Reason Minus Zero/No Limit: Trying to Bring It Back Home

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Reason Minus Zero/No Limit: Trying to Bring It Back Home, a Trilogy of University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point Collection Development

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Abstract

Negotiations connected with database renewals are sharply critical and ultimately impact renewal decisions. Today, academic libraries face an ever-consolidating marketplace, often accompanied by disruptive cost increases that toss sound reasoning aside. Instances of superexponential cost increases transfigure once reasonable practices based on sound criteria to unsustainable subscriptions and inappropriate access models. Most troubling is that libraries have seldom been asked to participate in stakeholder discussions before these models and decisions were made. The paper reviews University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point Libraries' struggle with these changing metrics. In context, the paper looks at how recent political upheaval in Wisconsin has overturned Wisconsin's progressive heritage and contributed to a rapid dismantling of state funding for public higher education and its associated services. Wisconsin has been known as a "laboratory for democracy" with its Wisconsin Idea, publicly championing higher education's mission and expertise in service of the common good. Times are changing. Today, not only does Wisconsin's public higher education confront losses of state funding, it faces changing demographics, reduced FTEs, all equating to even fewer budget dollars. In turn, budget shortfalls have made it nearly impossible to address declining infrastructures, needs for academic program reorganization, and institutional restructuring, much less maintain and enhance existing services.

Charleston Conference 2019

Just as the Charleston Conference has developed and evolved, so too, have the storylines of conference presentations and papers. These changing metrics relate directly to shifts in academic libraries and their home institutions, as well as changes in the characteristics of information resources and dearth of vendors. The author's earlier Charleston Conference papers and presentations include "Managing Donations When You Are out of Space, Time, Money, and Staff" (2018), "Habits of Highly Effective Weeding Teams and Their Role in the Circular Economy" (2016), "A Crossroads for Collection Development and Assessment, Its Fallout, and Unknowns" (2015), and "Less Is More: Origins of University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point Collection Assessment Plan" (2013). Certain themes serve as coefficients for these varied reports:

- Changes in library collections, resources, and services, with an emphasis on reorganization and collection assessment
- Competition for space in the library
- Changes to gift policies and practices
- Importance of library specific gifts, monetary donations, endowments, capital drives
- Global literacy programs, changes to Better World Books and Thrift Books
- Trends in higher education and academic libraries
- Implications of state political, legislative, and economic actions
- Perfect storm, higher education and academic libraries
- Libraries, vendors, library products, e-resources, renewals
 - Rationale for renewals, discontinuations
 - Unreasonable pricing increases and licensing models
 - A place at the table
- Impacts on University of Wisconsin System (UW SYS)
- Impacts on University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point (UWSP)
- Impacts on UWSP Libraries as part of Council of University of Wisconsin Libraries (CUWL)
- Importance of library consortiums, library alliances
- A place at the table and call for collective action

The University of Wisconsin System and University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point Story

In 2011 the passage of Wisconsin’s Act 10 (Budget Repair Bill) for the first time mixed state fiscal provisions with the elimination of collective bargaining for public sector employees. In addition, it required greater employee contributions for benefits and froze wages. As a budget repair law, it went even further by reducing state aid to public schools. In the realm of public higher education budget cuts averaged \$250 million annually and froze tuition six years and counting. Changes in statutes redefined tenure protections and even attempted to strike the Wisconsin Idea. One failed budget proposal included language that would have eliminated the century-old mission of the University of Wisconsin System, long embedded in the state code—the Wisconsin Idea—by eliminating phraseology directing the university to “search for truth” and “improve the human condition” with the phrase to “meet the state’s workforce needs.” Vigorous debate in opposition was met with claims of miscommunication, as support for keeping the Wisconsin Idea intact won out. However, the tides had turned, and cyclical budget bills effectively marked an end to the state’s long progressive era. For higher education losses of state funding have been confounded by changing demographics, reduced FTEs, equating to even fewer budget dollars. Budget shortfalls have made it impossible to address declining infrastructures, needs for academic program reorganization, and institutional restructuring, much less maintain existing services.

Thus, the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point (UWSP) has seen significant changes in recent years. In 2013 UWSP served an undergraduate and graduate student body of approximately 9,700. By 2019 this dropped to some 6,800 students. UWSP had a teaching faculty population of approximately 400+ in 2013, and now has some 280. In July 2017–2019, UWSP became a regional campus, with branch campuses in Wausau and Marshfield, as the University of Wisconsin System was restructured, merging its comprehensive universities with its two-year colleges. The main campus library in Stevens Point has partnered with libraries on its branches. In addition to the campuses, the UWSP Libraries serve Central Wisconsin residents and make resources available to statewide users through Interlibrary Loan and Universal Borrowing. Even with the regional “expansion” changes in demographics and revenue have resulted in reduced numbers of students and faculty/staff.

