



Support Unit Review Self-Study Report, April 2008

Executive Summary

This self-study highlights the following environmental variables and their impact on library collections and services at CSU Stanislaus:

- Constrained budgets throughout the history of the institution have resulted in gaps in the subjects and date ranges covered by library physical collections.
- Substantial increases over the last five years in costs associated with employee compensation and library materials, supplies and equipment in a period of static or decreasing budget allocations to the Library have put tremendous pressure on library collection development.
- An accelerating trend toward electronic access to virtual collections of information resources and away from more traditional methods of access to physical collections means that library physical collections are often the information resource of last resort.
- At the same time, the increasing complexity of navigating and effectively using vast arrays of electronic information resources has exacerbated the difficulty of retrieving relevant and meaningful information.
- Relatively stagnant growth in library faculty and staff F.T.E. have made it virtually impossible to keep up with the demand for library services.
- Mounting pressure on university faculty for research, scholarly activity and professional development has challenged library faculty to re-conceptualize their relationship to their colleagues in the academic departments and programs.
- An increasing demand for self-paced and online learning in virtual classroom settings has forced library faculty to reexamine long-held assumptions about library reference and instruction.
- An increasing focus on the assessment of student learning outcomes is demanding the development of new ways to measure the effectiveness of library collections and services.
- Changing usage patterns of library collections, services and facilities have led library faculty and staff to question traditional assumptions about the role of academic libraries in higher education.
- The proposed renovation and expansion of the library facility has created uncertainty among library faculty and staff about the future of library collections, services and organizational structures.

The following implications of these changes in the environment are brought to light in the self-study:

- Without substantial augmentations to the library acquisitions budget it will not be possible to fill gaps in the physical collections or acquire and store locally any more than the most basic resources needed to support university curricula.
- Over time the portion of the library budget that will be spent on electronic information resources will grow and the portion spent on physical collections will shrink.

- While use of library physical collections is clearly on the decline, there is no evidence that demand for library facilities and services will abate in the foreseeable future.
- Interlibrary loan will continue to be a growing source of needed physical items not owned by the University Library.
- Library faculty and staff will continue to be challenged to stay abreast of the changing information technology landscape and to redesign library collections and services to meet the current and future needs of the university community.
- More time, effort and resources will be focused on reorganizing and retraining library faculty and staff.
- Library special collections will be further cultivated as a source of definition and distinction for the University Library, for their unique contribution to research and scholarship within the University and beyond, and thus as a justification for additional institutional resources.
- The need to educate the university community about the availability of library information resources and services will intensify, as will the need to develop and provide more sophisticated discovery and retrieval mechanisms
- Consequently, the need for instruction in the use of electronic information resources will intensify, as will the need to deliver instructional programs in a variety of formats.
- Constrained institutional resources will result in increased pressure on the Library to justify its budget and to assess and clearly demonstrate its positive contribution to student learning outcomes and institutional goals and objectives.