Strategic Library™

The State of Academic Librarian Spaces

» Results from a survey that looked into how work spatial environments affect librarians' happiness.*

BY BRYAN IRWIN AND ALIZA LEVENTHAL

How happy are librarians with their work spaces? We asked ourselves the same question last year and were surprised to find little discussion on this topic within library and design publications. Since library and architecture professionals often place heavy emphasis on patron spaces to ensure that academic libraries remain dynamic and engaging places, it's understandable that individual librarian's workspaces are less of a focus.

Still, this lack of information prompted us to explore the topics of changing librarians' roles and spaces. To gather information, we disseminated a survey through several American Library Association (ALA) listservs last March. The results of this survey, representing just over 400 respondents from the United States and Canada, provides valu-

able insight into academic librarians' spatial experiences.

The roughly 90-question survey provided significant quantitative data about the types of spaces academic librarians are working in and how well those spaces fit the needs of their work. Most impressive, though, was the significant level of detailed spatial descriptions and sincere observations we received from our respondents.

One of the most remarkable comments, made by several respondents, was how little they've thought about their spaces prior to the prompting of our survey. Comments like these helped us structure our approach to the data analysis to encourage readers to think critically about their own spaces. It is our sincere hope that our initial research facilitates further discussion on the issue of librarians' spatial needs.
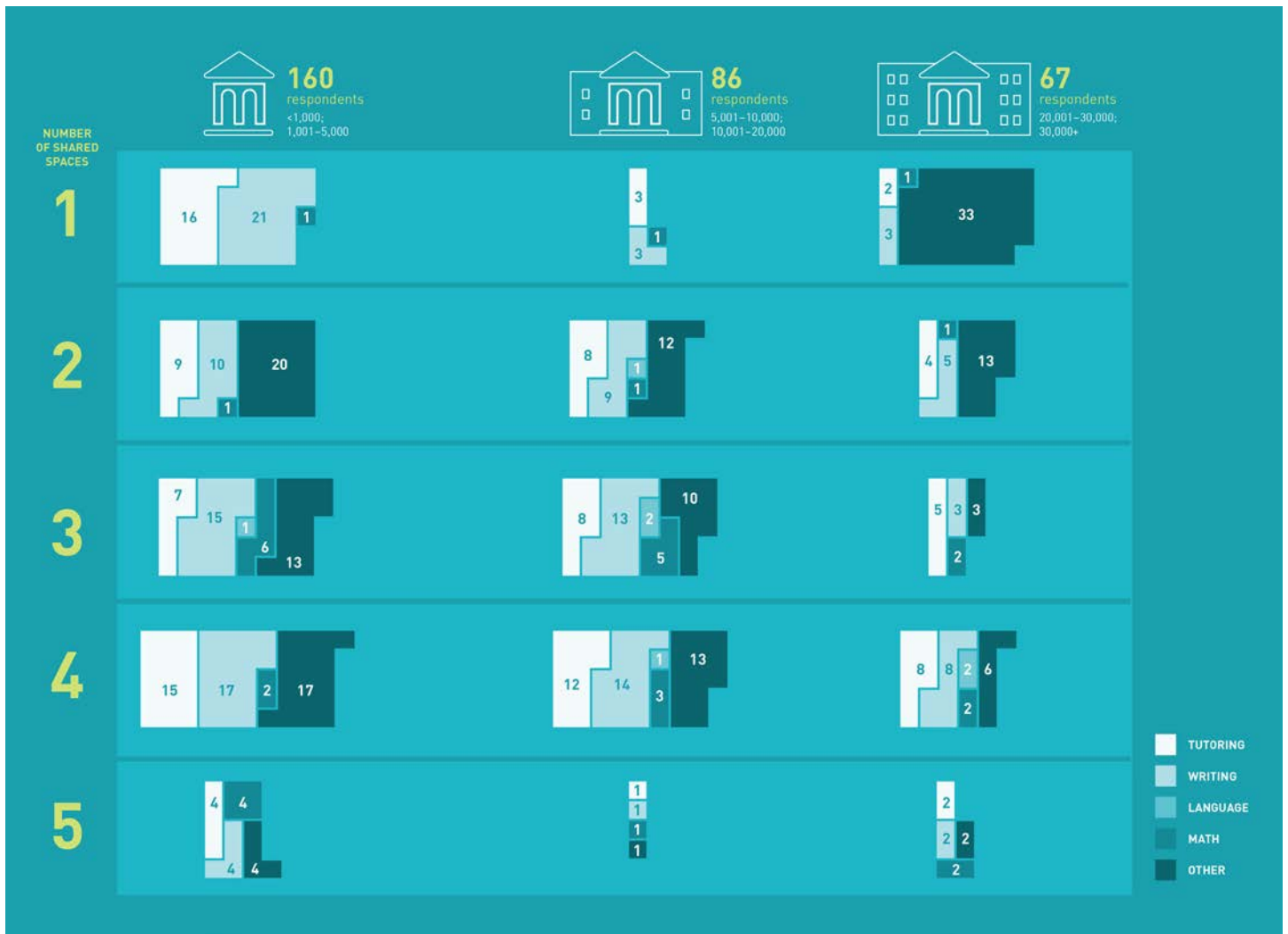
Image 1: Librarians' shared space by institutional size.

SURVEY TOPICS

The survey addressed four topics: changing roles and responsibilities of academic librarians; shared spaces within the library; librarian workspaces broken down between public-facing desks and private workspaces; and recent library renovations.

Changing Roles: To understand changes in the responsibilities of our respondents throughout their career, we asked respondents to indicate responsibilities of the position for which they were originally hired, using a list of twelve professional activities. This question had two follow-ups: first, respondents were asked to indicate which responsibilities had been added to their original position, and second, they were asked to indicate which responsibilities had been reduced or removed from their original position.

While reference, education and outreach, and collection development were the most prevalent original responsibilities, not all held their dominance over the course of the respondents' tenure. Education and outreach has continued to grow, but reference has experienced the most significant decrease of all original job responsibilities. Meanwhile, digital collection development, technology development and maintenance, procedures for operational tasks, and communication and management are responsibilities that have experienced the largest increase.

In addition to capturing the fluctuation of responsibilities, we also explored the prevalence of hybrid roles within academic libraries. Hybrid roles are positions that intentionally merge multiple, traditionally separate, responsibilities, such as reference and circulation. While many respondents indicated that they have always had hybrid roles, particular-

TWO SEPARATE DESKS POSITIONED
THROUGHOUT LIBRARY

TWO DESKS POSITIONED THROUGHOUT
LIBRARY, WITH COMBINED CIRCULATION
AND REFERENCE DESK

THREE SEPARATE DESKS
POSITIONED IN CLOSE PROXIMITY

ONE COMPREHENSIVE DESK FOR
ALL PATRON INTERACTIONS

FREE-STANDING DESK WITH REFERENCE
STACKS AVAILABLE

ENCLOSED DESK WITH FRONT OPENING AND
REFERENCE STACKS AVAILABLE

LOW BUILT-IN DESK WITH
ADJACENT SHELVING

Image 2: The survey provided four desk configuration examples for librarian work spaces.

patrons, has resulted in dramatic changes to library design over the past few decades. The library has continued to grow as a robust and engaging space—moving from the structure of static and restrictive banks of information, where the librarians serve as resource gatekeepers, to more dynamic and open spaces that include myriad new partnerships and technology within their walls. Many academic libraries have diversified their spaces, providing a mix of quiet and collaborative spaces, cafes, and lounge areas, as well as more formal partnerships with academic departments and enrichment programs.

Our survey focused on how these enrichment programs fit into the existing footprint of the library, asking how many and what types of programs were present within each respondent's library. The responses show that smaller institutions were more likely to share their space with other programs than medium or large institutions. Additionally, campuses serving primarily residential students are more likely to have enrichment programs within the library than those serving primarily commuter campuses. Tutoring centers were the most common type of enrichment program sharing space with libraries, while language labs were the least frequently present **(see Image 1)**.

Librarian Spaces: While library spaces for patrons become more fluid, it is apparent that the same level of fluidity and change has not been actively explored for librarian spaces.

