategies:
  - The “internal council” described in the Self Study.
  - A smaller body with rotating delegates could serve as bi-directional conduits for information in their respective areas.
  - “Delegate” representation to the various planning committees.
  - Bulletins and announcements sent via email to all staff and the same posted on a web page.
  - All-staff meetings with announcements, member’s items, and question and answer sessions as a regular part of the agenda.
  - There does not seem to be a reason for the Library Assistant III in Special Collections to have a dotted line reporting path to the Library Dean – perhaps residual from a previous org chart. Recommend re-examination of need for this.

- The four Reference/Instruction Librarians all report separately to the Dean – increasing the horizontal spread of the org chart. If *all* concerned agree, then a rotating “Head” or “Coordinator” could provide oversight and general direction to the Reference/Instruction Faculty on mundane matters might be considered as a technique for improving effectiveness and communication.

### **Decision Making:**

- The current practice among the tenure track Library Faculty to make decisions by “unanimous consensus” in a nine-member committee appears to be unwieldy and inefficient and allows the possibility of one or two voices impeding forward movement. Benefit may be derived by an organizational consultant’s analysis if all are willing to make a trial of a new decision making model. For that matter, the Dean or Library Faculty themselves could pose new ideas for structure and decision-making. Various processes could be used on a trial basis (and in lesser circumstances) with the understanding that mutual reviews be conducted to evaluate the new methodology. Possible ideas include:
  - Changing the group process to a conventional Robert’s Rules of Order model whereby issues to be decided are heard in discussion and the majority carries the vote – with RROs provisions for a Minority Report and tie-breaking vote by the Meeting Chair or Dean.
  - Streamlining the Library Faculty committee. One Librarian at planning meetings represents each Library unit (admittedly there is only one Librarian per unit), yet as noted earlier, there are four Reference/Instruction Librarians that attend. Perhaps the Reference/Instruction Librarians could choose a representative to participate on a rotating basis rather than have all four attend.
  - Establishing a rotating Chair of the Library Faculty to better facilitate communication and follow up.

### **Staff Morale & Professional Development:**

- Where possible, cross-train staff for mutual support, better understanding of other unit’s operations, and morale/community building.
- Create a technical support position or responsibilities within each Library Unit to increase self-reliance and relieve demands on Library Systems staff.
- Address areas within Library in need of deferred maintenance, safety corrections, and environmental health.
- Show spirit of concern for health and well being of all staff in stressful, reactive atmosphere with static resources and increased workload.

### **Data to Support Library:**

- Look for ways to collect more supporting data on Library effectiveness and improve response rate on student surveys. Seek regular data from course instructors (both tenure track and lecturers) about the Library’s effectiveness from their point of view.

**Student Outreach & Instruction:**

- As students in the Focus Group acknowledged a certain amount of ignorance or intimidation with regard to the Library, assertive outreach to students seems called for by these and other methods:
    - Increasing the Library's profile as a student-friendly, social space may be one approach.
    - Look for ways to demonstrate to students how the Library can help them.
    - Other students expressed a desire for a mandatory, library technology/information literacy course early in their career that could better help them meet course requirements and achieve academic success.
    - Collaboration and planning with instructors, chairs, and deans, could introduce Library instruction elements within courses and degree programs, thereby increasing the Library's profile as a key factor in academic success –“Why didn't I take this course two years ago?”
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