

Too Little Is Not Enough

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Too Little Is Not Enough

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Abstract

The Council of University of Wisconsin Libraries (CUWL) provides a forum and structure for library information planning within the University of Wisconsin (UW) System. The Council represents UW libraries on 13 two-year campuses, 11 four-year campuses and two research campuses and engages in activities such as cooperative planning and purchasing, materials delivery, training, and more. The Council's shared collection development budget has remained flat for a number of years, and inflationary increases have forced cutbacks. That materials budget is administered by CUWL's Collection Development Committee (CDC).

The CDC has created and maintained a shared electronic collection for almost 15 years. In order to continue collaborating and expand resources, the CDC is looking at alternative and innovative ways to increase flexibility and expand buying power in spite of years of flat budgets. As a part of that process, CUWL and the CDC are reviewing resource sharing patterns among libraries, purchasing habits across the system, traditional materials delivery services, overlap studies, the benefits and drawbacks of cooperative purchasing, bill back models for shared collections, budget realignment, and the group is taking a fresh look at how they do business. The presenters will share methods for systemwide data analysis, techniques for getting all functional areas involved in the collection and analysis of data, and they will discuss how to leverage that data to make forward-thinking decisions. The group is encouraged by how well received this work has been and by new opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

History of the Council of University of Wisconsin Libraries (CUWL) and the CUWL Collection Development Committee

The University of Wisconsin System (UWS) was created in 1971 with the merger of the state's two public university systems, the University of Wisconsin (UW) and the Wisconsin State University. It consists of 26 campuses throughout the state with two research institutions, 11 four-year campuses, and 13 two-year campuses, and has 65 libraries which serve more than 178,000 students annually.

The libraries within the UWS work together through the Council of University of Wisconsin Libraries (CUWL) which was established to provide a forum and structure for library and information planning within the UW system. Some of the activities in which CUWL is engaged include cooperative planning and purchases. Some examples of this are development of strategic directions, the current initiative to acquire a new

ILS, and materials delivery through support of a 4-day-per-week statewide delivery system. CUWL also oversees the work of four primary committees: Library Technology, User Services, Digital Initiatives, and the Collection Development Committee.

The Collection Development Committee (CDC), established by CUWL in 1991, was set up to address collection issues relevant to the UW's libraries collectively, to enhance systemwide collection development supporting research, teaching, and service, and to provide cost-effective ways of delivering information. It includes members from each of the four-year campuses and two members representing the two-year campuses. One of its primary roles is the management of the UWS Libraries materials budget which includes a collection of electronic resources, known as the Shared Electronic Collection (SEC), and some other resources. The SEC was established with an original budget of \$300,000 in 1994 and increased to \$1,333,400 by

a DIN in 2001. Current funding totals \$1,757,540 through a combination of \$1,470,000 in UWS allocated funding and \$287,540 from campus contributions.

The CDC has also worked to increase efficiencies for the UWS libraries through the use of new products and approaches. This has included analysis of serials overlap to reduce expenditures, selection of a primary book vendor to achieve greater discounts, consistency and transparency in ordering, and collection analysis using Library Dynamics. This last initiative resulted in a recommendation of a four-copy maximum to generally meet the need for a title in the UWS. Most recently, a Wiley e-book pilot has been implemented to analyze this format in a shared environment.

Managing the SEC and Other Shared Resources

From its small beginnings with few resources, the SEC has grown to a collection of over 20 titles supplemented by resources extended to the UWS by UW-Madison. Development of the collection has evolved over time from a focus on “core” resources to one that best supports the research needs and curricula of the campuses collectively. The CDC makes decisions by majority vote. The four-year campuses each receive one vote, while the two-year campuses collectively receive one vote regarding selection, retention, and cancellation for shared resources. This is supported by the Guidelines of the SEC which has been revised several times since 1999, most recently in 2013. This policy outlines rationale, principles, selection, renewal, and deselection criteria for the shared collection.

With funding remaining flat for several years, the SEC budget has been supplemented by additional funding of the collection through campus cost sharing. This, in turn, has resulted in a blended budget. Cost sharing is currently based on a model of common systems funding followed by the UWS.

