



Dean's Performance Review (Interim 2-year assessment)

August 2017-September 2019

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Context and Philosophy

On my fifth day of work, I participated in the celebration of the opening of the renovated Stewart Library. My first days were filled with optimism, with newly designed spaces now open to the WSU community. It also marked the end of a visibly disruptive time for library staff and patrons, during which they endured limited access to the collection, noise and construction dust, and uncertainty about what the new building might make possible.

My approach to leadership shaped my initial work as Dean. I see my role as one of guidance and support. I try to create the conditions that enable library personnel to thrive and do their best for our patrons and wider community. These conditions require a clear vision for what we hope to achieve. It also means providing autonomy so that the people closest to the work can make better recommendations and decisions than I can alone. Creating conditions for success also means that I must advocate for resources and promote the library as an essential partner in the larger WSU mission of learning, access, and community.

I try to lead with openness and integrity, being transparent in my thinking and decisions. As much as possible, I make information available to everyone and explain when I cannot, most often for reasons of confidentiality. I am also a reflective person by nature and I work to gather information, listen to others, be open to constructive critique, and make changes in order to improve. This is written in that spirit.

I began my work in the Library by meeting with every staff member individually. In these conversations, nearly everyone identified that they wanted more input into library decision-making, more information on why decisions were being made, more collaboration across departments, which were viewed as siloed, and more resources to address staff burnout issues. My initial actions were based on these conversations and the general consensus that we needed to look at the basics: a new strategic plan and a staffing model and budget priorities that aligned with that new plan. Library personnel also wanted a higher profile on campus so that faculty, staff, and students had a better understanding of what the library offers and how to collaborate to better support WSU's mission.

Strategic Planning

Developing a strategic plan was one of my first priorities. In addition to individual conversations with every library staff and faculty member, I facilitated multiple brainstorming sessions with library personnel and sought feedback from the Provost, Dean's Council, and other stakeholders. A small team then created a five-year [Strategic Framework](#), modeled on the university's three core themes of Learning, Access, and Community. The team also identified Organizational Excellence as an additional theme because this is the foundation that enables us to do our best work for the WSU community. We also completed a rolling 2-year [Strategic Action Plan](#) that identifies specific actions and initiatives that can be regularly assessed to see if they are having their intended impact.

The Strategic Framework has not been fully integrated across the library. I need to do more work in the coming year to connect all library personnel to our Strategic Framework so that they can use it as a guide and inspiration. This includes conducting more regular assessment of the plan and our actions, and regularly reporting on progress.

Major Accomplishments

I have connected the following summary of major accomplishments to the four areas of our Strategic Framework: Learning, Access, Community, and Organizational Excellence and Stewardship. I begin with the latter because supporting the work of my library colleagues is my primary responsibility and the focus of my first two years as Dean.

Organizational Excellence and Stewardship

Maintain an effective and sustainable organization as the foundation of all our work.

- Enrich the user experience by placing the user at the center of our work and decision-making.
- Invest in people by creating an environment of support, caring, and opportunity for all library workers.
- Transform work practices to better meet user needs.

1. Staffing Models

The primary accomplishment of my first two years was developing a staffing model and addressing salary inequity. The Library had been operating on a staffing model that was based on processes that were no longer working for some major areas of the library. Electronic resources management had been housed in two different departments and the communication gaps that resulted were causing problems in timely renewal of library subscriptions. There was no clear responsibility for collection management. There were also staffing shortages in several areas, including the lack of a dedicated librarian liaison for the College of Engineering, Applied Sciences, and Technology, resulting in over-extended staff and the real threat of burnout.

Each department and functional team (reference, instruction, collection management) met and discussed how the current and future work of the library should be organized. We considered every open position to determine if we needed new positions or should fill positions in similar ways. We also considered how to better use student employees so that staff could focus on professional level work. The results of this process include:

- A complete re-organization of reference services, using more student reference assistants.
- A transfer of electronic resources management to Technical Services, which required a position modification.
- The creation of a new Collection Management position, filled by a faculty member.
- The hiring of an EAST Librarian.
- The shift of an archival processing position from soft money to the E&G budget for stability and continuity.
- Streamlining of some reporting lines to get rid of layers of hierarchy.
- Transitioned the Head of Special Collections and Head of University Archives and Digital Collections to faculty status positions, which addressed issues of equity and brought the library into alignment with our peers.
- An increase in the number of student positions, including new positions in Technical Services, Library Administration, and Teaching and Information Services (formerly reference).
- A part-time marketing and communications position.

