Future of the Library

Scenario: what the library will look like in 2015: envisioning our best possible future

As the Strategic Plan (2006-2011) reaches its conclusion and completion, it is time for the LSL to look into the future and set some goals and plans. The MT and Supervisors have embarked on scenario planning in each of their areas—considering recent changes and likely trends in health care and medical libraries. Here is a composite of those ideas—building on our new model of “service and outreach.”

The Mello RNAi Institute and Research facility is near completion, following the earlier completion of the Albert Sherman Center. UMass Worcester has expanded to include new programs in allied health fields and public health. Total student population has doubled to 2,000 students in all 3 schools. The first class of medical students involved in the LiNC curriculum model recently graduated. The curricula for both SoM and GSN students reflect the renewed interest in evidence-based primary care, with LSL staff playing an ever-increasing role. The Library budget has steadily increased in operation and grant funding. The library continues to be a leader nationally in e-science initiatives and management models for health science libraries. The library has instituted an innovative decentralized model for library services outlined below, while also functioning as the unified cultural center for UMW.

The new LSL motto is: “The Lamar Soutter Library: Leadership in Service and Learning.”

Services

- Librarians are embedded in the clinical and research departments, but still an overall administrative team is based in the LSL, providing coordination, support, and professional development.
- Professional outreach has increased.
- Librarians will have more subject knowledge/expertise; many will have advanced degrees and faculty appointments in subject specialties. Teaching and research support will become the major foci of the professional staff.
- The LSL is involved with publishing, e.g. developing online journals, managing data sets, and overseeing compliance with government mandates to share research (NIH, NSF, data). The LSL takes an active role in promoting Open Access.
- The LSL website is a dynamic resource where patrons can customize and request services.
- Many previously internal systems are now outsourced. Systems deals with developing new library-based web products/services such as customization options for the user, centralized management of e-resources and hardware, enhanced social networking, and consulting services for personalized web sites and graphics. School IS and Library Systems work together to provide support to patrons.
• Library has developed a portal to showcase the research of the institution and facilitate future collaborations.
• Librarians are responsible for educating members of the public who are considering participating in a clinical trial. The LSL is an important resource for consumer health information, and serves as the NE Regional Center for Health Literacy. The LSL provides direct public health information outreach to communities that suffered cuts in their municipal departments in the 2008-2010 recession.
• OMHA is now the Office of Medical History, Humanities, and Archives, reflecting its role in humanities, arts, and cultural activities on campus.
• OMHHA serves as the recognized home for the common cultural and historical legacy of UMass Worcester, publishing historical writing, developing exhibits, hosting speakers, attracting researchers, and actively acquiring a unique collection of history, humanities, and archival materials both for circulation (current books) and for archival research.
• Copyright responsibility is institutionalized. The Office of Copyright Assistance and Education, housed within the LSL, works closely with other UMMS/UMass offices (e.g. Office of Technology Management, Office of General Counsel, IS, Office of Research) on copyright issues—including consultation, training of faculty, students, researchers, administrators, staff, website maintenance, legislative advocacy, etc. UMMS provides funding for permissions and staff.
• The expanded LSL Financial Office, an internal service, in partnership with UMMS central purchasing, has simplified financial management, including income management, file management, and the execution of policies and procedures.
• Across hospitals, academic health centers, research centers, and medical practice offices, the New England RML leads the efforts in establishing new roles for medical libraries in local implementation of federally mandated HealthIT initiatives.
• With the direction and assistance from the New England RML, librarians are key players in assisting local health care providers in migrating to electronic health records (EHRs) and in training consumers to adopt personal health records (PHRs).

Resources
• Library purchases journal back files and 10,000 e-books with a private donation of $2 million.
• The library retains a core collection of print journals and books. Most major texts are electronic only. Besides rare books, the print collection emphasizes works in history, biography, humanities, literature, the visual arts, and commentary – disciplines which are now important to the curricular balance of medical science with the art of medicine.
• The LSL participates in collaborative relationships with other key/strategic libraries to expand access to other collections.
• Collection development is patron initiated, and collections are primarily electronic.
• Books and journals circulate using a remote inventory system. Most books and reserves are online.
• RBR, 8th floor journals and Archival collections have been digitized to expand access via the web.
• Archival donations are integrated with institutional Records Management.
• All students are required to have their own laptops.
• WorldCat Local is totally unmediated. Requests go to the department liaison.
• Patron-direct ordering through a document supplier and purchase-on-demand replaces ILL Borrowing.
• The library continues to be a net lender and leads regionally with scan-on-demand technology and with vendor permission negotiations.
• The Library proactively trains its Staff as an important resource-- in new technologies, outreach, policy, changing roles, cultural competency. (Some training is outsourced or online.)

Library as Place

• The library is the only dedicated interdisciplinary place on campus. It brings the professions together by providing a space for students from all three schools to interact and collaborate.
• The library is the campus cultural center, hosting events in the humanities (art, music, poetry, writing, literature, etc.), history, and archives.
• Second and third floors house computer labs (video production and collaboration centers) and classrooms. The Library connects to its strategic partners, the Divisions of Health Informatics and Bioinformatics, on the East side of the Mezzanine level, adjoining the 2nd floor of the clinical wing.
• The Library's first floor is a study/gathering area with a café, bookstore, and a technical writing center.
• The Library is open to UMMS/UMMHC staff and students 24 hours per day via e-card access, with LSP staff support during regular library hours.

Reputation/Awards

• Library is awarded the RML contract for 2011-2016.
• Library is awarded the Chancellors Award for Collaboration in Education.
• Library receives an NSF grant for $2.5 million to nationally support data curation in the life sciences.
• Library is recognized for taking a leading role on library issues (e.g. licensing, contract, copyright, open access), working with local, regional, national organizations (e.g. BLC, NERL, MLA, ARL, ALA, SPARC, WALDO)