

West Virginia University Libraries

Strategic Plan 2007-2010

How is the success of a university library to be measured in an “amazoogle” world? In 1908 James Thayer Gerould, Librarian at the University of Minnesota, began compiling and publishing North American university library statistics for volumes held, volumes added, dollar expenditures, and the number of staff members. These annual statistical compilations continue to be published today by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the American Library Association’s Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL). [see Appendix]

Is this relevant in today’s environment of information any time, any where, any form, and any device? Where is the library in a Web 2.0 world of social networking, wikipedias, and folksonomies?

The WVU Libraries believe that we are successful if students and faculty can locate, select, obtain, and use books, journal articles, digital content, images, or any other resources they need for learning, teaching, and research. For many years, we have been known on campus for dedicated librarians and library staff, and for high quality public service. We accept the challenge of taking those accomplishments forward into a new world.

Introduction

The West Virginia University Libraries include the Downtown Campus Library, the Evansdale Library, the West Virginia and Regional History Collection, and the Mathematics Library. The Law Library and the Health Sciences Library are separately administered, although they participate in several library services offered to all WVU students and faculty. An off-site Library Depository with environmentally controlled storage for less-used materials is located in the WVU Research Park.

The WVU Libraries collections parallel the University’s academic interests. Books, periodicals, electronic resources, microforms, government publications, databases, maps, manuscripts, media, and access to information via the Internet provide a major academic resource for the University. The Libraries are the Federal Regional Depository of U.S. Government publications, and a depository for West Virginia State publications. The Evansdale Library is a U.S. Patent and Trademark Depository Library, and a member of AGNIC, the resource network for the National Agriculture Library. The

Mission

The mission of the WVU Libraries is to provide resources, services, instruction, and expertise in support of the teaching, research, and service roles of the University. The Libraries provide a dynamic and welcoming information environment that fosters learning, creativity, and engagement.

Health Sciences Library is the regional library in the National Network of Libraries of Medicine. WVU Librarians and staff provide a wide range of in-person and online services including reference assistance, circulation, interlibrary loan, and instructional programs. In recent years, the Libraries have purchased a broad range of electronic library resources, including more than 25,000 full-text electronic journals.

The West Virginia and Regional History Collection is the premier collection of West Virginia books, periodicals and newspapers. Its holdings include remarkable and distinguished examples of early West Virginia photographs, maps, broadsides, and sound recordings. The Collection’s archives and manuscripts encompass virtually all aspects of the state’s economic, cultural, political, and social history.

The WVU Libraries are members of PALCI, the Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium Inc., and of PALINET, through which we are connected to OCLC, the global online bibliographic utility.

Library Information Services

The Libraries will deliver user-centered services for today's students, professors, and researchers.

Librarians and staff continue to seek creative ways to provide information any time, any where, in any form, and eventually to any device, including handheld computers, PDA's, and smart phones. Services are provided in person, by telephone, and by virtual interaction.

- Strengthen and promote librarians' subject liaison roles for academic departments
- Increase the visibility of library resources in eCampus
- Review and revise library web site information and web design in accordance with up-to-date accessibility standards and usability testing
- Improve and advance virtual reference services
- Create new digital library projects such as West Virginia History OnView. Seek collaborative projects among campus departments and scholars.

Library User Education

The Libraries will provide a curriculum of library instruction and information literacy, especially for first-year students and for upper-division undergraduates with developing subject research requirements.

Librarians are developing sound instructional practices and effective learning experiences which foster critical thinking, information literacy, information technology, and scholarly inquiry.

- Collaborate with college-based faculty to determine where library contributions will most effectively help students successfully complete their assignments
- Monitor progress in the development of First Year Experience and determine Libraries' appropriate role
- Take a campus leadership role in promoting information literacy as a component of a WVU education

- Implement new methods for delivering library instruction both in person and online. Explore "just-in-time" instruction.

- Carefully consider the place of library instruction in the General Education Curriculum

Library Access

The Libraries will provide WVU students and faculty with easy, convenient access to library electronic resources.

The WVU Libraries currently spend almost \$2 million each year for access to electronic journals, electronic reference sources, and electronic books. Electronic access brings substance and content to a user's computer screen, whether the user is on campus, at home, or anywhere in the world.

Voyager, the Libraries' integrated software system since 1999, must be evaluated before 2010 and consideration given to a replacement system. Voyager was acquired in 2006 by the Ex Libris Group, and its future is uncertain. While Voyager was an excellent choice in 1999, other library systems recently surpassed it with new products and functionality. Ex Libris Ltd. and Innovative Interfaces Inc. are currently the most popular systems for academic libraries.

- Seek more customizable user interfaces for library information
- Conduct user studies to assess the effectiveness of EZ Search, the library federated search engine
- Expand and promote the existing ETD system into a true Institutional Repository of student and faculty research
- Explore new searching and display options for the MountainLynx online catalog. Continue to develop metadata expertise.
- Provide all available updates and enhancements to the ILLIAD system for interlibrary loans
- Establish an effective seamless document delivery service, with options for fee-based services. Incorporate document

delivery services to WVU students and faculty thru PALCI EZ Borrow, interlibrary loan, libraries depository, Book Express, and services for distance learners.

Library Technology

The WVU Libraries will provide state-of-the-art technical infrastructure and tools in support of user needs.

The Libraries have initiated plans for a renovation of the second and first floors of the Downtown Campus Library to create a technology-rich learning space for students and faculty called the Learning Commons. As more print journal volumes move to depository storage, space can be re-purposed to provide the resources required for group and individual educational projects and activities. In the Learning Commons, library users will find electronic and print information resources, reference and research assistance, computer workstations, technical assistance, and flexible group work space.