In 2018–19 UWSP made national news, as campus administrators reacted to the triad of state budget cuts, tuition freezes, and declining enrollments, by proposing to cut 13 academic majors, primarily in the humanities. A huge local outcry fought against that “Point Forward” proposal for restructuring and saved those programs. However, saving academic programs still called for substantial reorganization of such, and did not generate any new funding. Further, it does not guarantee the continuation of university services and personnel, nor the renewal of, or addition to, library resources that support department accreditation, course needs, curricula development, scholarly research, and program changes. Developments at UWSP are both embryonic and symptomatic of the University of Wisconsin System (UW SYS) as a whole and the Council of University of Wisconsin Libraries (CUWL). A listing of news headlines paints a suitable picture of impactful events:

- “As the Cost of a Public College Education Soars out of Sight for More and more Americans, State University Spending Is Cut Still More”
- “Impact of Act 10 (Budget Repair Bill) and Act 32 (2011–13 Biennial Budget Bill) on UW System Employee Benefits”
- “Statewide Support for Wisconsin Idea Partnership”
- “2011–13 State Budget Summary”
- “Budget Update, Tuition Freeze”
- “Walker Proposes Cutting \$300 Million, ‘Truth’ and ‘Wisconsin Idea’ from Univ. of Wisconsin System”
- “UW System Statement”
- “Legislative Task Force on UW Restructuring and Operational Flexibilities”
- “Chancellor’s Statement About 2011–13 Budget Lapse”
- “Advisory Committee on Roles of UW System Administration”
- “UW System Board of Regents President Pruitt and Vice President Spector Send Letter to Joint Committee on Finance”
- “Updated OSER Repair Bill FAQ”
- “The Wisconsin Idea: Under Siege but Stronger Than Ever . . .”

- “The Economic Squeeze on Rural Colleges”
- “Students in Rural America Ask UWSP, ‘What Is a University Without a History Major?’”
- “Letter by Chancellor Patterson (UWSP) to UW–Madison Chancellor Martin and UW Leadership Regarding Madison Separation Proposal”
- “Message from UW System President Raymond Cross 2-Year UW’s Merge with UW Comprehensives”
- “UW–Stevens Point Unveils Plan for New Kind of Regional University”
- “Planning and Implementation for Restructuring of UW Colleges, UW–Extension Is Underway”
- “Tony Evers Elected Governor of Wisconsin—The Blue Wave Has Come to Wisconsin”
- “UW System President Cross Announces Plans to Retire”
- “Statements on the Announced Retirement of UW System President Ray Cross”
- “Effects—The UW–Stevens Point Story”
- “Lowest Enrollment in Years Leaves UWSP With \$5.2 Million Shortfall. Here’s What It Means” (Oct. 5, 2018)
- “UW–Stevens Point Announces New Restructuring Plan” (Nov. 13, 2018)
- “The University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, Dr. Patterson Explained in a Memo, Could ‘No Longer Be All Things to All People’” (Dec. 4, 2018)
- “Tenured Faculty Members Could Lose Their Jobs.”
- “UW–Stevens Point’s Economic Impact Tops \$670 Million Annually” (June 19, 2019)
- “UW–Stevens Point Staff Cuts Will Save \$3.6 Million, Several . . .”
<https://www.jsonline.com › story › news › education ›> (April 4, 2019)
- “Restructuring Is Positioning Students and UW System for the Future, Chancellors Say” (day 1 news summary)

More UWSP Basics

According to a June 2019 study UW–Stevens Point campuses generate \$671.3 million in total economic impact annually to Wisconsin’s economy and \$40.9 million in state and local tax revenue generated annually. For every \$1 of state tax investment in UW–Stevens Point, there is \$18.28 in economic activity in the state. How did UW–Stevens Point save liberal arts majors? By cutting more than 130 staff and faculty positions. April 11, 2019—the combination of resignations, retirements, buyouts, and unfilled vacancies will save the university \$3.6 million in the upcoming fiscal year, according to university data. Faculty at UWSP feel the next challenge will be restructuring departments and programs with fewer people.