Public desks—To gauge views on both desk configurations and desk types, the survey inquired about the prevalence, staffing, hours of operation, and satisfaction of each desk. As shown in **Image 2**, the survey provided four desk configuration examples as well as the option to select "none of the above," where respondents were given space to describe their unique public desk(s) configurations.

The option to describe their unique public desk(s) set-up was the second most selected desk configuration. Of the 111 respondents who selected "none of the above" for their configuration had three or fewer desks, 90 percent indicated that the unique positioning of their desks is critical to understanding their spaces.

The variety of configurations for two and three desks that differ from those provided in the survey may be attributed to the diversification of public desk environments introduced to libraries in the last fifteen to

ly smaller institutions with limited full-time and part-time library staffs, the distinction we sought to make was understanding what responsibilities were intentionally combined, rather than the informal or gradual addition of responsibilities to existing roles.

All told, 44 percent of survey respondents said that hybrid roles had emerged in their library's staff due to changes in technology and the needs of the library. Respondents were then asked to pair responsibilities together that had been merged to create hybrid roles at their libraries. The most popular pairings were circulation and reference, reference and technology, reference and education, and collection and digital library.

Sharing Spaces: The evolution of libraries, as they changed to accommodate the technological and environmental experiences of
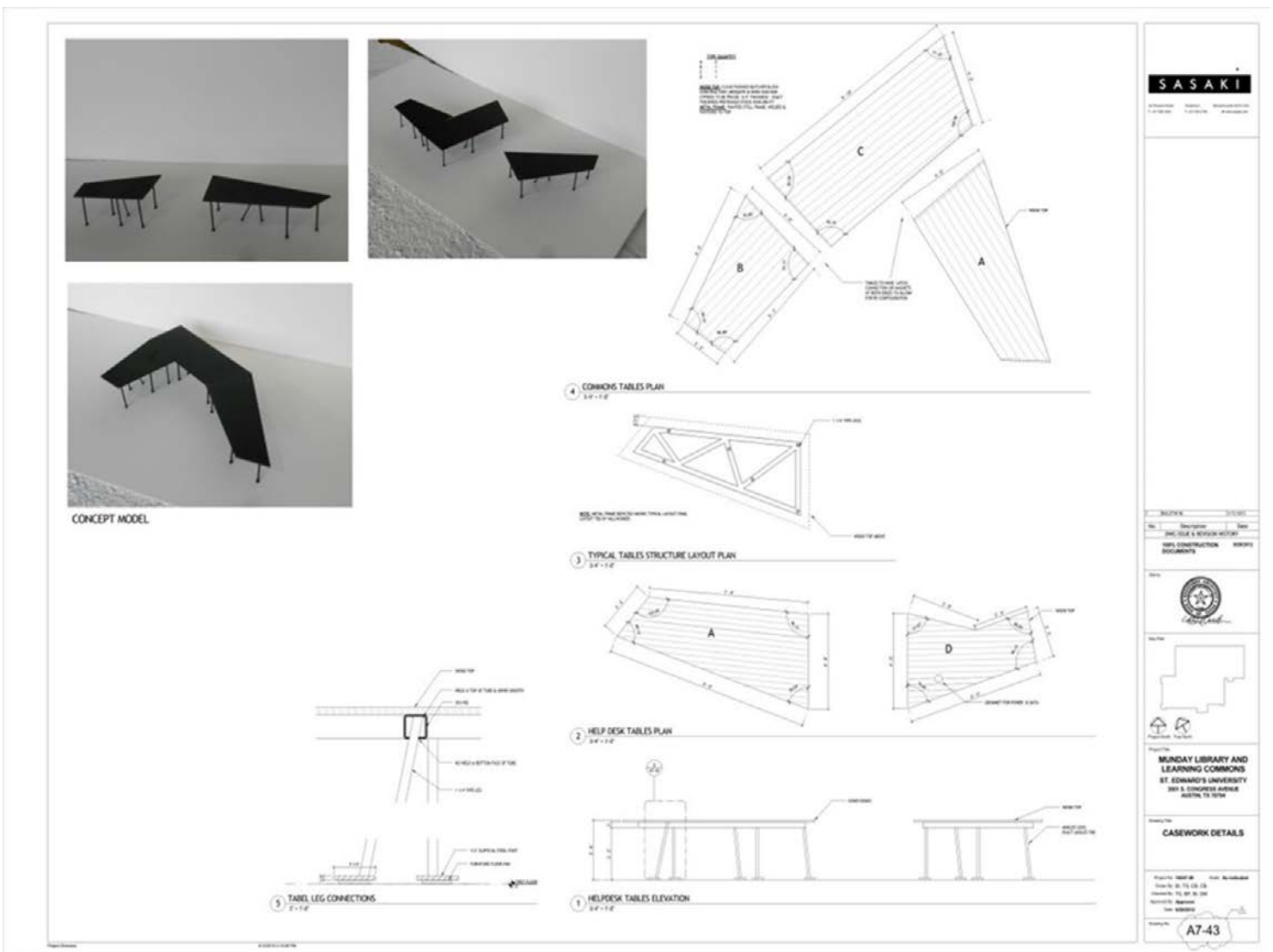
CONCEPT MODEL

Image 3: Less permanent and more flexible desk models empower librarians to discuss what activities the librarian and patron spaces should support.

twenty years. This diversification signals a shift from the intimidating/foreboding altar-like front desk to more friendly and inviting models, such as concierge, help desk, or peer-to-peer stations.

The proliferation of convenient technology and accessibility of information online has allowed less permanent and more flexible desk models to develop, reducing the need for desks to maintain close proximity to a reference collection. Additionally, designers are becoming less restricted by furniture manufacturers through the small-scale production of affordable customizable furniture—ever increasing the elasticity of public service desks to have exactly the pieces they require. These nearly endless possibilities empower librarians to have more productive conversations about what activities the librarian and patron spaces can and should support **(see Image 3)**.

Private work space—As survey respondents made clear, librarians often require some privacy to provide the focus their work demands. Librarians' private workspaces were reported, for the most part, as either offices or cubicles. Of the respondents, 59 percent indicated that the private workspaces for librarians are away from the public eye—with the most accessible being open office environments, and the most visibility-limiting being cubicles. Several satisfied respondents noted that their private offices were directly accessible from patron spaces or in close proximity to the public-facing desks, making them both more visible and more inviting.

While the corporate world has done extensive research on shaping spatial environments to maximize productivity and minimize turnover, the library community has not shown nearly the same level of concern about their workspaces. This oversight can be partially explained by the relatively low turnover rate of academic librarians; our respondents indicated about half of the pro-

fessionals in the field for five or more years have spent their entire career at a single institution. However, even though there are some unchanging spatial needs for academic librarians, it is reasonable to assume that spatial needs have already or will soon change to respond to activities associated with technology, education, and outreach.

Renovations: The most recent changes in academic libraries span a broad spectrum from some that are just superficial to others that affect structure and programs. More than 80 percent of survey respondents' libraries have been renovated to some degree; only 32 percent of that group, however, had any changes to librarian spaces. This percentage brings librarian spaces in at 10th place for areas of significant change during our respondents' most recent renovations.

Respondents' most recent space renovations have strong correlations to the activities and responsibilities that have

been added to their original responsibilities. This is most notable for spaces associated with teaching and computers, which were areas of significant change that ranged from 40 percent to 70 percent in prevalence, depending on institution type or size.