The Evansdale Library needs a careful and focused analysis of existing space and possibilities for expansion. The building was designed to allow the addition of a third floor. In any case, Evansdale must undergo the same re-purposing as other libraries as print collections decline in importance. Flexible, collaborative study space and more spaces for library instruction are needed.

The WVU Libraries have been asked to assume an increased role in service for classroom instruction activities. In recent years, library systems and media personnel have responded to requests for electronic delivery of presentations, digitization of viewing and listening assignments, distance learning class recording and archiving, and live TV delivery campus-wide. This trend will continue into the near future.

- Increase the number of library public workstations and laptops available for student use
- Increase the number of technology-equipped group study rooms
- Maintain up-to-date versions of library hardware and software

- Maintain up-to-date technology in library classrooms
- Improve library digital preservation strategies and ensure critical back-up plans and procedures
- Improve direct technical support to students. Seek collaboration with WVU Office of Information Technology.
- Make full use of the capabilities of Media Site software to support instruction within and outside the Libraries
- Develop webcasting and podcasting for library news, tours, and instruction
- Expand digital archiving of campus events, performances, lectures and the like
- Continue to develop the recognized strengths and public interest for West Virginia History OnView, and similar projects using unique materials from library collections

Library Fundraising and Development Priorities

The Libraries will seek to attract private funding from a variety of sources.

Development priorities are Library Collections, Library Technology, and Library Teaching and Learning. The Libraries currently purchase more than 3,000 books a year with proceeds from library endowments. Digital preservation of rare and unique materials, and information literacy as a component of the WVU curriculum are newer initiatives, but no less important.

- Seek grant funding for library projects, especially those involving the West Virginia and Regional History Collection
- Promote programs that bring visibility to the Libraries
- Seek donor support for endowments, special efforts, and new initiatives

Library Facilities

The Libraries will use library space effectively for today's variety of information resources and services.

WVU's Libraries have become an important part of campus life, particularly for undergraduate students. Libraries provide a welcoming environment with both modern technology and traditional spaces for quiet study and thinking. Two classrooms in the Downtown library and one classroom in the Evansdale Library are heavily booked for library instruction and for specific course instruction. A second off-site library depository will open in the summer of 2008. Planning has begun for a new space for the Rare Book Room as part of a campus museum in the renovated Erickson Alumni Center.

- Consider off-site depository space and compact shelving options, as use of print collections declines
- Ensure safe, appropriate spaces for storing, displaying, and preserving the Libraries important special collections, including rare books, archives, manuscripts, historical photographs, films, maps, and printed ephemera.
- Improve environmental conditions in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection and continue to seek funds for HVAC replacement.
- Continue to examine library service points and reconfigure public areas as needed to meet needs of today's students and scholars. Seriously consider consolidation and integration of services from the user's point of view.

Library Administration

The Libraries will increase knowledge, service orientation, and library skills of personnel at all levels.

Even in a world increasingly oriented toward virtual access, librarians and library staff are a vital and critical academic resource. Library service quality surveys indicate that WVU students and faculty value the high quality

assistance they receive. Librarians and staff are answering more and more complex and technical questions, and are spending more time with individual users in response to inquiries.

Libraries in WVU peer institutions have resources far beyond those of the WVU Libraries. Peer libraries collections range from 7.9 million volumes (Wisconsin) to 2.2 million volumes (Virginia Tech). The WVU Libraries collections include 1.5 million volumes. Peer libraries total annual expenditures range from \$39 million (Wisconsin) to \$13 million (Virginia Tech). The WVU Libraries total annual expenditures are \$10.5 million. While extensive print collections are no longer the sole measure of library effectiveness, continued financial support, at a sustained and predictable level, does determine what resources and services the Libraries can offer to students and faculty.

Rather than bemoan institutional discrepancies, it is perhaps more useful to examine and analyze internal performance metrics for the libraries, and to study national survey results such as LibQual. National results indicate that WVU undergraduate students are more satisfied with the libraries than the national average; graduate students and faculty have satisfaction results that correspond to national averages. MINES (Measuring the Impact of Networked Electronic Services) is a new online transaction survey from the Association of Research Libraries that collects data on the purpose of use of electronic resources and user demographics. Currently MINES is in testing in Canadian ARL Libraries, and it should be available to the WVU Libraries in 2008/2009.

National searches for librarians are becoming more and more difficult as the number of library school graduates declines. It is especially hard to obtain strong national candidate pools in searches for senior librarians at the department head level and above, since WVU librarians have neither tenure nor continued appointments. The addition of new technology-based library services and the high level of user expectations for instruction and assistance mandate increased levels of learning and competency from librarians, staff, and student workers.

- Analyze past measures of door counts, service transactions, use measures, library web site use, etc. to validate and predict service trends
- Evaluate and make improvements to resources and services based on the needs of WVU students and faculty
- Seek opportunities for leadership and collaboration in PALCI and PALINET
- Increase librarians' active participation in ACRL and ALA, including poster sessions at national conferences, committee membership, invited papers and presentations
- Recruit and maintain a workforce that demonstrates commitment to service quality, organizational flexibility, and collaboration
- Examine and improve safety and security, and custodial and cleaning services in library buildings to maintain a welcoming atmosphere
- Promote library resources and programming that support the WVU Strategic Plan

Conclusion

The WVU Libraries are faced with great opportunities and challenges. With appropriate support, we will continue to make a positive contribution to the success of students and faculty. We will deepen our involvement in effective contributions to student learning, and we will seek partners on campus to experiment with us to enhance the WVU academic experience.