



**A. Frank Smith, Jr. Library Center
Strategic Plan 2010-2017**

Southwestern University
August 5, 2009

Memorandum

A. Frank Smith, Jr. Library Center

Date: August 5, 2009
To: Lynne Brody, Dean, Library Services
Jim Hunt, Provost
From: Dana Hendrix, Chair, Working Group for Library Planning
RE: Library Strategic Plan 2010-2017

Attached is the library's Strategic Plan, which was developed through a process that involved all librarians and library support staff in its first phase, and in its second phase representatives of the faculty and library serving together on the Working Group for Library Planning. Professors Burks, Berroth, Veerkamp and Parks were generous with their time and expertise this summer as members of the working group, and Carol Fonken played a crucial consultation role throughout both phases of the strategic planning process.

In the next five to seven years, I hope the university will recognize, maintain, and support the library as a transformational place comprising twin gateways—the building and the website—both needing to evolve if we are to meet changing student and faculty needs and keep pace with advances made in peer academic libraries.

Some of the proposals outlined in the Strategic Plan would require special funds to implement, including addressing our facility challenges—the challenges of a building that was intended to accommodate a collection of up to 300,000 volumes but now houses over 370,000. Some of our proposals would require assistance from other university departments, including Physical Plant, Development, or ITS.

Many of our proposals, however, do not require new funds or support from outside the library. Those we will move ahead with under Lynne's guidance. Our librarians and support staff emerged from the planning process with enthusiasm for addressing the challenges we identified, and I hope in a few years' time we will be able to look back and be satisfied with the progress we will have made.

If I or the Working Group for Library Planning can do anything to further explain the library's Strategic Plan 2010-2017, please let me know.

cc: Erika Berroth
Romi Burks
Carol Fonken
Don Parks
Patrick Veerkamp

A. Frank Smith, Jr. Library Center Strategic Plan 2010-2017

Executive Summary

In the context of Southwestern University's current strategic planning process, the library initiated independent planning in spring of 2009. The planning included two phases. The first—the Library Phase—drew on the experience and knowledge of all library support staff and librarians in a two-day mini-retreat held on campus June 2-3. The mini-retreat included an environmental assessment, generation of proposals in small groups, and prioritization.

The second phase—the Faculty Phase—was conducted by the Working Group for Library Planning, a group of faculty and librarians meeting in six two-hour sessions in the library June 10-19 to hear presentations from librarians on library operations and proposals. The Faculty Phase also generated new proposals and ended with a session to prioritize objectives and to draft a library Vision Statement. This Strategic Plan synthesizes the outcomes from both the library and faculty phases.

The objectives outlined in the library's Strategic Plan are listed under the strategic goal that they further. All objectives are crucial to fulfilling the library's vision, mission, and goals, but the objectives that address the greatest needs and that carried the most support in the prioritization conducted by the Working Group for Library Planning are (with the highest priority items listed first):

- **Increase library staff** to support basic services to student and faculty and to enhance hours of operation. (Objective 6.1)
- **Address longstanding challenges presented by the library building** through relocation of AV Services, establishment of a first-floor Film and Sound Studies Center, and other facility improvements in order to open second floor space to accommodate shelving, regain lost study space, extend study hours, and better meet additional student and faculty library expectations throughout the building. (Objective 4.1)
- Employ librarians' expertise and knowledge to **reconfigure and refurbish the first floor Reference Area** for collaborative and individual study as well as information literacy instruction so that the library is affirmed as a primary informal learning space on the campus. (Objective 4.2)
- **Identify reliable financial support** for hardware, software, infrastructure, integrated library system, and web-related needs. (Objective 5.1)
- **Maximize Voyager** integrated library system functionality. (Objective 5.2)
- Enhance content as well as instructional and functional elements of the **library web presence**. (Objective 5.3)
- Provide **additional skills training for staff** charged with meeting new technological challenges. (Objective 6.2)

Going forward, the library will communicate about the Plan and progress toward the objectives described in it, and will consider it to be a dynamic document to be reviewed regularly and revised as appropriate. Members of the Working Group for Library Planning and the library staff and librarians are all to be commended for their thoughtful work and dedication in creating this Plan to guide the library's efforts over the next five to seven years.