The expansion of space in libraries for both education and outreach and technology services is discussed in major news outlets as well as library-oriented publications, but the spatial concerns and interests of librarians has yet to be addressed in depth. Shelving is an example, as most people assume shelving will continue to decrease as more resources are available online or digitally. However, of the 107 respondents who indicated that their shelving was affected during their most recent renovation, 20 percent indicated they had added compact shelving and 14
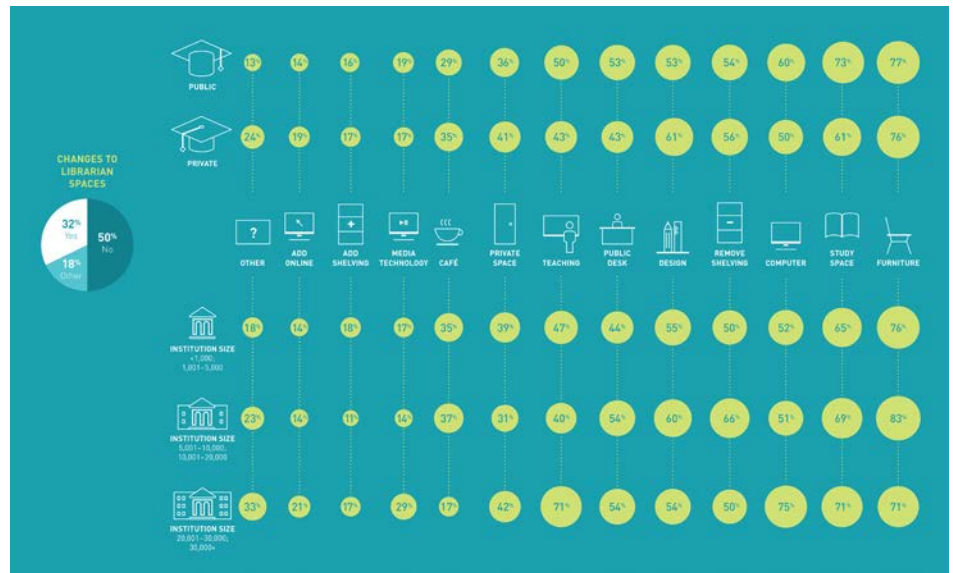

Image 4: Survey respondents identified all areas of significant change in their most recent renovations.

Image 5: When asked how their spaces fulfill their current work needs, 39 percent of respondents said their spaces hinder their current work.

> **Librarianship as a profession has long been known its ingenuity and flexibility, requiring solutions to be cobbled together through diligence and accepting that individuals will "wear many hats" and "make it work" no matter what resources are provided.**

percent indicated "other," which included adding or relocating shelving.

The connection between librarian activities and changing spaces is exciting and promising for future conversations between library staff and architects. Now, it is a question of pushing both designers and librarians alike to think beyond the direct patron services librarians provide **(see Image 4 on page 5)**.

LIBRARIAN SATISFACTION

Of central importance to understanding the impact of current workspaces and recent renovations is gauging the librarians' satisfaction with the functionality of their spaces. Overall, 39 percent of respondents indicated that their current spaces are hindering their current work. Of this number, half reported that their most recent renovation was in the 1980s and slightly more than one third indicated the renovation had taken place in the past 5 years—indicating some design failure during these two periods.

While it is easy to explain away the 1980s renovations as being unaccommodating to massive and rapid technology changes and needs, the failures of the renovations in the 2010s are less readily understood. Of recent renovations, one respondent remarked: "Remember, these are not necessarily POSITIVE changes." With 54 percent of all recent renovations of our respondents completed in the past five years, we are intrigued by the issues behind

these hindering and unsupportive environments, and look forward to continuing the conversation **(see Image 5 on page 5)**.

QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Designing the survey and analyzing its responses has been an insightful experience that has shed light on the struggles and successes librarians are experiencing. While the survey's results showed some public desk configurations or private workspaces to be more satisfactory than others, there is no one-size fits all design solution for libraries—public or academic. The design should be based on a master plan that is strongly connected to the mission of the library and that allows for an incremental implementation plan.

Librarianship as a profession has long been known its ingenuity and flexibility, requiring solutions to be cobbled together through diligence and accepting that individuals will "wear many hats" and "make it work" no matter what resources are provided. The questions in this survey have raised many more questions. Now we would like to ask, "why should librarians continue to work around obstacles?" and "what would design look like if librarians could articulate the spatial environment they would prefer?"

There are plenty of answers to these questions, and we hope that you continue this discussion among your colleagues, peers, and future designers. ∎

*Copyright 2016 Sasaki Associates, Inc.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Bryan Irwin is a principal architect with Sasaki Associates and has been an architect for more than 25 years. His work centers on libraries and learning environments with an emphasis on creating spaces that respond to the evolving role of the library on college campuses. He has spoken frequently on emerging trends in library services and their impact on library design. His work has won numerous design awards, including McGraw-Hill Publication's Best New Higher Education Facility. He can be reached at **birwin@sasaki.com**

Aliza Leventhal is the librarian and corporate archivist for Sasaki Associates. She is the co-founder and co-chair of the Society of American Archivist's CAD/BIM Taskforce. Her current work engages designers and CAD/BIM program developers to identify key functionality and information that must be saved to uphold the integrity and usefulness of archived BIM files. She can be reached at **aleventhal@sasaki.com**.

Visit www.librarysurvey.sasaki.com to view a digital version of the survey report.

Building a Collection from the Ground Up

» Notes from a first attempt at developing a collection for a new master's degree.

BY ELIZABETH FLATER, MLIS

In 2011, California Baptist University (CBU) began planning a new five-year Master of Architecture (M.Arch) program. As part of that plan, the Annie Gabriel Library was tasked with building a 5,000 volume monograph collection to meet National Architectural Accrediting Board criteria by 2018.

This was my first experience building a print and electronic subject collection from very little, approximately 1,000 books and ebooks, with a modest budget, $11,000, and a deadline. This is the story of our progress so far: how we got here, what we've learned, and our plans for the future.

WHERE WE WERE

In the fall of 2011, the library's monograph holdings in architecture and related subjects were limited **(see Figure 1 on page 8)**, and what was held had been added primarily in support of the fine arts programs. The 2014 Conditions for Accreditation from the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) require only "convenient, equitable access to literature and information...that support professional education in architecture."[1] NAAB accreditors stated that the traditional, if unofficial, recommendation was a collection of 5,000 volumes. In response to these recommendations, a plan was made to set aside a significant portion of the materials budget each year in an attempt to reach 5,000 volumes by 2018.

The total architecture budget for the 2011-2012 fiscal year was $11,300, followed by $11,400 in 2012-2013, $22,490 in 2013-2014, $18,000 in 2014-2015, and $15,000 in 2015-2016. According to local acquisitions statistics, between 2011 and 2015 the price for a range of architecture books follows:
- New architecture books, $65.68;
- Retrospective architecture books, $59.37;
- Architecture ebooks not part of a collection, $210.73.

As the budget numbers indicate, by the 2013-2014 fiscal year it was clear that reaching our goal on schedule would require a significant increase in the architecture acquisitions budget.

Unfortunately, an unexpected cut forced the library to reduce the budget for subsequent fiscal years. Additionally, in an attempt to develop a well-rounded, multi-format collection representative of both classic and new publications, the budget was divided into three categories: new (publication date of current or previous year), retrospective (publication date of two years prior or earlier), and e-books. In most years these budget categories were initially allocated as 20 percent for ebooks and 40 percent for both retrospective and new books; however, money was freely transferred between budget categories throughout the year depending on what was wanted. No significant planning beyond the budget categories was put into what the final collection should look like, and we certainly did not anticipate how heavily we

would need to rely on ebooks to reach our volume goal.

We decided the collection would be built in two ways:
- First, by the Collection Development Librarian, who would make title-by-title monograph selections in architecture and related fields **(see Figure 2 on page 9)**, primarily in print with occasional individual ebook purchases;
- Second, via the library's two primary e-book databases: ebrary Academic Complete, a subscription-based database that adds (and occasionally subtracts) ebook titles on a monthly basis, and SpringerLink, which houses the annual ebook collections published by Springer and purchased outright by the library.

These two databases add large numbers of titles to the collection, using subscription and purchase models, at a significantly lower cost than individual title print or ebook purchases. Because both databases contain a variety of subject content, the

exact number of architecture titles added to them each year is difficult to anticipate. During the last five years, however, an average of 511 ebrary and Springer e-books on architecture and related fields have been added to the catalog annually, significantly more than the Collection Development budget could afford.

It should be noted that although quantity is a major strength and selling point of ebook databases, the quality and intended audience of both products were taken into account. Our library faculty considers both ebrary and Springer to be dependably high-quality academic content providers whose products consistently meet our students' research needs.

