

WASHBURN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY: 2008—2010 Operational Strategic Plan

Mission Statement: The mission of the Washburn University Libraries is to guide teaching, learning and research in the transformation of our community through its intellectual discovery and educational experiences.

Core Values of the Washburn University Libraries:

1. The Washburn University Libraries will collaborate with other members of the University to enrich the research and learning community
2. The Washburn University Libraries will work to further the existence of a learning society, with particular attention paid to information literacy
3. The Washburn University Libraries will promote intellectual freedom with the understanding that it is dependent upon immediate and seamless access to information in diverse formats from a variety of sources
4. The preservation of materials, including the intellectual and historical output of Washburn University, is a primary focus of the Washburn University Libraries
5. Innovation, and its promotion, is crucial to the success of the Washburn University Libraries

Narrative:

Historically, libraries served as the intellectual and cultural heart of their university, and the design of this 2008-2010 Strategic Plan is to return the Washburn University Libraries to that position by making Mabee Library the “Academic Living Room of the Campus.”

The caliber of a university’s libraries, it is generally accepted, is a reliable mechanism through which to evaluate both the quality of education offered and scholarship produced at the institution.¹ Scholars, for example, with access to the best information resources have 87% more success in their research activities.² This finding led to a major white paper by The New York State Higher Education Initiative that argued “the infrastructure needed to spur an economic boon in the twenty-first century is one of information,” of the type that resides in academic libraries and “not on the public web.”³

In the seminal study of all university architecture, Brian Edwards declared “the university library” as “arguably the most important building on the campus. “The library” wrote Edwards, “is the signifier of learning.”⁴ Building upon this idea, Peter Jamieson carefully demonstrated that “it is not possible to fundamentally change the character and function of the campus setting without addressing the role of the central library.”⁵

¹ D. Yvonne Jones, “How Much Do the “Best” Colleges Spend on Libraries? Using College Rankings to Provide Library Financial Benchmarks” College & Research Libraries 68:4 (July 2007): 343-51.

² Martin Akel & Associate, A Study of Correlation: The Effect of R&D Information Tools on Research Success (Chester, New Jersey: commissioned by Reed-Elsevier Publishing, 2005), 4.

³ NYSHEI White Paper, “The Strategic Value of Academic Libraries in Economic and Workforce Development” (July 25, 2007): 1 & 3.

⁴ Brian Thomas, University Architecture (London: Spon Press, 2000), 78.

⁵ Peter Jamieson, “Positioning the University Library in the New Learning Environment,” Planning for Higher Education 34:1 (September/November 2005): 6.

Thus, for Washburn University a benign neglect of its Libraries is not an option.

This Strategic Plan focuses upon public services because the 21st Century Washburn University Libraries will reflect the needs of its clients. The Washburn Libraries will embrace new technologies as they emerge, and accept the reality that the majority of 21st century students and faculty begin their search for information electronically, meaning the Libraries internet presence must receive significant attention as a tool of outreach.

Technology has transformed university libraries on the modern university campus, causing the historian Edward Ayers to refer to librarians as “the real heroes of the digital revolution in higher education.”⁶ The embracing of technology by librarians causes library users to access and use Library collections in increasingly diverse ways. This means no library can be static in its services, and that this strategic plan will promote the careful and continual examination of all its operations. The Washburn Libraries will recognize, for example, the wealth of information that overwhelms the modern university student, and develop and implement an interdisciplinary Information Literacy program for Washburn. Likewise, an intense focus upon public services means that the Washburn Libraries will look for ways to integrate themselves into the discussion of, among other issues, General Education, the Freshman Experience and, of course, Information Literacy at the University. In addition, through its increasingly active Liaison program the Libraries will seek ways to collaborate with the various academic units across campus to meet their specific needs.

Libraries are so much more than simple repositories, and yet the collection of information remains central to their existence because a university exists to collect, develop and disseminate knowledge. The Library will continue to hold a crucial role in this process, one that will take place in both physical electronic realms. Building and refining a Digital Institutional Repository is a practical and cost-effective manner through which the Library can collaborate with faculty to promote scholarly communication. A concerted effort to acquire both the intellectual and institutional output of Washburn University means that Special Collections will play an important role in the 21st century library.