The result is a staffing model that better fits our current work and areas of growth. We continue to look at every open position to address gaps in our staffing and to continue progress on pay and equity.

2. Staff Compensation

As part of the staff reorganization, Library Council (our leadership team) made raising staff pay, particularly in the N24-N26 pay grades, a priority. Low pay and inequities were contributing to morale problems and retention. The new staffing model provided some funds for raises. We worked with HR to develop a pay model that accounts for staff performance and time in position. Equity within pay grades (compression) was also addressed. Outdated position descriptions were reviewed and several positions were re-graded higher. The result was a significant raise (up to 10% in some cases) for a nearly a quarter of the library staff. The pay model will also enable us to check progress on salary across all pay grades and set annual goals for staff compensation that are transparent and consistent.

3. Budget and process improvements

The library renovation caused several disruptions to regular processes, including budgeting. The staff reorganization enabled us to reconsider some work processes, especially in the area of electronic resources management, which resulted in more timely renewals and payments of invoices, cost savings from adopting new journal access models (pay per use access to many Wiley journals), better tracking of and access to journal subscriptions, and the implementation of usage statistics in collection analysis. While we face challenges from rising journal prices and a flat budget, we have a much clearer picture of our options and priorities, and are instituting more transparent and evidence-informed decision-making.

I also annually share the entire library budget with all personnel, so that they can better understand how we balance library priorities within the realities of the budget. Library Council has developed several priority lists for staffing, collections, special projects, and capital expenses, so that we can plan for the future and be less reactive. As part of this, we outlined a rough capital expense budget which includes anticipated replacement and repair costs for library equipment, furnishing, and fixtures. All of these processes enable us to develop clear fundraising and development goals.

More transparent budgeting and planning has also enabled us to complete several important projects. Highlights include:

- Central capital funding for two self-checkout machines, including one at the Davis campus.
- Central capital funding to complete the installation of compact shelving in University Archives, providing for 10 years of collection growth.
- Central funding to support the digital preservation of university archival records.
- Much-needed computer upgrades for staff computers and furniture that were not included in the renovation.

We are in the early stages of planning for future building modifications. After spending two years in the renovated building, some spaces are not being used as anticipated. We have also identified new user needs based on our strategic plan and conversations with campus partners. Developing clear priorities will help us make better decisions, as well as identify opportunities for fundraising.

We have also experimented with several new work processes and consensus decision making, at all levels of the library. This includes using a consensus decision making model in Library Council, as well as experimenting with committees with broad library representation to work on issues related to marketing and outreach and the library website. These experiments have been rocky, given constraints on personnel time and a tradition of focusing on their departments, rather than a library or campus-wide vision. We have learned lessons about what does and doesn't work for library-wide participation and decision-making, including the need for more central support from the Library Administration Office, clear goals and expectations, and an integration of responsibilities for functions like outreach and communication into job descriptions. This is one of my main areas for growth and improvement in leadership in the next two years, especially in providing more intentional support for managing cultural change.

4. Increase in support for professional development

Staff re-organization and new strategic priorities required increased support for professional development for all library personnel. The Library Council approved a substantial budget for professional development, as well as a policy that provides for equal funding for staff and faculty. Each staff and faculty member has an allowance that they can choose to spend, in consultation with their supervisor, on travel to conferences, webinars, or other professional development activities. I have also dedicated funding to professional development in key areas of growth or improvement for the library, such as in collection management.

5. Donor relations and fundraising

After several years of inactivity, I led the revival of the Friends of Stewart Library, with a recently elected board and officers. This group will focus on growing a network of library supporters in the community and on-campus, with a special emphasis on building our collections related to local history and culture, increasing community engagement with our collections, and supporting student success through internships and employment. While I have worked on donor relations and been successful in securing one named space in the library (a faculty carrel), this is a key area of growth and improvement for the next two years. I will work closely with a new development officer to support and grow the work of Friends and expand fundraising beyond our strengths in Special Collections to support other library services and collections, such as affordable course materials, that will promote student success.

