

Campus Review Team Report
University Libraries, University of Missouri-St. Louis
November 15, 2006

Campus Review Team:

Chair: Paul Speck, Associate Professor of Marketing, UMSL; Jane Zeni, Professor of English and Teaching and Learning, UMSL; Andrew Hurley, Professor of History, UMSL. There were no student members.

Input Used by the Campus Review Team:

Comments and Documents from the Review Facilitator: Judith Walker de Felix, Associate Provost, Academic Affairs and Dean, Graduate School
Comments from Other Administrators: Glen Cope, Provost and Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs; Peggy Cohen, Associate Provost for Professional Development and Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning
The UM-St. Louis Libraries' 2006 Self Study
Comments from the Dean of Libraries (Amy Arnott)
Comments from Stakeholder Groups (deans, faculty, students)
Comments from Library Staff
Discussions with the External Reviewer (George Rickerson, UM-System)
The Site Review Summary by the External Reviewer (George Rickerson, UM-System)

Review Process:

Prior to the review, team members familiarized themselves with their charge, read the Libraries' 2006 Self Study, and read representative internal and external reports from the 5-year reviews of other administrative units. On Thursday, October 19, the Chair met with the Dean of Libraries and the External Reviewer. On Friday, October 20, all three team members and the External Reviewer met with key administrators, stakeholder groups, library staff, and the Dean of Libraries. The following week, the Chair met again with the Dean of Libraries. The team received the External Reviewer' report on Friday, November 3.

This report consists of seven parts: primary strengths of the Libraries, recent accomplishments, ongoing challenges, areas of concern, the review team's response to the External Reviewer's Site Review Summary, recommendations the do not require new funds, and recommendations that do require additional funds.

Primary Strengths:

1.Helpfulness and Attitude of Library Staff. There was universal praise for library staff, especially those who work with users (e.g., Reference, Interlibrary Loan, Acquisitions). The library's greatest strength is this extraordinary commitment to customer service. Administrators should be recognized for fostering such a strong service-oriented culture.

2. Ability of Library Staff to Handle Change. As noted by the External Reviewer, our libraries have been subject to spiraling costs, flat budgets, a need to integrate the Mercantile Collection into the TJL collection, rapidly evolving technology, and fundamental changes in the way students, teachers, and researchers use library resources. Such changes would have humbled a weaker unit.

This Library has proven resilient and flexible. Management practices, like their extensive use of committees and group decision making, probably help them manage change.

3. Strategic partnerships. The Library has used several strategies to stretch its limited resources. The most important are partnerships that expand its holdings (the MOBIUS Consortium and the UM System collaboration) or support its services (UMSL's Information Technology Services and UMC's School of Information Science and Learning Technologies). The Library is very good at developing and managing such relationships.

Recent Accomplishments:

The Library has:

1. Expanded its virtual holdings to more than 20 million books and 65,000 periodicals.
2. Integrated most of the Mercantile Collection into the Main Collection. The Mercantile's circulating collection is now completely integrated, and the vault is mostly done.
3. Opened Library Research Commons in both the Thomas Jefferson and the Ward E. Barnes Libraries. Both areas are heavy used by students.
4. Removed 30,000 underused volumes from the Thomas Jefferson Library to an off-site system depository in order to free up critical shelf space.

Ongoing Challenges:

1. To continually re-imagine the role of our virtual library so that staff and web site best serve the academic mission.
2. To re-imagine the role of our physical libraries so that staff, space, and physical resources best serve the academic mission.
3. To provide a collection that adequately supports academic programs and faculty research. This is particularly challenging in regard to doctoral programs, research productivity, and our institutional goals to achieve higher US News & World Report, grant funding, and Carnegie rank.
4. To maximize access to all off-site resources so that the Library's virtual collection approaches the speed and functionality of a physical collection.
5. To continually educate students and faculty about resources, processes, and tools that can leverage their time and enhance their learning, teaching, or research.

Campus Review Team's Response to the External Reviewer's Report

The Review Team unanimously endorses the External Reviewer's Site Review Summary. It is an excellent analysis by someone who is intimately familiar with the UM-System and UM Libraries. He understands what can and should be achieved within our environment. His comments should be carefully considered by the Dean of the Graduate School, the Provost, and the Chancellor, as well as by the Dean of Libraries and the Faculty's Library Committee.

Areas of Concern and Recommendations that Do Not Require New Funds:

1. The Library's Self Study. It should have been more strategically focused and it should have provided more data. That said, the review team viewed it as a warm-up exercise for accreditation.

Recommendation: Future reports should be organized around UMSL's academic missions and the Library's role in achieving those goals: undergraduate education, graduate/ professional education, faculty research, and community outreach. They should include data to describe and demonstrate success in each area (educational activities, services, resources, use, adoption rates, benchmarks and trends). Data must be decomposed by strategic goal. Some data will be problematic since traditional library metrics fail to capture many new user and staff behaviors. That said, the library must provide data that reflect all resources and activities related to each academic mission.

2. Problems with the Review Process. There was inadequate input from Deans and students in this review process. There should have been two students on the review team. There was reported that the stakeholder groups were not notified until the last minute. What ever the cause, it was a missed opportunity. Student input is critical. Active participation by more Deans should lead to broader ownership in the library as a shared strategic resource.

Recommendation: Give stakeholder groups an opportunity to respond to the internal and external reports.