The cost of these e-book databases are shared between two departments: Collection Development, which is responsible for the purchase of Springer ebook collections, and Digital Services, which pays the annual ebrary subscription costs and fees. This collaboration has contributed greatly to the success of this undertaking, for without the more affordable cost-per-title in ebrary and Springer, it would have been necessary to commit a larger portion of the materials budget to the architecture collection, and we would have been much farther behind in reaching our goal.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT TOOLS
Building a collection with little practical knowledge of the subject matter is a core challenge within collection development. Fortunately, there are numerous tools available to ensure that selections are as informed and thoughtful as possible, and the development of the architecture collection at the Annie Gabriel Library (AGL) relied on several.

Library of Congress Classification Outline: As a natural first step, we turned to the LC Outline, which breaks a topic down in great detail and provides a template for acquisitions to ensure that all facets of a subject are represented. I began by running reports in the integrated library system (ILS) to determine current holdings and identify gaps. Familiarizing oneself with relevant call number ranges is also an excellent way to develop a thorough theoretical understanding of a topic and ensure that even frequently overlooked aspects are represented in a collection.

For example, resources on the art, history, study, and practice of architecture are in the NA section; however, several other call

Figure 1: Holdings in Architecture at Annie Gabriel Library

	2011	2015	Increase
Print	369	1249	338%
Ebook	803	2819	351%
Total	1172	4068	347%

number ranges explore the social and practical topics and skills covered in an architecture program. Call number ranges in social science, political science, and technology **(see Figure 2)** cover topics such as historic preservation and city planning, architecture law and building codes, landscape architecture, and construction engineering. Although easy to overlook and more difficult to identify, these areas are as important to an architecture program as materials in the NA section, and their identification was an important step in our collection development process.

Other Libraries: Very few librarians are tasked with building a wholly new and unique collection; most often they follow the example of other libraries, and AGL was no different. One of the most useful and informative resources I discovered was the Association of Architecture School Librarians (AASL) Core Reference List, an open-access LibGuide established by architecture librarians from universities across the United States. Its purpose is "to identify the categories of core reference resources needed in libraries supporting accredited architecture degree programs in North America and the core resources needed in each category."[2] To improving our reference collection, this list provided a fantastic framework for the most important categories of architecture resources.

Additionally, WorldCat, LibGuides, and holdings comparisons through OCLC WorldShare offered useful lists of currently held titles at libraries with established architecture programs. These tools were especially helpful in developing the retrospective portion of our architecture collection. New books are abundant, and they and their reviews are easy to find. But identifying older, sometimes classic titles is more difficult without the guidance of librarians who have been collecting in a subject for years.

Professional Organizations: Learning about the organizations connected to our

growing collection was a worthwhile step that led to valuable information. For the architecture collection at our library, those organizations are the Association of Architecture School Librarians (AASL), the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) and the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB). The websites of these organizations have been sources of print and serial publication lists, contacts, conference information, and standards and requirements. The resources most important to our collection development project are the AASL Core Reference List and the NAAB criteria. As universities grow and programs expand, librarians may find it worthwhile to join one or more organizations to keep informed of changes in professional standards or accreditation requirements.

Bibliographies: When a collection needs to be built up fairly quickly, bibliographies are an especially useful tool. Finding a list of titles from a reputable online source, book, or article saves time and allows librarians to make selections with less title-by-title evaluation than usual. Reference books and anthologies such as *Architectural Theory*[3] were extremely helpful in our collection development process, and individual selections were often made based on the value of their bibliographies.

Additionally, once the M.Arch program was underway, course syllabi were consulted to ensure that the library held all the required and recommended course texts as well as any supplementary titles that students would need based on major projects and assignments.

Reviews: Reading reviews can be time consuming and accessing them can be difficult and expensive. The primary source of full-text academic publishing reviews at AGL is our subscription to Choice Reviews Online. This tool allowed us to read reviews when necessary, but mostly to trust that the Choice database would return results that met our search

Figure 2: Social and Practical Topics and Skills Covered in an Architecture Program

E 159	Historic preservation
GN 414	Historic housing customs and technology
GT 170-226	Housing - social aspects
HT 161-178	City planning & urban design
HT 330-384	Metropolitan areas, suburbs, urbanization
KF 902	Architecture and law
KF 5701-5704	International building codes
LB 3205-3325	School architecture and planning
NA	Architecture
NK 1700-2195	Interior and house decoration
RA 967	Hospital design
SB 469-480	Landscape architecture
T 369	Mechanical drawing, engineering graphics
TA 401-493	Construction materials
TD 169-195	Environmental protection, pollution, effects of industry
TE 279-298	Streets and pedestrian facilities
TH	Building construction

parameters. The ability to narrow a search to titles within a particular LC range that received high ratings from Choice reviewers has been extremely helpful.

In addition, Yankee Book Peddler's (YBP) online ordering platform, GOBI, allows for searching and sorting that enables users to perform LC range searches and sort them by YBP Select rating—a ranking system similar to Choice that indicates the audience level as well as the recommendation level. When Choice Reviews Online was exhausted or insufficient, searching in GOBI proved to be an excellent way to find highly-recommended titles evaluated and ranked by subject specialists. GOBI also provides monthly Spotlight Lists highlighting core titles, award winners, and subject collections that have occasionally featured architecture—a happy and helpful coincidence.

Knowledgeable Resources: At the beginning of our collection development project, the pool of potential purchases was large and overwhelming, and it quickly became clear that finding ways to break the pool down into manageable pieces was the best approach. Identifying important people, publishers, and series gave focus to a project with a broad scope and allowed us to begin building our collection with confidence.

For example, names of important architects, both as authors and subjects, were discovered in the list of Pritzker Architecture Prize winners. Publishers such as Princeton Architectural Press, Wiley, Yale University Press, Birkhèauser, MIT Press, and Laurence King were found to have excellent reputations and produce valuable titles that could be found either via online publisher lists or through vendor platform searching.

Individual titles and series from these and other publishers established a base level of quality resources that are continually added to the collection. Additionally, important code and standards publications and test preparation materials are a significant part of our standing orders profile and add practical resources to our collection, creating a balance between the art/science duality of architecture.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Based on current holdings and the 2015-2016 materials budget, the library is on track to end this fiscal year with approximately 4,500 volumes, 500 volumes short of our goal. However, this estimate does not include ebrary Academic Complete and SpringerLink e-books that will be added over the next year, so with that in mind we hope to be within the 4,700-4,800 volume range by fall 2016. Although a collection of 5,000 volumes is not explicitly required by NAAB, it is still our hope to reach that number in time for the 2016 progress visit. But if we should fail, we are certain to reach it in time for the final accreditation visit in the fall of 2018.

LESSONS LEARNED

Although the library may not reach its collection goal by fall 2016, the project has still had great success. Ambitious goals were set for this project in an effort to assemble a sufficient collection for the first graduating cohort of M.Arch students. We are proud of the collection we have built and have learned a lot in the process.

Our architecture holdings have increased by over 300 percent in less than five years, and our small but growing M.Arch program has a collection of more than 4,000 titles to support its scholarship. Looking back, while we did do some things right the first time, there are some changes we would make if presented with similar project in the future.

One important improvement to future collection development projects at CBU would be to be more aggressive about the budget. We learned that new programs, especially those with monograph volume requirements, demand a great deal of money. At the outset of our collecting, we set aside what we considered a significant sum of money for architecture and asked for modest budget increases in future years. In reality, however, it always felt as if we were focusing on the architecture collection at the expense of everything else. New program collecting should not subtract

> » **In the future, we will be more systematic and aggressive about requesting budget increases that will sufficiently support the collection needs of new programs. One possible solution to this problem may be to begin including budget requests in the planning documents for new programs.**

from the existing budget, but rather should attract a budget increase; otherwise the continuous addition of programs will simply divide the budget more and more each year.

In the future, we will be more systematic and aggressive about requesting budget increases that will sufficiently support the collection needs of new programs. One possible solution to this problem may be to begin including budget requests in the planning documents for new programs. One element of new program planning at CBU is the Library Impact Statement, a document completed by the library that evaluates current monograph, journal, and database holdings and their ability to support the proposed program. Adding a section to this document where requests for additional funds could be made may be one way to attain Collection Development budget increases in support of new programs.

Throughout our collection project thus far, we have had limited communication with the faculty of the M.Arch program. This may not have hindered our progress to a great degree, but in the future we would make a more concerted effort to stay in touch with deans and professors. This change would create more opportunities for feedback and ensure that the library's collecting was meeting the unique needs of the program and interests of the faculty.

