**Lydia M. Olson Library**

**Strategic Directions 2009-2015**

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***Introduction***

NMU’s *Road Map to 2015* includes within Leveraging Campus Attributes the priority to “continue campus discussions regarding the “library of the future” to identify state-of-the-art facilities, collections, technology and collaborations that will meet current and emerging instructional and research needs, and that will support the goals and priorities of the Road Map.”

The term library evokes different meanings for different people. There are those for whom library means a collection of books, while for others the term encompasses a range of resources in many formats, coupled with a host of services offered both face-to-face and virtually that overarch collections of resources. Regardless of one’s definition, the library has been moving steadily toward becoming a gateway to information in a multitude of formats as well as a place of study, collaboration, and social engagement.

Society, and with it higher education, is witnessing significant shifts in how people seek information, communicate, and collaborate. NMU’s *Teaching, Learning and Communication* initiative recognized this shift and strove to engage in it: “Northern Michigan University's vision for education in the 21st century is a learning environment that embraces technology to enhance student access, promote the development of independent learners and encourage greater student-faculty communication and collaboration.” Lydia Olson Library contributes to this vision by using technology to provide access to resources, by offering instruction to develop information seeking and evaluative skills essential to independent learners, and by providing a place in which to work in groups as well as solitude.

***Five Strategic Directions***

In formulating a path toward a library of the future, five strategic elements have been adapted from strategies articulated by David W. Lewis in his 2007 article *A Strategy for Academic Libraries in the First Quarter of the 21st Century*.1 The efficacy of adopting the basic tenets of these strategies resides in the fact that Olson Library has been operating under their influence, making steady progress along the continuum formed by these strategies. Formally adopting these strategies can lead to deliberate steps for further progress.

The five strategic elements as Lewis identifies them are:

* Complete the migration from print to electronic collections and capture the efficiencies made possible by this change.
* Retire legacy print collections in a way that efficiently provides for their long-term preservation and makes access to this material available when required. This will free space that can be repurposed.
* Redevelop the library as the primary informal learning space on the campus. In the process, partnerships with other campus units that support research, teaching, and learning should be developed.
* Reposition library and information tools, resources, and expertise so that they are embedded into the teaching, learning, and research enterprises. This includes both human and, increasingly, computer-mediated systems. Emphasis should be placed on external, not library-centered, structures and systems.
* Migrate the focus of collections from purchasing materials to curating content.

***Lydia M. Olson Library: Accomplishments and Future Directions***

Each of Lewis’ five strategies is applied within the local context of Olson Library. The original strategies written by Lewis encompass a twenty-five year time frame (first quarter of the 21st century); our local adaptations target the years 2009 to 2015. For each strategic direction, selected accomplishments and future directions are identified.

**Strategy 1**: **Continue the migration from print to electronic collections and capture the**

**efficiencies made possible by this change.**

Olson Library embarked on this path in the early 1990’s when indexes and abstracts in print were relinquished in favor of CD-ROM versions. Eventually, removal of the tables holding the indexes and abstracts made way for additional seating and open work space. Journals were the next segment of the collection to go digital. As online offerings became more abundant and collective resources such as JSTOR arrived on the scene, a major project was undertaken to move bound journals out of the main library. Subsequent projects have culled the reference collection, again favoring electronic over print resources. Efficiencies gained by this migration include lessening the need for shelving, reducing binding costs, and increasing the number of accessible items while maintaining relatively low acquisitions costs. Authenticating NMU users in compliance with license agreements enables these electronic resources to be accessed from any network connection, thereby capitalizing on the TLC program and NMU’s WiMax initiative.