Recently, a subgroup of the CDC was designated to analyze the collection and its composition through review of a variety of data. The purpose is to identify alternatives for more flexible

approaches to maintain a collection that meets campus needs for research and also aligns with campus budgetary limitations. This subgroup will then bring ideas to the full committee for comment.

Using Data to Make Systemwide Decisions

In addition to reviewing the existing collection, the CDC also reviews data from a variety of sources to make sure shared purchases align with the needs of the UWS. The group is currently looking at vendor data, resource sharing patterns, materials delivery, collection overlap studies, institutional peer data, LibQual and other surveys data, and budget realignment to ensure they meet the needs of the consortium.

Vendor Data

Last year within the CDC, there was a greater emphasis on adding value to vendor statistics. New spreadsheets were developed and dashboards were created for each resource so the group could access use, cost, cost per full-text download, and long-term trend data all in one place. The statistics gathering process was also streamlined to allow more time for the value-added components of this process. Statistics had historically been gathered monthly and are now gathered and analyzed once a year. The long-term trend data has allowed consortium members to make better future projections about use and cost.

Resource Sharing Patterns

The UW libraries collect a variety of data related to resource sharing. The emphasis this year is on universal borrowing data (intralibrary lending) and interlibrary loan data for books and journals. Trends in intralibrary lending are being looked at to see what types of physical material requests could be met using alternative formats. Studying trends allows the consortium to understand future budget demands, plan for alternative sources when appropriate, and renegotiate contracts with delivery subcontractors.

Interlibrary borrowing patterns for journals are being analyzed and new collection needs are

surfacing. An extended contract with one vendor could potentially satisfy around 40% of interlibrary requests. Book data are also being analyzed in response to a new resource sharing pinch point—restrictions on e-book sharing. The CDC would like to use these data to negotiate systemwide access to materials that have multiple system purchases.

Traditional Materials Delivery

CUWL contracts with the South Central Library System for statewide delivery of physical materials. This includes books as well as state archival materials that are being distributed to the area research centers on UW campuses. As more interlibrary and intralibrary loans are being satisfied with electronic versions of the materials, delivery numbers have decreased. An analysis of delivery data allowed the system to reduce delivery from 5 days per week to 4 days per week with little adverse effects expected on service. The savings were reallocated to a pilot shared e-book project.

Overlap Studies

As part of a CUWL systemwide efficiencies task force, one library staff member conducted an overlap study to better understand where overlaps existed in e-resources and where efficiencies could be gained by extending licenses or consolidating resources. As previously mentioned, campuses have a practice of not purchasing more than four copies of any book title. While not a mandate, the CDC regularly looks at book vendor data to ensure the practice is being followed.

Peer Data

The UWS is using a variety of peer data to gauge how well the UW libraries are doing in relation to their peers, to assess competitive positioning, to better evaluate library performance by identifying library strengths, and to discover areas where UW libraries may be falling below peer benchmarks. The group has used National Center for Educational Statistics peer data, LibQual peer data, and more. The group has made a special effort to use the same peer lists used at the

campus level for campuswide assessment and accreditation reporting.

LibQual and Other Surveys

The CDC has used a variety of surveys to gauge interest in systemwide resource buying initiatives. In addition, they have also used LibQual survey data to understand perceptions of resources availability. They have also used LibQual peer data, which can be cross referenced with NCES acquisitions data to make resource and budget comparisons.

Budget Realignment

A wide variety of assessment methods are used each year to better understand campus and consortia needs. The point of these assessments is to align budget dollars with those resource needs. It is vital that ongoing assessments are performed to ensure alignment and responsiveness.

Rethinking Lines of Communication

Historically, the CDC acted as an independent group within the system when making decisions for shared resources, passing these recommendations up to the library directors for approval. On our campuses, we gathered input to support, or not, the resources. Our decisions were determined by majority, regardless of campus size.

With more data, we have better avenues to validate our decisions and opportunities to support new thinking and make better recommendations. Increased communication across functional lines demonstrates strong collective support for our recommendations to the directors. The libraries have become more actively engaged by discussing our common challenges, which has come to the forefront, especially with the implementation of a systemwide discovery tool. The importance of including other functional areas in the discussions is clear, particularly the importance of conversations with automation managers and catalogers.