Near the midpoint of our collecting, the library was made aware of a small, un-catalogued book collection in the architecture department, resulting from independent collecting using department funds. It is still not clear if this collection is a response

to insufficient content in the library or whether it is simply a convenient service for students. Regardless, more communication with the architecture department may have shed some light on the issue and created more opportunities for faculty to express needs and offer recommendations.

Finally, we have come close to reaching our goal with a fairly modest budget since approximately 70 percent of relevant titles having been added to the collection through our ebook subscriptions in ebrary Academic Complete and purchased collections in SpringerLink. Ebook databases are a fantastic asset to new program collecting as they make it possible to acquire large numbers of titles at costs far lower than print volumes. Any library at a rapidly growing university would benefit from such efforts. These resources are a built-in insurance policy for forthcoming programs that the library may otherwise struggle to support. Having these resources at the Annie Gabriel Library has been and continues to be a great help to collection development for all new programs at CBU.

NEXT STEPS

In the coming months, we'll spend down our 2015-2016 budget and end the year as close to 5,000 volumes as possible. We plan to allocate a larger than usual sum for the architecture program for one more year to ensure that we reach our goal, plus a little more. After that, the budget for architecture will be determined in the same way as all the other programs. Collecting will continue to ensure that core, retrospective titles are

acquired, but greater focus will be given to new publications.

To date, no major new programs are in the works at CBU. Most new programs are small and supported by current collecting, so it is not often that a project such as the M.Arch comes along. It has been a unique challenge and an invaluable personal learning experience; I joined the Annie Gabriel Library staff in 2011 and have been working on this project ever since. Building a collection from the ground up teaches one to think critically about a discipline, learn what its core needs and principles are, and determine how to fulfill them in the best way possible—valuable skills for any collection development librarian. ∎

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Elizabeth Flater, MLIS is the collection development librarian at California Baptist University's Annie Gabriel Library. She can be reached at **ebrandtflater@calbaptist.edu**.

FOOTNOTES:
[1] The National Architectural Accrediting Board (2014). 2014 Conditions for Accreditation. Retrieved October 8, 2015, from **www.naab.org/accreditation/2014_Conditions**.
[2] Association of Architecture School Librarians (2015). Core Reference List. Retrieved October 13, 2015, from **http://woodbury.libguides.com/content.php?pid=576715&sid=4754615**.
[3] Mallgrave, Harry Francis (Ed.). (2006). Architectural Theory, Volume 1: An Anthology from Vitruvius to 1870. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Don't Get Married to the Results

» **Managing library change in the age of metrics.***

BY COREY SEEMAN

For the past 15 years, and most certainly more, libraries have been managing in a dramatically changing environment. This observation might be especially true in academic libraries where the perfect storm of flat or decreasing budgets is matched with growing pressures for library space. As academic libraries try to balance these two forces with their desire to support the growing information needs on campus, the challenges are all around.

From an administrative point of view, the library can no longer take anything for granted, as the space for students and for collections that we have long believed were stable and secure may not be truly so. To that end, libraries must not only continually adapt to reflect the changing priorities and realities on campus, but also develop flexibility to more nimbly move through the changes that we might face.

In my case, a flexible and patron-centered focus enabled a departmental library to continue long past the moment when its conventional library space and physical collections were taken away—but more about that later. In the same way, dramatic changes in your library must reflect more unconventional thinking of services and metrics since the standard values will not be relevant to the new operation.

THOUGHTS ON ASSESSMENT

Over the years as a library director, I have developed an iconoclastic approach to assessment and metrics. There is a strong belief in all fields that everything can be measured and that tweaks to existing systems will be a means to truly measure impact and assessment. Like the X-Files, there is a notion that the answer is out there.

And while all programs need assessment tools to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their stakeholders, I believe that

In the summer of 2913, Kresge Library staff finished the last book shifting project.

coming up with more numbers is not necessarily the way to proceed. Additionally, there are numerous elements that all libraries share that are commonly used for metrics, but they might not truly measure the overall benefit (or return on investment – ROI) that a library provides for a college or university.

A more informed approach might be one that a library can use to measure its value in the particular environment in which it operates. In this case, a predetermined measure of success for any endeavor, especially a library, is not logical nor helpful. There are so many elements associated with measuring success that we need to explore, far more than wins and losses.

The central theme of a great conference hosted at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan in August 2015, "Rethink it: Libraries for a New Age," was the design of the library of the future, with the emphasis on interactions with patrons.[1] The conference focused not only on public spaces of the library, but also on the design of services for the community. Great value

was placed on the empathetic design of our services, with our users central in the development and continued expansion of those services. The additional challenge libraries face is that different users of an academic library (thinking primarily of students and faculty) often need and desire different resources and services. So providing sufficient balance is also a key element of the successful library.

One of the true underlying challenges that we face in academic libraries is our unique position on campus, which, I believe, affects our ability for true change and empathetic service models. In almost all regards, academic libraries are campus monopolies. The libraries generally control what resources are acquired and how they might be used.

While we sometimes reference Google as a competitor, that premise only is applicable for the "low hanging fruit." For years, we have seen fewer and fewer libraries answering questions that are easily found on the Internet, especially Wikipedia. In the busi-

The Kresge Library Quiet Study Space as it was in 2011.

ness disciplines, for example, students may easily find all sorts of financial information that they might have come to the library to find in years gone by. With this change, reference numbers are down, and the perception of the library as a self-service entity has come front and center.

But what will not be easily replaced with the open web is access to ebooks and scholarly content in journals. Typically, these resources are acquired for campuses by libraries as a central purchase. This model gives the library great power and responsibility for managing and crafting the resources that are available for research and classroom use.

If academic libraries are viewed as information monopolies, they can be less interested in the customer and end user. The same could be said about utilities: power, cable, and phone services. Mostly, these providers are single-source options for people in a community, and that lack of competition can lead to a lack of innovation and new services. The campus monopoly that libraries have for information resources (for the most part) is a contributing factor in the slow pace of change among libraries over the past years. Without competition, one might ask, how real is the push for an academic library to assess and improve?

THE PROBLEM WITH NUMBERS
There is a tremendous interest all around us to produce facts and the figures. The numbers, whatever they really mean, may tell us how we are doing and what is going on. On the surface, this seems like a perfectly logical approach. Our activity generates results, which may be counted, ranked, and most importantly, compared with others.

Through a sophisticated set of metrics, we can easily find out how well the library is doing in the grand scheme of things. However, what kind of value can we gleam from these numbers, statistics, and other data? It is possible that, on the surface, the numbers appear to provide a great deal of understanding about how the library is operating. But by digging a little bit further, we might discover that they do not tell as compelling a story as the library would have us believe. In so many regards, numbers can easily be manipulated to show value that is not really there.

The problems with numbers are numerous. In a political season, we see that numbers can easily be manipulated to tell the story a certain politician wants to sell. A single jobs report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for example, can generate "proof" of contrarian points from people on different sides of the political aisle.

We also see the fallacy of numbers in relationship to the "regular price" and "probably price" (after a sale has been applied) for stores like Jos. A. Bank or Kohl's (and others) that make sales a regular occasion. The same might be said when so much emphasis is placed on standardized testing, and student scores become the primary criteria on which a school system is judged. We place such important values on numbers that can be easily manipulated. In turn, the numbers become no more than noise that does not begin to illustrate what is actually happening.

In the same way, user statistics are problematic when looking at what a library actually accomplishes for its community. One

of the greatest challenges to this approach is the broad assumption that all libraries provide the same services for their communities. This is generally not the case, which may complicate the use of numbers and metrics to compare libraries. There is a great deal of interest right now in "big data," but it has the potential of misdirecting libraries more than helping. Big data thinking can answer some questions we might have in libraries on usage and direction. However, at the end of the day, does it matter? What if this type of assessment minimizes the need for particular resources that are of primary interest to a smaller population, say faculty?