*Accomplishments:*

1. E-book collections have been added; holdings numbered 30,230 titles by 2008.
2. Realized nearly 50% cost savings in print journal binding. Redirected these funds to purchase software for interlibrary loan and for electronic reserves.
3. Increased dramatically the number of serial titles available to our NMU user community. In the 2000 IPEDS data, Olson Library reported holding 1,711 serial titles. By 2008, the number of serial titles reported to IPEDS had increased to 18,830. Purchasing bundled packages with multiple titles and including no-cost titles in the Library catalog contributed to this growth.
4. Acquired access to Literature Resource Center, containing several reference collections, bio-critical essays on more than 127,000 authors, over 500,000 full-text articles, numerous citations, and the Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature.
5. Acquired access to ARTStor, a collection of nearly 1 million images from museums and art collections worldwide.
6. Acquisition expenditures steadily shifted toward favoring electronic resources.

Figure 1. Percent (%) Library Expenditures by Major Category

*Future Directions:*

1. Reduce print book expenditures; shift those funds toward electronic resources and associated expenditures (e.g. access costs, software, electronic storage, hardware, digital readers). Target: 80% of the library acquisition expenditures are directed toward electronic resources and access.
2. Negotiate bundled purchases when possible to maximize content for cost. This requires creative bargaining with vendors, ongoing collaboration with the Michigan Library Consortium to continue collective purchasing agreements, and continued participation in the MI COLD (Council of Library Deans) Collection Development group.
3. Continue to build e-book collections, particularly in subject areas where information currency is critical (e.g. technology, nursing and allied health). Increase promotion for the e-book collections to increase awareness. Acquire portable e-book readers to facilitate and encourage use.
4. Acquire additional segments of JSTOR to build upon currently provided journal access.

E. Promote and participate in shared scholarly communication efforts, including open access resources, to maximize access and minimize costs for access to research and scholarship products.

F. Migrate from media-based video (e.g. DVD) to distributed streaming video, especially for film/video requests associated with classroom use.

**Strategy 2: Retire legacy print collections while maintaining discipline-based core titles;**

**preserving access to resources; contributing to state, regional, and national**

**preservation efforts; and retaining unique strengths within the collection.**

**This will free space that can be repurposed.**

Just as the acquisition of electronic resources began with indexes, journals, and reference materials, reversing the process to remove print resources followed the same pattern (i.e., indexes, journals, reference). Pushing this pattern forward would extend the process to monographic materials.

*Accomplishments:*

1. Retired selected print indexes and journals in lieu of electronic format. Removed approximately 3,500 linear feet of shelving from the center of the Library main floor and reconfigured seating and shelving to create an attractive, comfortable space.
2. Periodicals targeted for removal from Olson Library were placed in storage or routed to libraries seeking to fill collection gaps, to larger institutions embarking on digitization projects, or to a recycling program.
3. Retired selected reference sources in lieu of electronic format, removing approximately 1,700 linear feet of shelving.
4. Contributed to state, regional, and national preservation efforts by careful relocation of withdrawn materials to more appropriate homes. Examples include transferring historic children’s literature and Michigan imprints to the Clarke Historical Library (their collecting areas), and scholarly publications to the faculty authors’ home institutions.
5. Initiated membership in *Better World Books*. Books no longer wanted in the collection are offered for distribution to countries with limited resources; remainders are recycled. Since our first shipment was sent in January 2006, participation in *Better World Books* has generated nearly $4,000 income for Olson Library.
6. Withdrew older print government documents and substituted electronic access for selected print editions, thereby reducing the overall print collection and allowing for more study space.

*Future Directions:*

1. Adopt the pattern used for journals to reduce the print book collection. By 2015, reduce the main print book collection housed on the third floor by 50%. Considerations include:
2. Retaining sufficient collections to ensure that Interlibrary Loan and MeLCat lending are not jeopardized.
3. Preserving significant collections: Holocaust and collections of local significance.
4. Maintaining core discipline-centered collections.
5. Assess print journals in Olson Library to identify any remaining dual-format holdings and target print versions for local, regional or national storage, and for sale or discard.
6. Identify off-site storage options for collections to maximize our ability to retain resources while opening library space for other purposes.
7. Ensure continued participation in state, regional, and national preservation projects through analysis of collection strengths, relocation of selected materials, and participation in shared collection development strategies.