A. Frank Smith, Jr. Library Center Strategic Plan 2010-2017

NB: The goals and objectives below are not listed in order of priority, but rather follow the thematic order of the library's long-established goals. To see the highest priority objectives set in 2009 by the faculty Working Group for Library Planning, refer to the Strategic Plan Executive Summary.

Vision Statement

Southwestern University's A. Frank Smith, Jr. Library Center seeks to provide the best of traditional library services balanced with innovative and emerging information technologies in creating a user-focused, service-rich liberal arts environment that supports undergraduate research, teaching, and learning.

Mission Statement

The library actively supports the mission and goals of Southwestern University by providing information, building collections, cultivating highly qualified staff, and creating physical and virtual learning environments that encourage intellectual exchange, freedom of inquiry, and a passion for knowledge.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goal 1: To participate actively in the intellectual life of the campus and to play an integral role in university educational programs. To continue to enhance the intellectual life of Southwestern students through The Writer's Voice. To draw the community into the library via outreach efforts such as exhibits and lectures.

Objective 1.1: Enhance library cultural and intellectual programming and services to extend beyond traditional library services and enliven the university's shared intellectual life.

- Secure an endowment to support The Writer's Voice to enhance this unique program and deepen its value to students, with increased time spent by the author on campus.
- Develop smaller programmatic offerings, such as a monthly event in the courtyard, to enrich campus life and reinforce libraries as places of value that make possible exploration and new ideas.
- Pursue national (as well as local) press coverage for library efforts including The Writer's Voice through the Communications office.

Strategic Goal 2: To build and maintain print and digital collections of superior quality, depth and breadth to support the curriculum and teaching needs of faculty, to meet the research needs of undergraduate students, to address extracurricular interests, and to meet or exceed national standards for comparable institutions.

Objective 2.1: Continue to set goals and strive for balance in available resources for campus.

- Following clarification of the university's vision, set appropriate goals for library collection size and expenditures per year and communicate goals and justification clearly to university administration.
- Balance and define digital collection goals with print collection goals to create an effective high-use undergraduate collection. Consider also ownership versus access, and serials versus monographs.

Objective 2.2: Strengthen the library's digital collections.

- Increase funding for digital reference works, databases, full-text journal collections, and ebooks in keeping with peer libraries.
- Pilot a library funded pay-per-view access program for digital periodical content and later expansion if the program successfully saves money while still meeting student and faculty needs.

Objective 2.3: Strengthen the library's print and media collections.

- Increase funding for needed print monographic and serial resources as well as media in keeping with peer libraries.
- Increase weeding of collection (removal of items that do not fit the Collection Development Policy) so that it is very timely, closely aligned with the current curriculum, and includes very little duplication.
- As appropriate by discipline, experiment with approval plans or affirm the value and practicality of the current faculty-librarian partnership model.

Objective 2.4: Enhance communication with campus about collections.

- Work with Development office to add library collection funding requests into all future academic grant proposals with any impact on library resources, such as grants for new faculty or programs.
- Ask that Academic Affairs Council and the Provost inform the library early in any process involving change in the curriculum or in the size of student body to ensure library resources are sufficient to support the change.
- Communicate systematically with faculty about collection and budgeting policies and resources, services available in the library and on the website, and about library areas of expertise.
- Expand role of bibliographers to "liaisons" and ensure they consistently reach out to faculty in their departments so faculty know them as a contact in the library throughout the year.

Strategic Goal 3: To promote access and encourage effective use of print and digital collections by providing individualized public services, thereby creating researchers who find and use information with skill and integrity. The library protects researchers' access to information, right to privacy, and freedom to read.

Objective 3.1: Enhance reference services to reflect changes in student learning and research.

- Re-envision reference services in keeping with successful innovations in peer libraries' practices.
- Encourage students to schedule in-person consultation appointments for extended assistance.
- Use Web 2.0 functionality and other remote approaches to reference services.
- Advertise reference services.
- Place phones and Internet access on upper floors so patrons can reach assistance from librarians in Reference Area (or contact staff in case of emergency).

Objective 3.2: Increase focused information literacy efforts to enhance students' research skills.

- Formalize advanced information literacy components for Capstone or junior year research methods courses in all disciplines. Work with faculty to ensure that instruction targets disciplinary research expectations.
- Introduce tools for assessment of student learning (pre- and post-testing) in library components of FYS/AES and possible Capstone/research methods courses.

