Final Report  
Academic Program Review  
Libraries and Learning Resources

Review Process

Five departments in the area of Libraries and Learning Resources (LLR) prepared a self-study following program review guidelines. The five departments are Access Services, Information Services, Technical Services, Ogg Science and Health Library, and Instructional Media Services. An external review team, composed of two library deans from other institutions, visited the campus, reviewed the self-study documents, and interviewed unit personnel and University administrators. The Program Review Committee (PRC) read the self-study and the external review, and discussed an early draft of this document with the Dean of Libraries and Learning Resources. This document reflects the PRC’s findings and recommendations.

Self-Study

Mission

Each of the units prepared a separate mission statement.

Access Services
BGSU was a founding member of OhioLINK and this precipitated an administrative reorganization of the Library in 1992-93. Access services comprises six units of operation: Main Desk, Reserve, Interlibrary Loan (ILL), Document Delivery, Stacks, and Support Services.

The mission of the Access Services unit is to serve the constituents of BGSU and the international research community by providing access to BGSU materials and facilitating access to materials not owned by BGSU, by maintaining accurate databases of both patron and item records, by promoting intellectual freedom through maintaining confidentiality of patron records, and by preserving the collections for future generations of researchers.

Information Services
The Library’s Information Services Department comprises five units, each with specific functional responsibilities and each with a coordinator to whom various academic ranks of staff report: Collection Development; Library User Education; the Map Collection; Reference Services; and Serials and Binding.
The mission of these units is to select, acquire, organize, preserve and interpret materials and information resources within the social sciences and humanities disciplines.

**Technical Services**

This area includes Cataloging and Acquisitions. The mission of the Acquisitions unit includes the efficient and economic acquisition of library materials for LLR and the University community, the accurate and timely monitoring of the Library’s materials budget, and regular reporting on the budget balance to the Collection Development unit and the LLR administration. The mission of the Cataloging unit is to provide access to resource materials that support the curricular and research interests of the BGSU community and which are owned by, or made available to, BGSU Libraries.

**Ogg Science and Health Library**

The Ogg Science and Health Library comprises five units of operation: Circulation, Reference, Serials and Binding, Collection Development, and Data Archives. It was created in 1968 to support the needs of BGSU programs in the sciences.

The mission of the Ogg Science and Health Library is to provide access to a wide range of information resources that directly support the University’s roles of teaching, research, and service.

**Instructional Media Services**

The IMS consists of three divisions: Multimedia Production Services, Audiovisual Distribution Services, and Technical Services. Instructional Media Services began life as Audio-Visual Service in 1959-60. In 1988, the name was changed to Instructional Media Services to emphasize a service commitment to its clientele. IMS was involved in the planning of Olscamp Hall and four staff members have their offices there.

The mission of the IMS is to serve the needs of the faculty, staff, and students of BGSU by producing digital, graphic and photographic materials to support university teaching and research, by providing a variety of technology support equipment for classrooms and scholarly conferences, and by consulting with faculty and administrators on effective instructional techniques and on planning of classroom facilities.

**Facilities and Resources**

The two main facilities on the main campus are Jerome Library and the Science Library. In addition, the Northwest Ohio Book Depository serves as a storage facility for underused and older materials. Both main campus facilities are aging and, in the view of the LLR self-study, there are severe space constraints. As the Libraries are transformed from traditional areas with periodical and book collections to media centers for the dissemination of information, the self-study states that these space requirements and allocations need to be rethought. In addition to providing access to paper copies of books and periodicals, the libraries use interlibrary library loan, OhioLINK and other web-based devices to access and provide material for their clientele. Instructional Media Services uses various multimedia devices in order to provide services to their public.
Faculty and Staff

Many of the faculty and staff in the units perform multiple functions. Efforts to maintain and improve the resources tend to suffer given the competing demand to serve the public. The staffing situation is as follows:

Access Services
There are eight full-time employees and three part-time employees. In addition, this branch uses 75-80 undergraduates per term plus four graduate students to help at the circulation desk.

Information Services
IMS has seventeen full time staff members plus thirty-five student assistants.

Technical Services
There are eleven full-time employees and one part-time employee. Seven student assistants also work in Technical Services.

Ogg Science and Health Library
There are three Assistant Professors, two Library Associates and three Library Media Technical Assistant II’s.

Instructional Media Services
There are 12 full-time employees, 5 graduate students and 57 undergraduates.