**Strategy 3: Redevelop the library as the primary informal learning space on campus and continue to develop partnerships with other campus units that support research, teaching, and learning.**

With a central location, more comfortable furniture, and extensive wireless coverage, Olson Library has seen steady traffic and facility use. Gate counts and head counts show increases in 2001 – 2003, with steady rises and minor dips in the more recent years. Both gate and head counts are important: neither is 100% accurate in showing a picture of library use, and actual use is somewhere between the two measures. However, both are true numeric counts, and taken together these data show use patterns.

Gate counts reflect the amount of traffic through the entrance/exit gates and include staff as well as patrons who stay only briefly to print or return items, as well as those who stay in the library for up to an hour or more but whose total time in the library falls between the hours designated for a head count. Gate count data reflects the gate count in a typical week, divided by two to accommodate entry and exit. The typical week is in October, midway through the fall semester, with data averaged over a seven-day service week. Head count data reflect the number of people (staff excluded) in the facility at a specified time; this count is typically taken four times per day at the same time daily. Again the numbers shown represent a sample week in October, midway through the fall semester. (See Gate Count and Head Count charts on page 6.)

Reconfiguring library space to ensure compatibility with our constituents’ needs and to maximize facility use is important, and also has implications for developing partnerships with other campus units.

*Accomplishments:*

1. Opened the center aisle on main floor and created a more welcoming atmosphere.
2. Abandoned the ‘no food or drink’ policy, allowing students to relax in the Library with coffee, water, and snacks.
3. Replaced heavy wooden tables with moveable chairs, enabling students to sit alone or draw into small groups.
4. Wireless coverage expanded laptop range to every corner of the Library.
5. Established a library liaison to the Writing Center and All Campus Tutoring, capitalizing on the LRC location and allowing easy referrals between units.
6. Created the Course Technology Alliance (CTA), a behind-the-scenes collaborative team with members from Olson Library; Instructional Design, Technology, and Media; Academic Computing Services; and Learning Resources Division, including Audio-Visual.

*Future Directions:*

1. Increase facility use by reallocating space on the Library’s top floor (gained through Strategy 2, Future Direction A). This space may be used to relocate materials currently housed on the first floor, to create study and collaborative work spaces using moveable and modular furnishings and partitions, or to develop other appropriate learning spaces.
2. Secure funding to implement the plan for a “Technology Corridor” on the LRC first floor. This plan requires moderate renovations resulting in consolidation of Instructional Technology and Instructional Media Services, increased collaboration and cross-training opportunities, extended service hours, and enhanced technology lab and training spaces.
3. Create a common service desk offering support from the Library, Academic Computing, and Instructional Design and Technology.
4. Incorporate elements of the Archives collections into the Library and integrate functions where feasible (e.g., reference and research services, instruction, processing, etc.)

E. Renovate the facility, incorporating a late-night study lounge, an express, late-hours

service point, and other functions deemed appropriate.

F. Explore partnerships with other entities that support teaching, learning, and scholarship, such as the Language Learning Lab and Grants and Research Office.

G. Collaborate with the NMU Bookstore to provide electronic textbooks and other resources.

**Strategy 4 Reposition library expertise, resources, and information tools so they are embedded into the teaching, learning, scholarship, and research enterprises. This includes both human and, increasingly, computer-mediated systems. Emphasis should be placed on external, not library-centered, structures and systems.**

*Accomplishments:*

1. Improved the Library’s Web design, revamping resources and services, and incorporating interactive services and changing announcements.
2. Developed staff expertise reflecting new directions. Provided staff development opportunities and revised specific positions including:

* Reference/Web Services Librarian
* Reference/Electronic Resources Librarian

3) Created web-based style guides and course guides to meet course objectives and student

research needs. Examples can be found under the *Citing Your Sources* and *Course*

*Guides* headings on the Olson Library web page (<http://library.nmu.edu/>). Of particular

note is the APA style guide, recognized nationally and internationally as a model and

linked by other institutions for use by their students and faculty.