6. Campus relations

The library renovation also meant less attention was focused on communication and campus relations, especially with other deans and administrators and faculty. I arrived to some distrust and lack of understanding about the nature of library collections, including a collection de-accessioning (weeding) project. I have worked to become more fully engaged in Dean's Council and other campus initiatives, including Digital Fluency, student success initiatives, and the Affordable Course Materials Task Force. I also created a Faculty Library Advisory Committee, with representatives from each college. We have had good initial conversations that have clarified how the library at a predominantly teaching-focused institution approaches collection building that retains a curricular focus while also supports faculty research through discovery and quick document delivery. These activities have led to a successful communication campaign related to weeding of bound journal backfiles, as well as a better understanding of the role that the library can play in a range of campus efforts to support student learning and well-being and faculty success.

The other areas of our plan, Learning, Access, and Community, yielded several accomplishments, which I summarize, but cannot take credit for. I supported this work through guidance, advocacy, and providing resources. Space precludes me from discussing all of the work of my library colleagues, so these are selected highlights only.

Learning

Empower learners and foster independent, critical thinking through high-impact and personalized educational experiences.

- Partner with faculty to integrate information literacy throughout the curriculum.
- Apply assessment results and insights to improve teaching and learning.
- Provide personalized assistance to learners, wherever and whenever they are.

1. LIBS 1704: Faculty and staff in Teaching and Information Services (formerly Reference and Information Services) made progress in offering more sections of LIBS 1704 and reducing the waitlist, as well as experimenting with new models of the course that will better integrate LIBS 1704 with ENG 2010.

Highlights include:

- Piloted a concurrent enrollment LIBS 1704 course, coordinated with ENG 2010, at four high schools in Spring 2019. Faculty are currently developing more than 70 sections for full roll out in Spring 2020. This initiative is an opportunity to experiment with the integration of ENG 2010 and LIBS 1704, which provides students with a potentially richer learning experience. It will also address the problem of long wait lists for ENG 1704 in the coming years, as some of these CE students will enter WSU with the LIBS 1704 requirement completed.
- Piloted integrated sections of ENG 2010 and LIBS 1704 on campus. Early feedback suggests that students valued the integration and ability to practice the LIBS 1704 skills on their ENG 2010 assignments. Expansion of the program continues in Spring 2020, with a possible goal of offering ENG 2010 and LIBS 1704 as a fully integrated 4-credit course. This could help students meet the LIBS 1704 requirement earlier. More important, it can provide a better learning experience for students as they learn research and writing skills in tandem.

2. Peer learning: Began developing a peer learning program, which provides personalized and approachable research assistance to students. Having student assistants provide service at the Reference Desk has enabled the subject librarians to dedicate more time to the developing new models for LIBS 1704 (described above) and enabled them to concentrate on more specialized reference questions and research consultations. More important, students often find it easier to approach their peers for help.

- Hired three student reference assistants to provide basic service at the Reference Desk in Fall 2018.
- Hired three Peer Reference Consultants in Fall 2019 in a pilot program to expand reference assistants to include more outreach, workshops, and peer teaching and learning opportunities.

Access

Promote equitable access to higher education and community learning opportunities.

- Provide access to information resources that our communities need, at no cost to them.
- Reduce barriers to degree completion through inclusive services, technology, and other resources.
- Promote a sustainable information landscape through our choices and leadership in open access and open educational resource initiatives.

1. Affordability: Staff in Resource Sharing, Technical Services, and Collection Management explored options for providing more textbooks and course materials through our course reserves program. They have tested a process to identify potential books to purchase or license from the textbook adoption list and will pilot a program in Spring 2020. The Resource Sharing and Circulation Departments also expanded our equipment lending program with more and updated laptops and peripherals that reduce cost barriers for our students.

2. Affordability: I currently chair the university's Affordable Course Materials Task Force which brings together multiple units on campus to develop ways to lower costs to students. Highlights include:

- Facilitating several conversations with faculty to identify their needs and concerns about creating and adapting course materials, in both a commercial and open environment.
- Currently developing a suite of services to help faculty locate, adapt, and adopt more affordable course materials, including material already owned or licensed by the library.
- Currently undertaking a survey of students and faculty to identify issues related to the affordability of course materials and student learning and success. Results will be available in Spring 2020.