The self-study identifies the experience and expertise of the permanent members of the staff as strengths of these units. The need for heavy reliance on a student staff was identified as a weakness. The new students need to be trained and there is a constant turnover which, the self-study concludes, puts an added strain on the already stressed permanent staff.

Research Productivity

The LLR units under review are primarily service oriented units. Nevertheless, the Information Services faculty publish and make presentations about areas as diverse as library management, approval plan vendor selection, library instruction, electronic journals, and web-based tutorials. Information Services staff have authored or co-authored roughly 41 separate web sites.

Integration with the wider University community

The primary mission of the unit is to serve as a source of information for students and scholars. As such, the Libraries are open 97 hours/week during the academic year. During the last four weeks of Fall and Spring Semesters, the libraries are open 107 hours/week. In addition, Information Services faculty give guest lectures for faculty in other academic departments. In addition to this support role, Information Services faculty have served as instructor of record in a distance learning program (1994), and in a library skills class (96/97 and 97/98).
Strengths and Weaknesses

Each unit included a section on strengths and weaknesses in their self-study.

Access Services
The major strength of the access services is the permanent staff and their dedication to the public. The weakness noted in the Main Desk sub-unit were: a heavy reliance on student staff; the use of an antiquated OCR “barcode” system for labeling items; and the fallibility of the Innovative Interfaces Incorporated (III) software - an integral component of the OhioLINK system.

Information Services
The primary strengths of the Collection Development Unit include technological innovations, an efficient organization and wise leadership.

The self-identified weaknesses include a less than optimal budget - necessary to meet the increase in subscription rates and book costs as well as the need to meet obligations to the OhioLINK system - and the need for staff to divert their attention from collection concerns as a result of multiple commitments.

The primary strengths of the Reference Services sub-unit include: taking a leadership role within the Libraries in adopting new technologies; the technical expertise of the staff; OhioLINK participation and membership; and the dual nature of responsibilities (Reference and Library User Instruction).

The self-identified weakness is the reliance on student staff, which imposes a continual training burden on the Coordinator of Reference. In the judgment of the self-study, the Reference budget is more in line with that of Owens Community College than it is with comparable state universities.

The Library User Education (LUE) subunit identifies its strength in the development of effective electronic tutorials on library usage and research skills and in staff teaching skills. Staffing has been a problem, which will be addressed somewhat by the Provost’s approval of a First Year Experience Library faculty line.

The Map collection unit strengths include the experience and expertise of the faculty coordinator of the map collection. This is also a weakness because that experience and expertise does not extend to the rapidly developing reliance on electronic technologies.

The strength of the Serials and Binding unit lies in the experience and expertise of the staff, and in the use of the III system. The unit identifies its weakness in unreliable and expensive older machines required to read microform and microfiche. In 1992, the number of local serials titles was over 10,000. Currently there are 5,631, with further cutbacks in the near future a real possibility.

Technical Services
This unit states that its main strength is in the experience, knowledge and flexibility of the staff. Its weaknesses include lack of time to develop WWW products and services, and the lack of integration of invoice payment information, which is currently loaded onto two different automated systems (BGLink and CUFS).

The Cataloging unit finds its chief strength is in their personnel. They believe their current challenges include developing projects to make productive use of excess cataloging capacity and dealing with inherent problems in the structure of the BGLink database. The decentralization of cataloging processing for monographs, scores and serials threatens the reliability of the records and increases the potential for inconsistent treatment of cataloged materials.

Ogg Science and Health Library
The Ogg Library identifies its main strengths in the staff and the collective organization of the staff. They locate their main weaknesses in obsolescent technology, too little classroom space and inadequacies of the building.

Instructional Media Services
IMS feels its main strength is in its staff. They identify the constant need to update the relevant technology as their main challenge.

Budgets and Financing

The self-study noted that the Library funding levels have not kept up with the increasing costs of acquisitions and the need to upgrade relevant technologies. This, it was argued, affects the level of service that the Library can provide. Specifically:

- The number of acquisitions has declined in recent years;
- Journal subscription cost increases have resulted in a drop in the number of journals on hand in the Library;
- Necessary older technology (reading machines, etc.) has not been maintained;
- Participation in OhioLINK at a level appropriate for a university of the stature of Bowling Green is expensive;
- The Reference Library budget is at the level of community colleges in the area and not at a level appropriate for major university;
- The need for student training causes the diversion of essential personnel from their normal tasks;
- The demands on the staff creates a tradeoff between providing service and maintaining and enhancing the collection.