One instance where metrics do not tell the story accurately is with database usage. With many business resources, librarians are often presented with the "retail" value of the reports downloaded by students over the course of the year (in addition to the basic counts). This number is not truly useful or accurate, however, since students have no incentive not to download a report, even if they end up never using it. Much like a food buffet, we are able to try things out freely, though we often leave much on our plates. Finally, cost-per-use is potentially helpful, but it does not capture the true value of the resource to the community. At its core is a simple calculation—the resource's total cost divided by the number of items that have been accessed. But what is missing is the nature and purpose of the item being accessed. Are they brief articles or ebooks or scholarly articles or large reports? The simplicity of the math does not tell the full story.

Lastly, sometimes the changes are too small to detect. Many organizations right now are implementing small and seemingly inconsequential changes to products or services as a cost-savings measure. Taken individually, these small changes do not cause a great deal of concern. However, taken holistically, they can lead to much larger and irreversible issues down the road.

So where does that leave us with libraries? With lots and lots of numbers. We are always looking to count things, be it items, access, usage, or head-count, for example. These numbers certainly do tell a story, but it may not be one that resonates with others outside of our profession. Librarians can visualize a collection by the number of volumes, but what difference does it make to an administrator who cannot get the one item that he or she wants on a regular basis?

In 2013, the last books leave Kresge Library in the shadow of the tree that was moved for the new project.

This is the contrarian point of view I would like to put forward into a new way of thinking about metrics. In some way, it has its basis of a 1996 article I wrote on, of all things, baseball history. In "Drowning by Numbers: The State of Baseball History,"[2] I argued that baseball history is being bogged down by the fact that each action has a set of numbers associated with it. Historians, in turn, were looking for a greater meaning in all of these balls, strikes, runs, hits, and outs. What we needed in baseball history was a bigger view of what was actually happening, not a rehashing of runs, hits, and errors.

The same might be said for the library. We happily collect and share statistics that have great meaning to us, but potentially mean very little to others, including people who might ultimately make critical decisions about our libraries. We yearn for there to be a set of dashboard indicators that will tell the whole story in a way that everyone will understand. But sadly, they do not exist and, furthermore, they could never tell the whole story.

LIBRARY CHANGE AND YOU

Library change has been happening all around us, in many small bites that barely register. But among departmental or branch libraries on academic campuses, we can see that change is happening fast and furious. While there are a few exceptions, the vast majority of these libraries are no longer being seen as important to the departments and schools that they serve. A good reason for this conclusion is the ease by which people can obtain electronic resources. Easy access to journal articles, one of the main reasons why faculty wanted these libraries in the first place, is often as close as their nearest keyboard.

While many in the profession can see the logic behind the closing of the departmental libraries, I believe that their demise is a precursor to things that will be happening across campus. A departmental library may be where some key journals are located—or it can be a vibrant operation that mirrors all the functions of the main library. The Kresge Business Administration Library at the Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, was the latter.

The Kresge Library was built in mid 1980s to serve the research and curricular needs of the Ross School of Business, and the library was quite substantial. During the Fall and Winter Terms of its last year before construction (2013-2014 academic year), the library provided 108 service hours a week to the community, had seating for 700 students, and had space for around 70,000 volumes.

The Kresge building is centrally located at the Ross complex, which made student adoption of the space very easy to understand. Some of the biggest complaints we heard were focused on not having enough hours for the students. Despite this success, we were in a constant state of "library erosion," with space being delegated to other purposes and departments. That would end with the Ross Construction project of 2013-2016.

During the summer of 2013, we learned that a major construction project would begin at the school to fix a long-term space issue. Architects were called in for planning, and a big gift in Michigan's capital campaign by Stephen M. Ross (the namesake of the school) started the work in earnest.

While internally designs and space allocations were being considered, it was February 2014 before we realized that we would not have space for our 70,000 volume print collection. Within four short months, we had to firm up plans to salvage the print collections (in our case, unique titles went to the main library) and plan for the future with dramatically reduced space. In June 2014, we moved out of the building into temporary quarters that did not have any space for students or collections. When the students returned for Fall Term, they no longer had Kresge Library as a space, but only Kresge Library as a service.

With this dramatic change in the scope of what the library does and could potentially do, a realignment of our value proposition needed to take place. We were no longer a student destination. We no longer could collect in a "format agnostic" manner since we did not have practically any space for managing physical collections. So, instead of being a physical library, we became an ethereal one, focused on the service and information needs of our patrons.

The two years in temporary quarters gave us an opportunity to be entrepreneurial and try things out. Failure was a perfectly acceptable option for a group that had to make so great a transition. While we had long-been considered a service-oriented unit, we were also viewed as a great physical resource for the students. This sentiment was reflected in the May 2015 survey results from exiting MBA students. When asked about Kresge Library, many mentioned the service that they received. But far more gave the library a lower grade because of the closure during the student's second year. Here are some of the responses:

- "I'd still love an actual library where I can study on the Ross campus."
- "This is a tough question for someone who didn't really have a library second year; however, throughout my time here the staff has always been very helpful."
- "Kresge was closed this year, so I didn't even really consider them a resource for this year."
- "My satisfaction with the library was

Kresge Library's Vision to Supporting the Ross School of Business

Positive: Through positive business practices, the potential of people and firms will be realized and society's most pressing problems will be addressed.
- Provide resources and services that support research in all fields of study.
- Support faculty and student research in areas such as International Business, Sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility, Ethics and Renewable Energy.
- Focus on "patron-driven services" and incorporating the power of "yes" in our decisions to meet the diverse needs of the Ross Community.

Boundaryless: Solutions are not confined to one sector, function, or type of person, and that true innovation comes from a boundaryless approach to problem solving.
- Provide resources and services to accommodate researchers' work styles by providing both email and chat reference and supplying materials electronically.
- Support business related reference assistance for students elsewhere at the University of Michigan.
- Grow the very popular Ross Syllabi Archives - the first of its kind on campus and the inspiration for the LSA syllabi archives that launched in 2013.
- Provide Ross alumni and Michigan businesses with access to useful, relevant and freely available information resources to support business through Kresge guides via the Internet.

Analytic: Analytic rigor must be the foundation for all business decision making in the 21st century.
- Work to provide Ross faculty and students with useful data sources to enable successful completion of their research and action-based learning experiences.
- Provide the information resources to support strong decision making by our students and faculty in such diverse areas as market research, competitive intelligence or scholarly review.
- Kresge librarians and staff serve as leaders in the information field through presentations, scholarly writing, and participation in local and national organizations.

Action: Business acumen consists of a set of knowledge and skills that can only be developed by bridging the gap between theory and practice and engaging in action-based learning.
- Support action-based learning through a unique and essential program of embedded librarians for each team of Ross MBA and BBA students. Kresge Librarians are assigned to work with over 175 action-based learning teams a year to ensure that their information needs are being met.
- Provide timely and quick support for faculty to prepare them for press interviews and added resources for classes on the breaking news of the day.
- Share our theory and practice of supporting student groups through our unique embedded librarian program through presentations and scholarly articles.

Visit **http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/kresgelibraryservices/Ross** to see our full list of how we align our services with that of the school's mission.

lower this year just because there was no easily accessible space. I'm sure it will be fabulous once it is finished!"

For many students, there was a strong, if not critical tie between the library as space and the library as service. When one went (space), it took the other with it. The 2015 evaluations resulted in the lowest scores for Kresge in the last ten years. But in many ways, it gave us an opportunity to build on that low point and grow the library once again.

TELLING YOUR STORY

The big question one may ask when a library undergoes significant change concerns assessment and knowing if the library in its new format is meeting the needs of the school. How do we really assess our function at Kresge with the new reality? While we still have numbers for reference transactions and instruction sessions, we have no print volume counts and no head count for the library. So moving from a traditional library to one that is online only (as I call it—the ethereal library) causes a real problem in showing how you are doing.

When Gertrude Stein reflected on her hometown of Oakland, California with the now famous phrase, "there is no there there," she was experiencing a loss of an established identity that made it hard to see the connection between the Oakland of her childhood and what she saw as an adult. The same disconnect can take place in a library, especially one that goes through a dramatic change like what took place at Kresge Library.