3. Student employment: Increased student employment opportunities across the library. Students are gaining important customer service and library research skills during their employment. Campus employment also provides more flexible work hours that supports their success in school. Highlights include:

- Nearly doubled the budget for student workers, expanding positions in nearly every department. This includes the reference assistants described above, as well as a new position to expand hours at the Davis campus in Spring 2020.
- More student workers have been hired in Circulation, and these workers have been provided more training and opportunities for independence at the Circulation Desk. This has enabled staff to dedicate more time to essential functions such as stacks management, the expansion of course reserves (described above), and other projects.

4. Increased technology support: The Teaching and Information Services and Systems Departments partnered with Student Affairs Technology to synchronize student/public computers with Student Affairs Technology lab computers and hire lab assistants for all of the hours that the library is open. This has enabled us to provide better technology support to students, including support for digital tools in the Adobe Suite, now available to the entire WSU community. This partnership is funded by Student Affairs, the Provost’s Office, and Stewart Library as a pilot project.

Community

Contribute to the well-being and strength of the campus and local communities in which we are embedded.

- Provide spaces and services that promote campus-wide collaboration and connection.
- Create physical and online community spaces and programs that bring people together.
- Place diversity, inclusion, and equity at the center of all of our work.

1. Community programming: Special Collections, University Archives, and Digital Collections have offered a range of successful exhibits and programs that connect campus and community and promote greater understanding of communities and peoples who have been historically under-represented in library collections. Highlights include:

- Created the successful exhibit on the history of World War II in Ogden, which spent several weeks at Union Station in Ogden and at local public library locations. The exhibit included a well-attended speaker series.
- An exhibit and speaker series to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the completion of the transcontinental railroad.
- Currently working on another exhibit marking the anniversary of white women’s suffrage and documenting the contributions of women from diverse backgrounds to northern Utah history. The exhibit will open at Union Station in March 2020.
- Outreach events at Ogden and Salt Lake City Pride, farmer’s markets and community fairs, as well as local history lectures at Alleged, as part of the First Friday Art Walk in Ogden.

2. Inclusive programming: The Library co-sponsored several events with the Office of Access and Diversity and the Center for Community Engaged Learning. Highlights include:

- Well-received programming for Hispanic Heritage Month.
- Co-sponsorship of Safiya Noble’s keynote at Digital Humanities Utah and Lingofest conferences on the topic, “Algorithms of Oppression.”
- Co-sponsor of the American Indian Council Pow-Wow.

3. Inclusive collections: Diversified and enriched our collections. Highlights include:

- Donations of significant collection of LGBTQ material for Special Collections
- Acquisition of streaming media, including foreign language films, via Kanopy.
- Began collection analysis to diversify and update our circulating collection to better document under-represented voices.

Goals and areas for improvement:

1. Implement assessment of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan to measure progress towards goals and connect all library personnel and departments with the Strategic Framework.
2. Provide more regular communication with library personnel about ongoing changes and projects. Informal feedback from library colleagues has indicated that regular communication, even when the status of a projects have changed little, will help address the uncertainty and challenges of managing change.
3. Provide more professional development and team building opportunities, particularly for library managers. Informal feedback from library colleagues suggests that there are still issues of silos and lack of communication between departments, as well as the need for more support in having difficult conversations and consensus decision-making.
4. Continue working on policy review and establishing clear work processes, especially in areas where the Library Administration Office needs to provide central coordination and support, such as marketing, outreach, and programming.
5. Expand donor relations and development efforts.
6. Complete the space planning process for the library, including a plan to address the storage challenge in Special Collections.
7. Solicit mechanisms for regular feedback from students on library services and collections, including establishing a student library advisory group.
8. Improve the integration of equity and inclusion goals into the fabric of the library. We have a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement and a representative on the university diversity committee. We decided to have Library Council serve as our library diversity, equity, and inclusion committee, rather than making that work separate from the regular work of the Council. While our goal is to use an equity and inclusion framework to guide our decisions and shape our work, this remains uneven.