Strategic Plan

The LLR self-study contains a strategic plan for development in the years 1997-2000 that includes five strategic goals:

- Empower the user;
- Assume a leadership role in acquiring, brokering, and managing information resources;
- Enhance intellectual access;
• Optimize the environment for effective work, study, and research; and
• Maximize LLR’s resource base.

External Review Team’s Report

The two reviewers note that the BGSU Libraries have many of the characteristics, strengths and challenges of other academic libraries in the nation. The Library staff is very service oriented and highly experienced in traditional library services. The collections, they note, are large and feature many special collections of national importance.

The reviewers cast their report in the form of 13 specific recommendations, noting that some recommendations will require new or additional resources while others will require rethinking of work, services and staffing.

(1) **Staff Development and Training.** Although the staff is well versed in traditional library services, the movement to increase electronic access to and dispersal of information means that staff need to be retrained to meet the needs of the 21st century libraries that they will manage. They strongly recommend that a clear and formal process for providing opportunities for training and development should be put into place. Its goal should be primarily programmatic support (i.e., advancing established Library goals and agendas), and its support should be an established and recurring budget line.

(2) **Develop Strategies to Integrate Information Literacy Programs into the Curriculum.** New technologies for information storage and retrieval mean that users need to become familiar with these systems. The reviewers recommend that the Library faculty begin to find opportunities to work with faculty in the revision and rethinking of any curriculum both on the undergraduate and graduate levels so that students will have the opportunity to acquire the information skills they will need for the future.

(3) **Student Employees.** The external review team felt that the need to rely heavily on student employees calls for a more effective student employment program, both to benefit the student workers and to allow the Library to make more effective use of their contributions. The reviewers strongly recommend that a working team, charged to investigate how the University work study program could be more effectively organized for the benefit of both students and the employing units, be established no later than late spring, so that its recommendations can be implemented for Fall Semester, 1999.

(4) **Recruitment and Reorganization.** Given the rapidly changing profile of library needs, new faculty and staff need to be recruited and the organizational structure of the Library needs to be rethought. The reviewers recommend that a plan should be developed to address staff and service needs after every area of the libraries has been examined carefully.
(5) **Review Collection Development Strategies.** Funding levels have not kept pace with acquisition needs. The net result is that the Library’s collections rank near the bottom of comparable institutions. This is a crucial priority. BGSU was one of the founding institutions of OhioLINK, a consortium that relies on the excellence of the several libraries that constitute it. Bowling Green is an important library in OhioLINK and needs to be a strong and proud contributor to the whole - not a weak link. The reviewers recommend that the Library Dean and University Provost work together to establish a collections budget which places Bowling Green in the midpoint of its peer institutions, rather than last, as at present.

(6) **Develop Assessment Plan for Libraries.** Institutions of higher learning are now coming under scrutiny by legislators, accreditation agencies and other groups. Libraries need to develop strategies for assessing their collections and services. The reviewers recommend that the Library staff develop an assessment plan based on their strategic plan and on the outcomes expected from BGSU’s new goals for a learning community.

(7) **Barcoding.** The collection is currently labeled partially by OCR and partially by barcodes. The reviewers recommend that a single concerted effort be made (during the summer perhaps) to switch over to the barcode system in one fell swoop rather than by the current drawn-out practice of rebarcoding as staff can accommodate.

(8) **Instructional Media Services.** The reviewers made several recommendations with respect to this area. They recommend that the Library Dean consult with her faculty advisory committee and the Provost on how best to conduct a review of the billing practices of the unit. The Media Services Unit is highly dependent on rapidly changing technology and a plan for assessing needs should be put into place. The reviewers recommend that the Library Dean direct the Director of IMS to prepare a draft plan for administrative review. The reviewers noted that no one seems to be responsible for media collection development. They recommend that the Library Dean develop a collections plan in conjunction with the Director of IMS and discuss its funding with the Provost as present collections funding is already insufficient.

(9) **Remote Storage.** Space limitations necessitate the use of off-campus facilities such as the Northwest Ohio Book Depository. This results in access delays that could hamper research productivity and teaching needs. The reviewers recommend that the Library staff work with appropriate faculty to determine which materials can best be placed in the off-campus storage facility.