The title of this article comes from something my dad would say all the time when I was young. It is a counter-intuitive approach to measures and metrics that might be used to determine success for an enterprise. My father was one of the first discount retailers in New Jersey and was one of the key figures to overturn "Blue Laws" that prevented the sale of many items on Sundays. He always wanted us to realize that the results that we attain might not be the ultimate measure of success. Something might appear to be successful, but could not be sustainable in the long-run. Conversely, something might be chalked up as a failure, but provides a good framework for moving forward.

It might be that the outcomes that we record today at Kresge are more indicators and less validators. The successes we have at Kresge add up to a total story about the library in the new age, but do not necessar-

ily indicate that we should stop evaluating the services we are providing to the campus. With an ever changing community that we work with, having this type of flexible approach is truly important. When telling the story of this new type of library, I had my dad's expression in the back of my mind as we moved forward. Here are some of the aspects that we looked at in particular.

Short and Long Term Benefit: Academic libraries are unique entities on campuses because they are designed to balance the needs of today's scholars with those in the future. Academic librarians collect for generations to come, and yet that result is very difficult to measure in a period of less than ten to twenty years. The challenge is how this calculation can be done in an electronic-only library.

The Library's Mission: Many academic libraries have unique mission statements. At Kresge Library, our mission has always been subservient to that of the school. So, in 2012 when the Ross School of Business established its mission statement and strategic directions around four pillars (Action, Analytic, Boundaryless, and Positive), we were poised to support the very same pillars **(see Sidebar)**. This framework enables us to better connect with the stakeholders at the school (faculty, students, staff, community members, alumni).

Supporting Student Research Needs: With the changes that took place at Kresge Library, we were able to shift more attention away from the physical demands of the library operations (circulation, collection management, for example) and direct that energy to more student-facing needs. We were about to increase support of student research as it relates to the school's action-learning programs at Ross before the change. Today, Kresge's embedded Librarian program was able to grow when these learning opportunities were expanded to undergraduate students.

The opportunity to work with sophomores in the core class (BA 200) as well as support student teams across the curriculum was made possible in part by having fewer tasks associated with running a traditional library. The benefit here is that our support of these programs was recognized as having immediate impact by the school's leadership. It also helped bolster our reference and research support interaction counts.

High Class Problems: So often, librarians find themselves burdened with a series of low class problems. They might include find-ing the right audience for a service or a collection. They might also be how to get people interested in the library, especially in research services. These low class problems involve marketing, where you are trying to get others to use your service. These actions might be born from the implementation of a service or resource that was successful somewhere else and implemented now at your library.

Rather than seek out services and then find an audience, however, libraries should figure out what the school needs and build out from there. Then your problems are capacity and how to meet the increased needs of the community. These are the high class problems than any director should seek out.

During our transition, we brought into the library a service that enables faculty to outsource (to us) the work of handing back papers or exams. This was especially useful if they wanted students to review them only. This is not a traditional library responsibility, but there was a demonstrated need and some capacity to take it on. Though we have only done it for two years, it has been a strong success.

Be Leery of Dashboard Indicators: In the world of metrics, there is a strong notion and belief that the truth is in the numbers—that if we had better data, we could tell a more convincing story. Personally, I do not believe that such data exists.

Ultimately, the true measure is not our interactions, but how well we tell the story of our interactions. If we can support the school and people see the work, then libraries will continue to prosper. If the administrators cannot see the value of the work of the library, then all the numbers in the world will not provide a safe harbor for the work of a library.

Many library directors have sought out a set of dashboard indicators to definitively show the value provided by the library. And while metrics can provide an overview of the health of the library, what they cannot tell is the external forces that are play in any environment. An academic library that has built a tremendous historical collection may face space constraints not from its own work, but from the needs and demand by others. So while a dashboard will reveal a great deal about your own operation, it does not help clarify what is happening around you. And that is where a library is going to get hurt these days.

Libraries are People, not Buildings: Finally, as libraries go through changes, space will be lost and the very nature of what a library can do will change also. As with the new Kresge Library Services, we had to embrace what we became, not what we were or wanted to be. We needed to shift our services and assessment tools to view the library as it is, not what it was.

As your library shifts from a place to visit to a service unit, consider that you need a new story to measure your success. That success will come from the staff that you have, not the facilities you maintain. To that end, make sure that your staff has the flexibility to choose their path forward—but they must move in that direction.

MEASURING SUCCESS

When libraries undergo dramatic change, it is imperative that both the library and the governing administrative body give everyone time to adjust to the new environment. Not being married to the results means that a library that undergoes dramatic change should have the ability to take risks, win some services, and lose others.

The key point from the currently evolving story of Kresge Library is that we do not have predetermined measures of success. Likewise, we do not have predetermined levels of failure. If our goal is to meet the needs of our community, then we can be less concerned about the appearance of success or failure.

Remember, the work of the library is not a game, a match, or a race. It is increasing a service that aspires to connect a finite number of people in our community with potentially an infinite number of resources. Given that formula, success should be, and can be, what we make of it. ∎

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Corey Seeman is the Director, Kresge Library Services of the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He may be reached at **cseeman@umich. edu**. This article is based on a presentation he made at the Charleston Conference on November 6, 2015. The slides are available here: **http://tinyurl.com/CHS15Corey**.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Re-think it: Libraries for a New Age: **http:// scholarworks.gvsu.edu/rethinkit/**.

[2] "Drowning by Numbers: The State of Baseball History" (Western Pittsburgh History 76:2, Summer 1996). See: **https://journals. psu.edu/wph/article/view/4382**.

The Academic Library's Future Is Institutionally Aligned—Or the Academic Library Has No Future

» An academic library has a duty to align its policies, programs, and priorities with its host institution.*

BY RICK ANDERSON

I've learned many things in my 23 years as a librarian, some of them more or less intuitive and some of them quite surprising. Among the more surprising things I've learned is that it doesn't matter how trivially obvious an organizational truth might be; there are still people who will be shocked and offended by one's invocation of it.

Consider, for example, the ineluctable fact that academic libraries are, for the most part, organizational units within academic institutions. Actually, that fact isn't usually controversial in and of itself. What I have found to be quite controversial, however, is the proposition that the library's status as an organizational unit within a host academic institution means that the library has a fundamental duty to align its policies, programs, and priorities

with those of its host.

In the following paragraphs, I will explain what I mean by "alignment" in this context and why I believe it's such an important issue for the future of academic libraries. I will discuss what successful institutional alignment in libraries looks like in practice and explore why discussions of institutional alignment sometimes evoke unhappiness among my colleagues in the library world.

WHAT DOES ALIGNMENT MEAN?

The concept of institutional alignment is not especially complicated. It refers to the amount of congruence the library can show between its policies, programs, and priorities and those of the institution that sponsors it.

Consider this example: A university creates a multidisciplinary degree program in environmental sustainability studies, funds five new tenure-track faculty positions and three full-time support staff for the program, and renovates a building to create office and instructional space for it at a cost of several million dollars. In addition, the university's president has given multiple public speeches in which she has emphasized the university's increased prioritization of issues related to sustainability. That university's library should—if it wants to align itself with its host institution—take all of these indicators as a prompt to review its allocations of collection budget and staff time and make sure that those allocations reflect the degree to which environmental sustainability studies is now a university priority.

The same principle works in the other direction as well. If the library brings an initiative to the university faculty—say, for example, a proposed open access policy for faculty publications—and the faculty response is tepid or resistant and the campus administration shows no inclination to support it, then this lack of response can be taken as a signal that the library's enthusiasm for such a policy is out of alignment with faculty feeling and institutional priorities. If the library wants to keep itself in alignment with the host institution, it will take that signal as a prompt to stop and reassess: is the proposed policy a bad idea? Is it, perhaps, the right idea at the wrong time? Is it possible that potential support is there but has not yet been fully identified or cultivated?

Not all signals are as clear as the ones in these two examples, of course, which means that if the library wishes to align itself well with its institution, it needs to pay close attention to subtler indicators as well, such as these:

- When university leaders speak to the press about what's happening at the university, what key words and concepts do they repeat frequently?
- Which university programs do university leaders boast about in campus publications, and which ones are seldom mentioned?
- At what campus events does the university president usually show up?
- Which areas have received budget enhancements over the past five years, and where are budgets static (or shrinking)?

The answers to questions like these will help guide the library as it shapes its strategies, collections, and program offerings for the future.