At the same time, users are impressed with expanded search capabilities, but they are

discouraged at the discovery of a critical resource, that is an e-book, not available because it was licensed to a single campus. While the advantages of a new discovery tool for the system are clear, the challenges of historically disparate practices are magnified. The diverse campus missions are being brought together to create a shared collection expected to meet all our needs.

The UW libraries currently have a robust and convenient resource sharing vehicle, providing rapid delivery of print materials to users on any of our campuses. The advent of e-books across the state has stymied and frustrated these same users now unable to access titles owned by another campus. With the implementation of a single discovery system, this frustration has been magnified.

Integrated Thinking About Collections

Future of the Shared Collection and Increasing Our Flexibility

Now, when we discuss shared collections, we have begun to take into account the opportunities to use the data we have gathered. For example, what can we do with the knowledge we have gained through identifying trends of journal usage or unfilled interlibrary loan requests due to e-book ownership by a single library? What directions should we consider that will provide for the best return on investment (ROI)? Should the shared collection continue to focus on databases, or how can we better use shared funds? What opportunities are there for increasing funds?

Aligning and working with faculty to understand new directions and initiatives and collaborating with them to identify opportunities for partnerships will benefit future decision making. New funding avenues could be discovered through collaborative partnerships.

New initiatives are impacting the way UW libraries are doing business. Across our campuses, distance learning is expanding through courses, MOOCs, and the UW Flexible Option. Users should benefit from robust access to our e-resources through easily accessible shared systems, rather than barriers due to limited access due to current

licensing terms. The new flex option presents hopes and concerns for the first participating campuses. For Milwaukee, the hope is to increase tuition revenue through increased enrollment while the Colleges are concerned that the additional enrollment will raise the cost for access to resources. As the flex program expands to more campuses, there is a hope that coordinated access to more resources can create better affordable access with fewer restrictions.

Converting Data into Decisions

Leveraging Data

We are responsible for providing the resources necessary for our faculty to teach and pursue their research and for our students to be successful in their coursework and research. At the same time, we need to figure out how we can continue with budgets that remain “too little.”

The UW libraries are approaching these challenges with creativity. While our focus has been on shared collections, we have faculty discovering resources on other campuses without the ability to access them. This has been discouraging because of the ease in which they were previously able to obtain print materials from any campus. The data reveals the increased frustration and has helped support our current e-book pilot project. This is expected to lead to a model for consortial purchasing, paving the way for future e-book arrangements.

The CDC is reviewing license agreements across the system that will lead to the establishment of best practices for all. Through this, and along with the potential for some centralized negotiations, efficiencies and equity will be realized. Consistent language will be employed, providing a better understanding of terms and strengthening our ability to negotiate best terms.

Sharing our unique campus experiences with administration helps identify the best approaches to garner their support. The relationships established on our campuses cannot be underestimated. We are constantly gathering data about new research areas and new degree programs to understand new campus directions.

Leveraging the data we gather on our campuses creates the opportunity to justify additional funding in order that we swim in the same direction with the campus. Unanticipated opportunities may exist through student technology funds, grants and partnerships, or other unique campus funding streams.

These experiences should translate beyond our campuses to system administration. In addition, consideration of new efficiencies and using funds realized from the savings may be put towards new initiatives. An example of repurposed funding is support for a new library services platform that will enhance all system libraries.

Conclusion

In order for us to be successful as a system, and to support the CUWL tenet “one system, one library,” we must advocate on our campuses with our administrators and pursue opportunities for creative collaboration. Those of us who are involved with campus conversations about

budgets, strategic, and academic planning have seen positive shifts in campus perspectives and increased financial support directed toward libraries. These conversations need to move beyond to the UWS level and bring about greater universal agreement regarding collaboration and identification of shared opportunities for which the common systems funding can be applied. Communicating this message beyond our own individual campuses will enhance our role as a consortium.

While the UWS has been funding a shared electronic collection for almost 15 years, we know that without an infusion of new money, along with new ideas, too little is not enough. It is our intent to draw from the data we have been gathering and develop a strong business argument that administrators can understand and will support. We will continue to advocate expanding our purchasing power while demonstrating the value of the resources in which we have already invested.