(10) **Appropriate Online Catalog.** The advent of electronic, off campus access to full text documents in addition to the development of electronic catalogs necessitates the development of sophisticated search, access and citation systems. In addition, some of the older material in the Dewey system, in the maps collection, and in the government documents collection needs to be integrated into the new catalog system. The reviewers recommend that conversations should take place in the near future between the Technical Services Department Head and the Library Dean so that a programmatic approach may be taken in addressing
further development of the online catalog. Priorities, timetables, staff training and a balance between correcting legacy problems and new development represent some of the key issues to be worked out.

(11) Explore the Integration of Fund Accounts. The libraries budgeting system needs to be brought into line with the University accounting system. The reviewers believe that it would be advisable to assess the situation to see if cost savings and efficiencies can be achieved by combining these two accounting methods.

(12) Explore System to Utilize University Faculty, Staff and Student Records for Library Records. The use of duplicate recoding systems makes it difficult for the Library to keep track of the more that 63,000 patrons it serves. The reviewers recommend that the Library staff work with the personnel in registration and human resources to explore a future sharing of records.

(13) Continue to Improve Physical Facilities. The reviewers recommend that the Library Dean work with the staff, the Provost and others to assess facility and electronic needs for the libraries in order to formulate a practical plan for the future.

Program Review Committee Findings

The PRC sees the Library as a vital contributor to the mission of the University. Based on the experience of its members, as well as on the information provided in the self-study and the external review, the PRC agrees that a consistent strength of the Library is its staff. They not only provide a high level of service to library patrons, but they do so with good humor and collegiality. The commitment of the staff to the Library is plainly evident in the way they carry out their work. The PRC recommends that the administration should commit to investing in the maintenance and improvement of the Library and its services. The central question is where that investment should go.

The Library sees itself as serving as a Research Library, as an Instructional Library and as an Archival repository. A plan should be developed for determining how available resources should be distributed among the Research, Instructional and Archival needs. In addition, a plan should be developed for determining how the Library intends to divide its resources between acquisitions in electronic form versus local hard copy materials. The existing plan, through the year 2000, is a good one but a new plan needs to be implemented to set priorities for future resource use. These priorities will determine how the following recommendations are to be implemented. The success of the Library is a function of the strength of its collection and its ability to access electronic information. Resources must be provided for new acquisitions of books and relevant journals. The Library should work with the Vice Provost for Research on developing a plan for supporting the research needs of new faculty.

The introduction of new technologies for finding and accessing materials means that users need relevant skills to enable them to make optimal use of the Library’s resources. There is a need to incorporate a requirement for developing information
literacy into the general curriculum. This might be achieved through the development of General Education courses on library use or through the integration of library use components into existing courses.

The PRC noted that the proliferation of rapidly changing information technologies means that Library personnel may find their training and skills inadequate for the needs of a 21st century library. The net result is that some job categories may become redundant or underutilized. LLR currently has some retraining programs in place to deal with this problem and these need to be maintained and expanded in some areas.

The PRC felt that the IMS has flourished under the direction of LLR. However, the charge of Instructional Media Services is to provide appropriate technological services to enhance the teaching and research mission of the university. The PRC noted that there are several different units charged with the acquisition, dissemination and maintenance of various media services. For example, the Television Learning Services (TLS) division of the television station WBGU-TV is described in its self-study as having “grown to [become] a diversified instructional support service into virtually every classroom and building on campus.” This sounds a great deal like the description of IMS as a service that “provides technological support for classroom instruction and faculty research by offering a wide range of services and equipment ....” The result of this duplication is that, in general, users do not know where to call for specific services and equipment. The PRC sees a need for a central service that coordinates requests for technological services.

In addition, the external team’s report noted that there is no clear assignment, either within the library or on campus, regarding who is responsible for media collection development - i.e., the acquisition and maintenance of films, videotapes, and CDs. Typically, they noted, media collections are a library responsibility both within the state of Ohio and nationally. The PRC felt that media collection would be improved by integration and coordination, both within the Library and among related units across campus.

The Library maintains a record system and accounting system that is different from that employed by the Bursar. The PRC concurs with the recommendation of the external team’s report that this creates difficulties in keeping track of users and in billings. The committee deemed that steps should be taken to integrate all the relevant accounting systems into one efficient system, as far as that is possible.

The Library currently has two different labeling systems - an OCR system and a Barcode system. This double system creates difficulties for cataloging and for users. The Library is in the process of switching over to the more efficient and universal Barcode system but is doing so on a piece by piece basis. In effect, items are re-labeled as and when staff can accommodate. The PRC agrees with the finding of the external review team that this process should be expedited.