3. Decline in Library Use by Undergraduates. Circulation transactions have declined much more among undergraduates (55%) than among graduate students or faculty (19% and 24%). This pattern suggests that recent undergraduate students overuse web resources (Google and Wikipedia) and underuse academic resources. During the review, faculty asked if tutorials could be offered that teach students to better evaluate the quality of sources and better appreciate the importance of academic materials.

Recommendation: Library staff currently work with instructors of freshman composition and advanced composition to educate new freshmen and junior-level transfer students. Research and library skills need even more attention. Library staff and the English Department should review current practice. Indeed, all units and faculty could be urged to include exposure to and guidance on research in every class they teach. This should become a campus priority.

4. Ongoing Need to Educate Faculty About Changes. With the rapid pace of technological advancement and the changes in services mandated by budget cuts, it is difficult for faculty to keep abreast of current library resources.

Recommendation: Library staff should improve its informational outreach to faculty through regular meetings of the faculty liaisons and semi-annual e-distribution of informational flyers.

5. The unfilled position of Head of Access Services. It is an awkward time for this position to be unfilled. User behaviors are rapidly evolving, new practices and metrics are required, accreditation approaches, and Head of Access Services should participate in planning for the new addition.

Recommendation: The position is there. Fill it by Fall 2007.

6. Space. The Library needs well-equipped space where student groups can work. The Research Commons may already need expansion. Shelf space is limited. Current discussion of a library addition does not really address these needs. Quality work space is critical for student success, especially poorer, international, and residential students.

Recommendation: Make sure that all library areas are set for wireless. Create some areas with computers where groups can work on projects and presentations. Start planning for additional space, particularly on the South Campus.

7. Limited weekend hours. This is an old complaint that grows more important as our number of residential students increases. It may be more relevant to the Barnes Library because of its proximity to dorms and apartments.

Recommendation: Total weekend service hours could be stretched without increasing staff hours by overlapping TJJL hours and Barnes Library hours. For instance, on Saturday TJJL could open 8-4 Saturday and Barnes 10-6. And on Sunday, TJJL 12-8 and Barnes 2-10. A campus bus could be used to transfer interested people when TJJL closed. This increases the amount of time when at least one library facility is open by four hours a weekend. Barnes should be open later because of its proximity to the dorms.

8. Expertise on Fair Use. Faculty expressed a need for guidance on Fair Use of Copyrighted materials that they post on MyGateway.

Recommendation: Expertise should be acquired and a tutorial offered, perhaps in concert with the Center for Teaching and Learning.

9. Faculty are not consulted adequately on budget priorities and collection objectives. Faculty are asked for feedback on journal cuts, but this is only after the larger decisions have been made.

Recommendation: Better use should be made of Area Reps and the Senate Library Committee. They should help the Dean of Libraries evaluate resources, identify deficiencies, prioritize needs, and develop an action plan to address the priorities. Faculty liaisons should schedule informational meetings with faculty once a year. Some issues may require discussion in the Academic Advisory Committee or the Budget Committee.

10. The Library's strategic value is not sufficiently appreciated by Campus Administration. Every academic program and faculty member depends on the library. Next to students and faculty, the library is UMSL's most important asset. It leverages every aspect of our academic mission. Under-investment in the library limits discovery and creativity. It generates no revenue, but it adds value to every aspect of our enterprise.

Recommendation: The library must be viewed and managed more strategically. It must have a higher priority in the Capital Campaign, the Master Plan, and the Budgeting Process. The Provost must become its champion.

Areas of Concern and Recommendations that Require New Funds:

11. The impact of past and pending journal cuts on UMSL's doctoral programs. Our research capability must resemble that of those institutions with which we are expected to compete. Faculty say additional cuts will jeopardize the integrity of our doctoral programs. IPEDS data indicate that UMSL's subscriptions rank eighth in the state, below Missouri State and Truman State and only on par with Central Missouri. None of these schools are research universities. None offers a PhD.

Recommendation: Evaluate the adequacy of resources for all doctoral programs. Give these areas budget priority. Address this problem first.

12. The cumulative effect of a small monograph budget. Although MOBIUS has expanded our virtual holdings and the Mercantile has expanded our physical holdings, funding for locally held core monographs seems inadequate. IPEDS data seem okay only because they include Mercantile numbers. Without the Mercantile, our book holdings are fewer than Missouri State and Central Missouri. Our general collection is comparatively thin and increasingly out-of-date.

Recommendation: Ask the Library Committee and Area Reps to assist the staff in assessing our core monographs. Develop a 5 or 10-year plan to address it.

13. The cumulative effect of a low equipment budget. From 2002 to 2005, the annual equipment budget averaged only \$14,000, a 75% drop from the previous six years. In FY2005 it fell to zero.

Recommendation: Restore the equipment budget to its former level.

14. UMSL's Per Capita (FTE Student) Library Expenditures are at least 15% lower than they should be compared to other Missouri libraries. UMSL's 2002 expenditures are on par with Southeast Missouri and Truman State (schools that do not have doctoral or professional programs) and lower than UM-Rolla (a school that has fewer and more concentrated programs). Since our ratio of students to librarians is about where it should be, the problem seems to be constant underfunding of electronic journals, print journals, monographs, and equipment (as noted above).

Recommendation: Increase the annual library budget by 10-15%. Go through a planning process before the new funds are spent, develop a long term strategy regarding price inflation, get plenty of faculty, student, and dean input. Don't let past patterns determine the future. Be strategic. Spend the money well.