Washburn University has committed itself to the Transformational Experience and the notion that learning is more than just the accumulation of credits. Through this process, Washburn University recommitted itself to the support of its Libraries because of the recognition that they serve as the historic incubator of inter-disciplinary thinking and discovery.⁷

The Libraries of Washburn University must provide an environment in which the promotion of imagination and wisdom occur. To accomplish this goal significant upgrades of the current facilities are required because the Libraries must offer a physical and sensory experience that inspires learning. Importantly, shaping much of this document is the idea that to get to information anywhere, one has to access it somewhere. This means, therefore, that the physical Library will remain the primary place where students and faculty turn when they need to use the tools of access and seek assistance in obtaining knowledge. Thanks to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, a better understanding of

⁶ Edward L. Ayers, “The Academic Culture & The IT Culture: Their Effect on Teaching and Scholarship” Educause Review (November/December 2004): 50.

⁷ “The Washburn University Transformational Experience,” approved by the Faculty Senate on October 24, 2005, and the Washburn Board of Regents on December 16, 2005, accessed at <http://my.washburn.edu/cp/home/loginf> (June 17, 2008).

the desires and practices of modern library clients exists. For example, those who enter the modern library, unlike users of the past, are not looking for large amounts of information. Instead, they search for specific knowledge. To find the precise information they desire, modern library clients recognize that various research methods are necessary and that asking for assistance is worthwhile. The Pew research offers the following information about modern library clients:

Among those aged 18-30, **62%** visited libraries

Among those aged 31-42, **59%** visited libraries

A significant drop-off in visits occurred among the group aged over 50. For example, among those aged 53-61, **46%** visited libraries.

Among those who self-reported as active internet users, **61%** visited libraries versus **28%** non-users.

Young active internet users visit libraries because they are information hungry and know that in the library they can take advantage of an array of materials in a social setting.⁸

Those institutions that provide a Library into which students enter in large numbers also, importantly, see a positive impact upon retention. In the major study of the role of libraries and student retention, the scholar Elizabeth Mezick declared: "Data analysis reveals that while statistically significant relationships exist between each category of expenditure and student retention within every Carnegie Classification, the strongest relationships exist between total library expenditures, total library materials expenditures, and serial expenditures at baccalaureate colleges."⁹

The idea of the Washburn Libraries as the "Academic Living Room" of the University drives this strategic plan and its commitment to public services because it will allow the Libraries to play a central role in each step of a Washburn student's academic life, and further their preparation for a lifetime of learning.

A knowledge based society demands people know where to find and how to evaluate and use information, and Librarians have long played the role of connecting clients to the information they require. This attribute of library life will only become more important in the 21st century because of the increasing availability of information, thus the Washburn Libraries will make its decisions not based upon trends but through collaboration with the University faculty and upon the core values and needs of the communities they serve. The goal of this strategic plan is, ultimately, twofold:

1. To provide an operational strategy for the next two years (2008-2010) for the daily activities of the Washburn University Libraries
2. To begin a conversation that will result in further intellectual dialogue among people searching for answers to profound questions across disciplines, while drinking their coffee in the new Libraries of Washburn University.

Of note, this means that a second vision plan that deals specifically with the future of the Washburn University Library facilities is both necessary and forthcoming.

⁸ Leigh Estabrook, Evans Witt and Lee Rainie, "How People use the Internet, Libraries, and Government Agencies When They Need Help" The Pew Internet & American Life Project (December 30, 2007).

⁹ Elizabeth M. Mezick, "Return on Investment: Libraries and Student Retention" The Journal of Academic Librarianship 33:5 (Spring 2007): 564.

I. Public Services

Goal: Deliver user centered services customized for the 21st century student, teacher and scholar.