Strategic Goal 4: To provide an attractive, comfortable and secure physical environment that stimulates thought and welcomes and encourages use of library resources. To make necessary building modifications to adequately house collections and provide a variety of student friendly seating configurations. To provide library hours that accommodate the varying schedules and study habits of undergraduate students.

Objective 4.1: Address longstanding challenges presented by the library building through relocation of AV Services, establishment of a first-floor Film and Sound Studies Center, and other facility improvements in order to open second floor space to accommodate shelving, regain lost study space, extend study hours, and better meet additional student and faculty library expectations throughout the building.

- Establish the Film and Sound Studies Center in the northwest suite to support the high use of film across the curriculum, showcase the library's growing film collection, and enhance the library's sense of place.
- Move AV offices from the second floor to the southeast wing of the first floor so that equipment can be stored safely and moved out to campus locations efficiently.
- Install shelving installations needed immediately to accommodate library collection on second floor, as the building was intended to house up to 300,000 volumes and collection is now over 370,000 volumes.
- Redevelop areas of second floor as varied student work environments to accommodate different uses, as over the past 20 years significant study space has been lost.
- Also consider possibilities and ramifications of repurposing other second-floor areas, including the Prothro Room, Media Library, Graphics Lab, and the Curriculum Room.
- Replace the 20-year-old carpeting throughout the building and address longstanding lighting and climate control problems as well as disintegrating ductwork that causes dust and debris in Special Collections areas of building.
- Create 24-hour study space (this need is supported by Dean of Students) as part of these efforts, which will solve multiple problems and enhance the library and the campus as a whole.
- Assess library ADA compliance. Consider accessible seating, service desk heights, signage, assisted technology, library instruction, librarian and staff training in assisting students with special needs.

Objective 4.2: Employ librarians' expertise and knowledge to reconfigure and refurbish the first floor Reference Area for collaborative and individual study as well as information literacy instruction so that the library is affirmed as a primary informal learning space on the campus.

- Redesign the Reference Area so that it functions as an instructional gateway into the library and its services as well as print and digital resources.
- Reduce print reference collection by as much as 60 percent, retaining only high use current material, and reduce height of stacks for open view through Reference to rest of first floor.
- Rethink/redesign the reference service desk to encourage face-to-face consultation with librarians, who will also offer virtual reference from that desk to students and faculty outside the building.
- Creatively configure individual and collaborative active learning/social spaces with comfortable seating and well-designed computer furniture to enhance flexibility and usability.
- Make mobile white boards with markers available to library users for group/class usage in reference and on upper floors.
- Reconfigure select areas to provide insulated public and technical services office space in order to alleviate the problem of noise within and outside offices, which affects patrons as well as staff.
- Librarians must be the primary consultants in renovations of library space in order to ensure the kinds of functional changes required to offer current and future library services and collections.

Strategic Goal 5: To meet the challenge of continuously evolving electronic services, including the library's online catalog and website. To continue developing and upgrading integrated automated systems that enhance collection access and provide superior service.

Objective 5.1: Identify reliable financial support for hardware, software, infrastructure, integrated library system, and web-related needs.

- Secure ongoing funding for routine upgrading of outdated staff and public use equipment not covered by ITS in its four-year replacement cycle.
- Secure comprehensive wireless Internet coverage throughout all floors of library building.
- Provide electrical outlets throughout building for laptop users studying individually or in groups.
- Make sure printing and copying capabilities are both user-friendly and cost-effective while encouraging only necessary printing.

Objective 5.2: Maximize Voyager integrated library system functionality.

- Implement needed OPAC and staff module enhancements, including spell-checking and other open source enhancements as well as electronic reconciliation between WebAdvisor and Voyager Acquisitions.
- The relocation of the library servers (as ITS moves to new building) and the age of the Sun hardware present challenges that will need to be addressed with ITS' assistance.
- Schedule training/consultation for MS Access in order to fully utilize Voyager data for library assessment and planning in all areas of operation.
- When they are released, implement RDA (Resource Description and Access) cataloging rules with users' needs being high priority.

Objective 5.3: Enhance content as well as instructional and functional elements of the library web presence.

- Enhance methods of on- and off-campus access to digital library resources, continuing to explore the costs and benefits of a proxy server, link resolver, federated searching, etc.
- Redesign to serve faculty needs with one location for book requests, reserve forms, instructional session requests, special questions, with a summary of available services of interest to faculty.
- Redesign website to be more user friendly to students: experiment with Web 2.0 applications such as Facebook, etc. to market library programming, services, and resources to students.
- Place Special Collections finding aids online. Add to and participate in digital special collections and projects as staff time allows.
- Explore possibility of open digital access to SU student theses in same way that Brown Working Papers are online.