4) Embedded librarian programs have been implemented in Nursing and Education. These

programs infuse information and technical literacy through the curriculum and facilitate student – faculty – librarian interaction using functions within the Course Management System (currently Blackboard/WebCT)

5) Implemented electronic Course Reserves, tapping into existing resources:

* Expertise in copyright and interlibrary loan applied to electronic reserves
* Connection to course management system (WebCT) to provide easy access
* Software to manage administration of electronic reserves, scanning, and copyright

6) Developed reference tutorials and learning tools using technology such as MediaSite

Live and Camtasia. With these tools, traditional face-to-face instruction sessions are

enhanced and modules can be infused into hybrid and online courses.

7) Tested new strategies for Academic Department Liaison activities by creating the

“NMUmanities” blog for Art & Design, Communication & Performance Studies, and Modern Languages & Literatures

8) Enhanced Archives support and tapped staff expertise:

* + Cataloger with expertise in history provides analytical, cataloging, and research assistance
  + Cross-trained TOP staff member to provide basic operational support.

*Future Directions*:

1. Maintain appropriate financial and staffing levels to support materials, services and instructional activities. A portion of the financial support should be devoted to professional development and training opportunities for staff.
2. Acquire a library system which uses progressive computing power to identify and retrieve resources, that supports user-defined services, research lists, etc., and which enhances off-site storage of materials.
3. Expand the embedded librarian program in support of students and faculty teaching hybrid and web based courses. Incorporate embedded librarian activities into at least two additional departments each year until at least 75% of departments have embedded librarian participation.
4. Integrate the Archives into services and facilities of the Library:

* Apply Archives faculty expertise in reference and instructional activities
* Support academic departmental liaison program
* Through facility renovation, create an archives research center within the library

E. Work with students to develop a locally produced, electronic journal or web presence devoted to student scholarly works and research.

**Strategy 5 Migrate from Purchasing Materials to Curating Content**

While curating traditional print materials has long been a library function, enveloping digital resources into the library requires changes in expertise, resources, and partnerships. Digital production, sharing, and preservation of scholarly works demands new collaborations, and those collaborations will be with partners who may hold a traditional view of the library’s role. This last strategy holds great promise, but involves challenges, both internal and external to the library, associated with developing those experts, resources and partnerships.

*Accomplishments:*

1. Promoted the Open Access initiative and in collaboration with the Academic Senate’s AIS Advisory Committee, gained Senate endorsement of a *Resolution on Open Access and Scholarly Communication.*
2. Investigated and proposed an institutional repository for NMU.
3. Developed an Internet resources collection development policy and began integrating URL links to open access and freely available materials compatible with Olson Library collection policies.
4. Incorporated into the Library catalog links to streaming media available on the web after analyzing content quality and source stability (e.g. Frontline media, Nova).
5. Secured grants to digitize materials housed in the NMU Archives and created web access to archival documents. Examples include the Voelker collection and local oral histories.

*Future Directions*:

1. Develop local expertise to facilitate and encourage faculty participation in open access publishing. Provide guidance with respect to copyright options and prepare supporting documentation for faculty regarding open access initiatives.
2. Work with state and regional professional organizations to develop collaborative acquisition and retention plans for library materials.
3. Establish an NMU repository of locally created scholarly works.

* Contribute to and help maintain the database of scholarly works.
* Expand existing collections, which include NMU theses, student papers, and some faculty works. Develop a digital, full image repository beginning with works authored in 2012.

D. Acquire collections for the Archives which preserve materials unique to NMU and the

central Upper Peninsula.

Reference:

1. David W. Lewis, “A Strategy for Academic Libraries in the First Quarter of the 21st Century,”

*College & Research Libraries* 68, no. 5 (September 2007): 418-434.