A. Information Literacy

Action: To develop a campus wide information literacy plan with a significant online tutorial by July 1, 2008. August 1, 2009, is the target date for full implementation of said plan

B. Research Assistance

Action: To ensure the providing of high quality assistance at the point of need—either in person or via electronic means

C. Collections

Action 1: Improve the breadth, depth and accessibility of information resources and library collections required to support instruction and research

Action 2: Revise the processes of collection analysis, selection and purchasing of materials

Action 3: Evaluate the relevancy and scope of both print and electronic serials

Action 4: Evaluate the relevancy and scope of both print and electronic reference materials

Action 5: Enhance the mechanisms through which to improve consortium purchases of library materials

D. Outreach

Action 1: Create a range of programs designed to promote the libraries to the Washburn University community and beyond

Action 2: Offer library related service-learning opportunities for students

E. Circulation

Action: To create an increasingly automated and efficient 21st century circulation experience

F. Scholarly Communication

Action: Lead the university conversation regarding copyright, issues of intellectual freedom, access and the ethical use of knowledge

G. Interlibrary Loan

- Action 1: Streamline and make more efficient the process of interlibrary loan
- Action 2: Collect and disseminate interlibrary loan statistical information to enhance the process of collection development
- Action 3: Develop a process for the immediate evaluation of user requests with regard to their suitability for our permanent collections

II. Digital Initiatives

Goal: Provide a state of the art technical infrastructure and tools in support of both user access and internal library operations

A. ATLAS

Action: Create and maintain an intuitive ATLAS (online book catalog) experience

B. Network and Technology Operations

Action 1: Maintain network integrity while ensuring all aspects of technology are accessible, fully functional and efficient in support of Public Services and Library Operation

Action 2: Maintain a strong relationship with ISS to ensure the technology needs of the Libraries are a priority for the University

C. Website design and support

Action 1: Design and maintain an intuitive Library 2.0 web experience, in which the user experience is the dominant design element

D. Digital Repository design and support

Action 1: Provide technical skills to develop and support the Washburn University Digital Repository

Action 2: Help plan and implement a specific process for archiving and submitting items to the Institutional Repository

E. Public Services support

Action 1: Collaborate with Public Services to investigate and implement the Library 2.0 experience

Action 2: Fully implement a laptop checkout program for students

Action 3: Work with ISS to place a libraries tab in MyWashburn

III. Curriculum Resources Center (CRC)

Goal: The mission of the CRC is to enhance the teaching and learning initiatives of the Washburn University Department of Education as well as support the community in their ability to develop successfully 21st century Learners

A. Outreach

Action 1: Continue to collaborate with community librarians and educators, such as KTWU's "Sunflowers to the Stars" partnership, KC Life Sciences partnership, Read180 collaborations, University Child Development and Topeka Collegiate

Action 2: Explore a partnership with the Department of Education and the Kansas Reading Association to enhance programs such as the Jamaican Transformational Experience

B. Digital Education Laboratory

Action: Develop a technology driven learning space for future educators

C. Digital Initiatives

Action: Design and maintain an intuitive Library 2.0 experience specializing in education content

D. Public Services

Action: Promote CRC orientations in EPIC courses and in ED 250 "Becoming an Education Professional" courses

E. Library Operations

Action: Improve the processing of and access to preview and instructional materials

F. Interlibrary Loan

Action: Explore participation in area school interlibrary loan systems

G. Collections

Action: Explore alternative models for acquiring, using and providing access to both print and electronic textbook materials

IV. Special Collections

Goal: To collect, preserve and expand access to the intellectual output, institutional memory and special collections of the university community. Of particular importance is the development of an expanded and improved space for collections, staff and researchers

A. University Archives

Action 1: Increase the digitization of university archival materials

Action 2: Make accessible unique local resources in the appropriate OCLS international union catalog, thus making said materials available to the global research community

Action 3: Develop a records and information management program that ensures the transfer of appropriate university records to the archives

B. Koch Art History Collection

Action 1: Complete the processing of the collection for improved accessibility and usability

Action 2: Determine donor's specific vision for the collection

Action 3: Institute programming to demonstrate the teaching and research value of the collection to our various communities

C. Washburn and Rare Books Collection

Action 1: Restore at-risk materials and ensure the long-term preservation of the collections

Action 2: Develop a plan to purchase titles to complete the original Lincoln College Library collection

Action 3: Determine the collection priorities for the acceptance and acquisition of rare books

D. Digital Institutional Repository

Action 1: Collect, preserve and provide access to the intellectual output of the university community in electronic format. Given top priority are Washburn Transformational Experience materials and faculty research

Action 2: Develop a plan for securing the equipment and personnel necessary to build and maintain the repository

V. Library Operations

Goal: Enhance the effectiveness of the library organization in order to achieve higher levels of public service and efficiency

A. Acquisitions and Processing

Action 1: Improve the efficiency of processes to make available library materials to support Public Services.