Strategic Goal 6: To maximize the talents and energies of a highly qualified staff through recruitment, training, and staff development, evaluation, and creative management.

Objective 6.1: Increase library staff to support basic services to student and faculty and to enhance hours of operation.

- Fund one new position to cover public service night hours five nights/week in order to provide extended Sunday through Thursday evening hours and to better utilize staff time in multiple departments.
- Fund one new position (or fund the hiring of contractors) to meet the AV needs of non-academic campus events on nights & weekends.

Objective 6.2: Provide additional skills training for staff who are charged with meeting new technological challenges.

- Identify funds for staff training, local travel, etc. in order to advance the library's capabilities related directly to job duties, especially the Voyager system or other electronic services the library offers.
- Develop regular communication with NITLE staff to ensure we are benefitting by their presence at SU.

A. Frank Smith, Jr. Library Center Strategic Plan 2010-2017

Environmental Assessment

Strategic Advantages

The Smith Library Center is centrally located on campus, and it enjoys a long history of support from teaching faculty evidenced in collegiality with librarians, participation in collection development, and instructional collaboration on behalf of students. The building has been enhanced by successful grant seeking over the past 10 years. Our longtime, committed library staff and Library Dean enjoy collaborative working relationships and good morale. The library's Writer's Voice Series is a Priority I event on campus and a central intellectual experience for faculty, staff, students, and the surrounding community each year. The library's basic services are well regarded by faculty and students. University/library memberships in the ACS, Amigos Library Services, and TexShare provide access to discounts on annual database fees and costs for digital full text journal content and digital books. TexShare also provides enhanced ILL/courier service and allows our faculty and students to check out materials from academic libraries throughout the state.

Strategic Challenges

For academic libraries across the country building uses, library service expectations, and collection opportunities and needs are expanding, especially regarding technological applications. A broader definition of the library requires resources. Student and faculty expectations have changed as well, but our resources limit our ability to expand our services or collections. The library was expanded in 1988 to accommodate 270-300,000 volumes, but now holds over 375,000 volumes. The library has had to sacrifice group and individual study space for stacks. Staff time is taken up with frequent shifting to make space for new acquisitions because there is not enough open room for shelving or reshelving. Many library departments face their own space challenges, as well, including offices that are not optimal and disparate public service desks that require triple staffing throughout the 97 hours/week the library is open. Since the advent of the Internet as an equally important entry point to information resources and the creation of valued cultural programming including the Writer's Voice, library staffing has not been increased aside from a 3/4-time FTE addition divided over two positions. Library resources in all areas—collections, staff, services—are not sufficient to support a library of the caliber that the University's *Strategic Plan for 2010: Revised* envisioned: "Build programming, superior collection, and technological resources to support the intellectual and cultural life of a preeminent college."

Peer Libraries Comparison

Comparison statistics have been examined in two peer groups. Factors compared included expenditures, usage rates, print and digital collection sizes and rates, monographic and periodical holdings, staffing, and more. In comparison to the other members of the ACS, Smith Library Center's resources are about average—we have not gained any ground in comparison to Trinity's Coates Library, for instance, but we are better on other measures than other ACS libraries. As a regional liberal arts college library, our library is about average compared to the ACS libraries, with some being much richer in resources but some having less to offer their students.

Looking at libraries serving the country's preeminent colleges, however, such as the top ten liberal arts colleges, we are not comparable. If the *Beyond 2010* planning process endorses SU "attaining national leadership as a liberal arts and sciences college" the library will need significantly greater resources and a commitment to developing a preeminent library as well.

Supporting Documentation

The background data and reading materials that informed the two phases of the planning process are included in the bound copies of the library's Strategic Plan 2010-2017. A bound copy is available for library use only at the library's Circulation Desk.

The supporting documentation includes:

Section 1: Library strategic planning process documents, including summaries prepared by library department heads for Working Group for Library Planning presentations

Section 2: Articles from *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Library Journal*

Section 3: Data, including SLC statistics; comparative statistics (ACS and national liberal arts college libraries); survey summaries

Section 4: Background memoranda

Section 5: Library annual report 2007-08