Both the self-study and the external review team’s report remarked on the space constraints that the Library faces and the need to maintain and upgrade the physical facilities. The space constraints have meant that part of the collection is housed in the
Northwest Ohio Book Depository. The external review team’s report noted that the fact that relevant materials were not on site might compromise the research efforts of faculty and students. There are, in effect, two problems here. The first concerns the formulation of a policy as to which materials are or should be stored off-campus. The PRC concluded that this problem can be addressed more or less immediately. The second concerns the state of the buildings in which the Library collections are stored. The time is approaching where these structures will either have to be renovated or replaced. Budgetary considerations preclude any significant efforts in this direction in the immediate future. Nevertheless, the PRC, in accord with the report of the external review team, felt that plans for this contingency needed to be developed. Given current demands on the capital expenditure budget, the Library should position its requests for implementation during budget cycles coming up in six to ten years.

Program Review Committee Recommendations

The following recommendations are listed in order of importance as determined by the PRC. Thus, the most important task, as determined by the PRC, is the development of a new seven year plan that will outline the priorities for the Library as it strives to maintain and improve its services in an ever-changing technological environment. Target dates are projected time lines for the complete implementation of these recommendations.

1. The PRC recommends that LLR develop a new seven-year plan for what it sees itself as doing and how it sees itself as developing to meet the needs of 21st century users. Because this plan will impact all the units at the University, the plan should be made available for discussion and revision by the Council of Deans in the Fall of 2000. Specifically, the plan should address
   a) how available resources should be distributed among the Research, Instructional and Archival aspects of the Library’s mission, as discussed in the previous section, and
   b) how the Library intends to divide its resources between acquisitions in electronic form versus local hard copy materials.

2. The PRC recommends that the Library develop a plan, in conjunction with the Vice Provost for Research, for focusing its research acquisition budget in identified research concentrations on campus, with additional consideration for support of the research needs of new faculty. Target Date: Spring 2001.

3. The PRC believes that it is the responsibility of the LLR to have effective programs for educating both faculty and students in the new information technologies. Furthermore, it is the LLR’s responsibility to assess these programs and to insure their effectiveness. In addition to traditional course formats, the PRC recommends that the Library might take advantage of the very technologies that comprise the subject of instruction. In particular, the PRC sees distance learning as an important part of the Library’s instructional mission, and so encourages the use of web-based courses or modules, and other technologies appropriate for distance learning. Target Date: ongoing.
4. The PRC recommends that the LLR, in conjunction with the Library Advisory Committee, articulate the principles or policy concerning the distribution of the collection between on-campus and off-campus sites. We recommend that such a policy statement be informed by an annual assessment of the effectiveness of collection in meeting the needs of its users. Target Date: 1999-2000 and ongoing.

5. The PRC recommends that LLR study the use of library personnel and their level of training and develop appropriate retraining programs for Library personnel. The Library should report to the President on its training and development program for staff, consistent with Institutional Priority number five. Target Date: 2001-2002.

6. The PRC recommends that the Provost appoint an *ad hoc* committee to study and make recommendations about the stronger collaboration or integration of IMS, Television Learning Services and the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology. Other similar units, such as (but not necessarily limited to) NWOET Foundation or Uni-graphics, should also be considered. We recommend that the *ad hoc* committee not include members from the affected units, but that the *ad hoc* committee consult with representatives of these units. The charge to the *ad hoc* committee should include the goal of users of the services being able to meet their instructional needs related to information technology by contacting a single centralized service. Target Date: Fall 2001.

7. The PRC recommends that the LLR, in conjunction with ITS and affected financial offices of the University, explore ways to integrate the Library accounting system with SIS and HRS in order to insure record completeness, promote efficiency and possibly bring about savings. Target Date: 2002-2003.

8. The PRC, following the recommendation of the external reviewers, urges that a concerted effort be made to switch over to the Barcode system in a single concerted effort. Target Date: Summer 2000.

9. The PRC recommends that the LLR continue to develop mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of its services. This recommendation should be addressed continually, and in support of the goals decided upon in response to recommendation number one. Target Date: Annual report due at the end of each academic year.

10. The PRC recommends that LLR develop a plan for the future development of physical facilities consonant with the mission of the University and the technological demands of a modern library. Target Date: 2004-2005

*The Libraries and Learning Resources should report annually to the Provost on the implementation of these recommendations.*