Action 2: The Libraries will ensure the effective management of print and electronic serials, including databases.

Action 3: Practice effective techniques of sound ethical, fiscal and legal policies and procedures within acquisitions management.

B. Organizing materials for access

Action 1: Work closely with Public Services and Digital Initiatives to ensure the quality and usability of the online catalog and databases.

Action 2: Facilitate maximum access to all library materials, including the Digital Institutional Repository, with minimal delay by maintaining accurate catalogs and providing timely cataloging

VI. Administration

Goal: Guides and ensures the completion of the libraries vision and mission by planning, organizing, directing and promoting all elements of operations. Considered paramount is the encouragement of a positive, diverse and forward thinking work environment that positions the libraries to fulfill their historic role as the center of the university learning community.

A. Outreach

- Action 1: Involve the various library partners in the ongoing visioning process to develop a 21st century library for Washburn University
- Action 2: Promote programs and marketing that bring visibility to the Libraries as the intellectual and cultural center of the university community

B. Budget

- Action 1: The Libraries will provide the University with a realistic annual financial plan that includes current and future expenditures for staff, programming, technology, materials and equipment
- Action 2: The Libraries will work with the University administration and faculty to ensure realistic evaluations of all course, curriculum and program changes regarding their potential financial impact upon the libraries
- Action 3: The Libraries will work with WEA, Institutional Development, the Friends of Mabee Library and the University Grants Office to identify and obtain additional sources of financial support for the libraries
- Action 4: The Libraries will establish procedures to maximize and ensure the efficient use of university resources

C. Personnel and professional development

- Action 1: The Libraries will work with the University administration to evaluate the staffing model
- Action 2: The Libraries will commit the necessary resources to ensure successful professional development for all staff members, and seek increased funding for said activities
- Action 3: The Libraries will develop and implement strategies for cross-training and the transfer of operational knowledge among staff
- Action 4: The Libraries will develop and implement strategies for the career advancement of staff.
- Action 5: In conjunction with the VPAA, the Libraries will develop and implement strategies to enhance its recruitment efforts to locate and hire highly qualified staff for all position openings.
- Action 6: Establish training programs for staff and student employees to deal appropriately with emergencies

D. Facilities management

- Action 1: Design and develop plans for new library spaces, while working with our various partners to develop a vision of the 21st Century Library
- Action 2: Make the best use of current physical spaces to provide a welcoming and collaborative learning environment
- Action 3: Periodically review and update library policies as necessary

E. Friends and Student Friends of Mabee Library

- Action: Integrate the Friends into the visioning process, and provide said groups with the necessary assistance to fulfill their functions in supporting development of the Libraries

F. Faculty Library Committee

- Action 1: Encourage more active participation of the faculty in the visioning process for the 21st Century Library
- Action 2: Maintain strong communication and collaborative efforts with the faculty regarding budget and collection issues that affect teaching, research and curriculum development

G. Assessment

- Action 1: The Libraries will create and maintain a culture of assessment across all units
- Action 2: The Libraries will annually report their assessment findings to the University administration
- Action 3: The Libraries will participate in university-wide assessment activities to ensure compatibility with the University mission

H. Co-operative Efforts

- Action 1: The Libraries will work through the Council of Deans and Directors of Libraries (CODDL) to leverage local and statewide resources.
- Action 2: The Libraries will work alongside the ATLAS partner libraries (Washburn University School of Law Library, Kansas Supreme Court Law Library, State Library of Kansas and Kansas Historical Society Library and Archives) to enhance the functionality of the integrated library system
- Action 3: The Libraries will work with the School of Law Library to investigate the further leveraging of university resources