WHY DOES ALIGNMENT MATTER?

For much of the past century, we and our academic colleagues have spoken fondly of the library as the "heart of campus." It's a metaphor that pleases everyone: the faculty and students who think of themselves as intellectually serious, and the librarians who think of their work as centrally important to the day-to-day intellectual life of the campus. It even works well as a physical model: students, instructors, and researchers circulate into the library and carry high-quality information out with them to generate new scholarship.

There is a problem with this metaphor, though. It made a lot more sense when the library building was the actual physical location of most of the high-quality information that supports teaching and learning on campus. In other words, it made sense in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the 21st century, the "heart of campus" metaphor has begun to break down.

Although most academic libraries still receive robust use as gathering places and scholarly workspaces, many are seeing greatly decreased use of their physical collections. Scholarly information doesn't circulate in and out of the library in the way it once did; instead, the typical library acts largely as an administrative broker of access to information that is housed and curated elsewhere and accessed remotely and online.

In this new information environment, I propose that the library be thought of less as a heart and more as an engine: as a program—a complex of people, services, and resources—that acts vigorously to move its host institution forward in the directions the institution has chosen. Unless the library does so, and does it in ways that are demonstrable and measurable rather than merely rhetorical, I don't think the library will survive—at least, not in a form any of us would recognize as a library.

It's important to recognize that, in very many cases, our academic hosts are under the same kinds of fiscal stresses that libraries are under, and they have to make very difficult decisions about how to allocate their increasingly tight resources among the various programs on campus. Inevitably, and appropriately, they will make their allocation decisions based largely on questions of relevance to institutional mission and alignment with related priorities.

WHAT DOES ALIGNMENT LOOK LIKE?

Because of the nature of institutional alignment, it will inevitably look different from institution to institution. One well-aligned library will focus on supporting undergraduate research, while another will put more emphasis on international programs or providing strong resources for distance learning, depending on local institutional priorities.

One principle of alignment will be constant, however: no library should support all of its programs and populations equally. I realize that may sound controversial, even horrifying, at first blush—how can we say that one student or faculty member ought to get more support than another? However, that's not what this principle means.

When it comes to providing research

assistance, access to library facilities, or other such individual library services, no patron should get less attention than another. However, when it comes to allocating collections budgets, organizing library programming, and setting programmatic priorities, the library has an obligation to reflect the academic goals of the institution whose teaching and learning it was established to support.

The library at a technical institute probably should allocate more collections money to engineering than to comparative literature, but at a liberal-arts college the proper balance might be just the opposite. At both libraries, any individual student or faculty member who needs help should receive equal treatment—but that doesn't mean that all departments and programs get equal amounts of every kind of support.

In practice, alignment can take a number of forms. For example, a wise library dean or director who undertakes a strategic-planning process will ensure that the library's strategic plan not only maps closely to the expressed strategic priorities of the institution, but also demonstrates that alignment explicitly in its language and even its formatting. Another library that sees an emerging area of programmatic emphasis on campus might respond by creating a task force to work directly with that emerging program and act as a liaison, bringing intelligence back and forth between the program and the library with an eye to adjusting library programming accordingly. Eventually that task force might become a small standing committee charged with keeping those lines of communication open and the library's support for the program strong.

WHY IS ALIGNMENT CONTROVERSIAL?
The idea that libraries should align their priorities and programming with those of their host institutions may seem unobjectionable on the surface, but dig a little deeper and it does suggest some difficult questions. These include:

- What is the proper balance, for an academic library especially, between serving its community and leading it?
- How does the need for alignment interact with academic freedom?
- What if aligning library priorities with those of the campus means supporting systems that undermine the greater good?

These are indeed difficult questions, and I propose the following answers to them.

As for the proper balance between service and leadership, and the balance between the need for alignment and academic freedom: It should not be controversial to point out that an academic library exists for the primary purpose of supporting the teaching, learning, and research carried out by its institutional host. A library that exists on its own and is self-supporting has no obligation to any other entity, but one that exists as an organizational unit of a college or university clearly has a built-in obligation to support that institution. But "support" does not necessarily mean being simply reactive or merely servile. Libraries and librarians have an important role to play in providing leadership. For example:

- Campus administrators may need help understanding certain aspects of the scholarly communication ecosystem.
- Teaching faculty may need guidance regarding copyright and licensing issues.
- Students often need to be shown effective search strategies and taught how to make responsible use of sources.

It's also true that librarians who have faculty status generally enjoy all of the academic-freedom protections provided to other faculty members, including the right to hold and express views that are contrary to those espoused by their institutions or to criticize the policies or practices of their institutions.

Clearly, there are multiple strategic and ethical issues at play here, and there can be tension between them: the library has a strategic need to align itself with its host institution, and it arguably has an ethical obligation to do so. At the same time, the library also has a role to play in leading and shaping campus culture, and individual librarians have both the right and the responsibility to think and act independently as academic professionals.

How these tensions can most appropriately be resolved will vary from situation to situation. However, I think it's safe to say that a library that fails to provide real and demonstrable support to its host institution runs the strong risk of losing its host institution's confidence and support—and it's difficult to see why a library that fails to support its host institution should continue to be underwritten by that institution.

The possibility that aligning with the institution will harm the greater good may seem like a strange thing to suggest. How could helping a college or university achieve its goals make the world a worse place? But we live in a complex world, and the ecosystem of scholarly communication is complex and becoming more so by the day. These complexities increasingly create tensions between the library's obligation to support local and immediate teaching and research needs and what is also, arguably, its obligation to improve the system more globally and in the long term.

For example, consider the prevalence in the current marketplace of comprehensive publisher journal packages, which in many cases provide very good curricular and research support at a very low per-unit price (a significant local and short-term benefit). But they also often perpetuate flawed models of access (a detriment to the integrity of the larger system) and tie up scarce budget money in support of access to low-demand content (a long-term detriment to the support of local needs).

Or consider another issue that many librarians would agree is globally urgent: open access to scholarly publications. On a particular campus, it may be that the librarians are passionate about pursuing that goal, while the campus administration and faculty are either disinterested or even actively opposed to it. In such a situation, where is the library's greater obligation—to what it believes to be the greater good or to local priorities?

None of these questions is either simple or easy to resolve. Simply invoking the importance of alignment or appealing to the greater good is insufficient when circumstances and resource limitations force us to pay for one in the coin of the other. These factors may be in tension with each other to a greater or lesser degree, but they must all be addressed if the library is going to move forward responsibly, effectively, and in a sustainable manner.

There is a bottom line, however. As long as the library depends for its survival on a budget allocation from a host institution, it fails to support that institution at its peril. We may embrace that reality enthusiastically or bemoan it, but our attitude toward that reality will not make it less real. ∎

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Rick Anderson is the associate dean for collections & scholarly communication at the University of Utah's Marriott Library. He can be reached by phone at 801/587-9989 or by email at rick.anderson@utah.edu.

Strategic Library™

Strategic Library focuses on innovation, best practices, and emerging trends in the complex and rapidly evolving library landscape.

Published monthly from January to October, Strategic Library assists administrators and managers in all types of libraries as they deal with day-to-day and strategic challenges. In-depth articles, written by highly regarded professionals in the field, focus on leadership, management, evaluation, assessment, marketing, funding, and more to promote organizational success.

Strategic Library is delivered direct to your desktop, as a digital download.

Special Charter Subscriber Offer!

Yes! Please enter my subscription to Strategic Library at the special charter subscriber rate of $99 for one year (10 issues), a $60 savings, or $299 for a site license (save $200).

Pay Online
Subscription Options
Single Subscriber $99.00 USD

Pay by Mail
Please complete and mail this form to:
LibraryWorks, Inc.
7823 Stratford Rd, Bethesda, MD 20814

(Make check payable to LibraryWorks, Inc.)

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____

TITLE: _____ ORGANIZATION: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Bill Me

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____

TITLE: _____ ORGANIZATION: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

PO # (IF APPLICABLE): _____

Thank you! Your subscription will begin upon receipt of your payment.

Strategic Library™

LibraryWorks®

Mary Alice Davidson
PUBLISHER
madavidson@charter.net
240.354.1281

Jennifer Newman
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
jenny@libraryworks.com
240.354.1281