

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY STANISLAUS  
**University Library Support Unit Review**  
**Executive Summary**  
**September, 2008**

**Self-Study**

The University Library's self-study highlighted 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. has 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 were 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.

### **External Review**

The external review yielded a series of specific recommendations for improvement, which fall into seven topical areas as are outlined below.

#### Funding and 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.
- Continue collaboration within the CSU library network to make more effective use of limited resources.

#### Planning and participation:

- Make planning processes more transparent and participatory; involve Library Faculty and staff in the following activities:
  - Allocating the internal budget
  - Planning physical space for collections, staff, and patrons
  - Regularly monitoring agreed upon goals, objectives, and milestones to be sure that progress or adjustments are being made as appropriate
  - Promoting an “idea culture” within the Library community.

#### Communication:

- Improve the organizational structure to better facilitate communication, both vertically and horizontally, using a multi-pronged approach that would include the following and/or other strategies:
  - The “internal council” described in the Self Study
  - A smaller body with rotating delegates that 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 and/or a web page to all staff
  - All-staff meetings with announcements, member’s items, and question and answer sessions as a regular part of the agenda
  - Eliminate the dotted-line reporting path from the Library Assistant III in Special Collections to the Library Dean
  - Appoint a rotating “Head” or “Coordinator” to provide oversight and general direction for the Reference/Instruction Faculty

#### Decision Making:

- Consider reformulating the current decision-making model, which relies on the unanimous consent of the library faculty. Possible alternative models include the following and/or others:
  - Implement a conventional Robert’s Rules of Order model whereby issues to be decided are heard in discussion and the majority carries the vote.
  - Implement a representative management team that includes the coordinating librarian from each of the library functional units, as well as staff representation.
  - Establish a rotating Department Chair of the Library Faculty.
  - Engage the services of a consultant to analyze the library organization and recommend an appropriate decision-making model.

#### Staff morale and 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 needs and concerns related to 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.

#### Supporting data:

- Identify 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 and instruction:

- Increase the Library's profile as a student-friendly, social space; look for ways to demonstrate to students how the Library can help them.
- Consider developing a mandatory, library technology/information literacy course for students early in their academic careers that could better help them meet course requirements and achieve academic success.
- Collaborate and plan with instructors, chairs, and deans to introduce Library instruction elements within courses and degree programs in order to increase the Library's profile as a key factor in academic success.

### **Strategic Implementation Plan**

The following strategies and activities have been identified for the current (2008-09) year to respond to the Support Unit Review and advance the goals and objectives of the 5-year University Library Strategic Plan. All of the activities for 2008-09 will be carried out or coordinated by the dean of library services and library faculty.

**Strategy:** Strengthen connections with college faculty.

**Activities:**

- Implement new features for college faculty and enhance regular communications regarding library collections and service through the library website.
- Increase outreach to faculty through faculty workshops, faculty orientations, etc.

**Strategy:** Focus on students.

**Activities:**

- Develop a relationship with student government that will lead to a better understanding of the needs of students and nurture their support for the Library.
- Explore the formation of a team of student "library ambassadors" to assist with and increase outreach efforts
- Enhance library spaces for studying and socializing, and provide laptops and whiteboards that can be checked out for use in the Library.
- Develop an information literacy plan and enhance instruction capabilities

**Strategy:** Redefine library collections to be as responsive as possible to the changing information environment and supportive of the library mission and vision, as well as useful, appealing and tangible.

**Activities:**

- Review and revise collection development principles and policies.
- Complete ongoing periodicals review and format migration project.
- Continue project to weed or store lesser used materials.
- Increase availability of and access to electronic information resources.
- Utilize expertise and technology available via systemwide library collaborations to enhance access to collections.
- Implement strategies to improve security of information systems and protection of data.

- Implement LINK+ and other new features for interlibrary borrowing to enhance and expand access to external library collections.
- Improve “way-finding” (signage, maps, etc.) within the Library to provide better access to physical collections and facilitate browsing.
- Define special collections and revise collection development principles and policies.
- Assess preservation needs of the Stanislaus County and Cities Historical Documents collection (working with NEH grant consultancy).
- Work to make Special Collections more accessible to library users, e.g., enhance web page presence, increase cataloging for Special Collections, and add additional collection descriptions to COLD’s *Directory of Special Collections for CSU Libraries*.

**Strategy:** Develop library website, user interfaces, and system capabilities.

**Activities:**

- Improve web access to high traffic resources (articles, books, guides, etc.).
- Implement an ongoing process for continuous website assessment and development.
- Develop electronic thesis submission capability.
- Enable students to pay for library services with credit/debit/Warrior cards.

**Strategy:** Redesign and increase utilization of library spaces; refurbish the Library’s interior to establish the Library as a primary learning space on campus.

**Activities:**

- Implement plan to reconfigure reference area, including Collaboratory; investigate adding help desks, information desks and other kinds of service points.
- Enhance food and beverage services available in the Library.
- Add electrical outlets to accommodate increased demand for laptop computer usage.
- Reorganize and expand storage space in L135D/156 .
- Increase visibility and use of West Reading Room; host literature readings, lectures, and other academically oriented events.

**Strategy:** Track trends in library service and information technology, as well as in curriculum delivery and pedagogy.

**Activities:**

- Clarify our vision for the University Library and develop a vision statement that reflects the path that the Library must travel to transform.
- Involve constituents (faculty, staff & students) in planning for building expansion and renovation; design enhancements based on student needs.

**Strategy:** Assess library collections and services with the goal of improving workload distribution, efficiency, productivity, and service.

**Activities:**

- Implement assessment measures for library instruction programs.
- Improve statistics gathering for Web usage, electronic resources, etc.
- Build success measures (tangible outcomes?) into all action steps.
- Participate in systemwide QI initiatives and customer satisfaction survey.

- Establish physical and virtual suggestion boxes to gather input and feedback from students and faculty.
- Establish an advisory body composed of students, faculty and staff.
- Develop a monthly discussion topic on timely library-related issues to which all library faculty and staff would be invited.

**Strategy:** Align budget to strategic priorities and develop avenues for new and expanded sources of funding.

**Activities:**

- Develop and implement a library development plan.
- Establish a library friends group to assist with fundraising efforts.
- Provide full disclosure of budget allocations and expenditures