UWSP’s most recent biennial budgets reflect a shortfall in general-purpose revenue (GPR) support for UW SYS per full-time equivalent student from \$10,500 (2001) to \$6,800 (2016) per student. At UWSP additional annual and mid-fiscal year cuts have become commonplace with the new administrative structure of the University College overseeing the UWSP Libraries and other student success units. Nowadays the UWSP Library Acquisitions Budget often funds administrative initiatives such as Critical Thinking and Wisconsin Idea Collaborative, instead of library resources. With the realignment of UW Colleges (two-year campuses) UWSP became a RI (Receiving Institution) with FY20 budget add-ons in support of two-year branch campuses and additional libraries, UW–Stevens Point at Marshfield and UW–Stevens Point at Wausau. However, with administrative-level campus reorganization, and forthcoming administrative and program restructuring initiatives, funding is increasingly being redirected away from library resources for FY21. Also, we’ve learned UWSP Student Tech Fee funds are to be redirected by campus IT in FY21 and will no longer support library resources. There is a pending annual loss of more than \$50,000 that supports several key library database renewals. The accompanying rationale for this decision relates to campus and administrative reorganization of IT, cuts in its funds and personnel. Reason Hit Zero, when simultaneously the UW System-wide renewal of two databases (IEEE Xplore and American Chemical Society) and trying to bring this home turned into an instance of superexponential renewal cost increases immediately transfiguring once reasonable shared-collection management practices. Sound criteria fell to unsustainable subscription levels and inappropriate access models. UWSP and other UWs leveraged to manage

funds, lobby system VPs, to once again secure systemwide support, with partial success. Locally, UWSP Libraries aligned with academic departments and our chancellor to lobby UW SYS ADMIN to prepay for five-year license ACS All Pub level for campuses. The UWSP administrative communiqué in Figure 1 looks back to when times were good, as in 2019 UW Libraries used a 1998 accord as plea for the future.

- “University of Wisconsin System President commends System-wide library group-license accord” (1998)

- <https://www.wisconsin.edu/news/archive/university-of-wisconsin-system-president-commends-system-wide-library-group-license-accord>

Resolution: Each year, UW campuses will chip in a bit more, up to half the final year. Solemnly, will this be fiscally feasible for other high-level renewals? What lesson does this convey to UWSA? To vendors? One answer came with the IEEE renewal. UWSP and three other UWs were unable to secure funds that would accommodate the new licensing and opted not to

ACS All Pubs 2013 vs 2019. UW SYS funds saves license

April 25, 2019

TO: Chancellor Bernie Patterson
FROM: UWSP Library and Chemistry Departments
RE: American Chemical Society (ACS) Journals

Beginning in 2020, UW System funding for two databases (IEEE Xplore and ACS) will cease and campuses will be expected to absorb these costs locally. The UWSP Library would need an additional \$67,000 to fund these resources. After a usage analysis, the UWSP library does not recommend that we fund IEEE, unless a different model is presented. The library does recommend that we fund ACS. These journals are heavily used and essential for the students, faculty, and staff of our Chemistry department. However, the pricing model ACS currently uses (based on Carnegie classification and average use over 3 years) puts small to mid-size institutions with active chemistry programs at a severe cost disadvantage. The cost for UWSP in 2020 will be approximately \$51,000. The UWSP Library is currently not in a position to absorb these additional costs without eliminating other well-used, multidisciplinary resources that would negatively impact other academic programs.

UW SYSTEM HISTORICAL FUNDING

In 1998, UW System Libraries began leveraging the power of System when UW-Madison Libraries negotiated a group license agreement on behalf of all UW System libraries for ACS journal access. This was one of the first System-side library negotiations of its kind and provided the groundwork for the “One System, One Library” philosophy that we currently operate under. By 2013, UW System funded 15% of ACS costs while campuses funded the remaining portion locally (in 2013, UWSP’s portion was approximately \$30,000). In 2014, realizing that individual campuses could no longer afford even their portion of ACS subscriptions, UW System provided one-time funding to cover the cost of IEEE and ACS databases for five years (2015–2019) to ensure continued equitable access across System.

ACADEMIC NEED

At UWSP, ACS journal articles are accessed more than 20 times per academic day by students and faculty. This access 1) informs the day-to-day curricula of many of our chemistry courses, 2) provides the foundation for almost all faculty-student research projects in chemistry, including those that bring grant money to our institution, 3) is a primary tool in developing our students into literate and capable scientific professionals as part of both their coursework and research experiences. The absence of this resource would fundamentally diminish the student experience at UWSP and, undoubtedly, at other UW System campuses.

REQUEST

We ask that UW System reconsider funding ACS journal access to fulfill several directions outlined in 2020FWD strategic framework. Specifically, investing in this resource will provide consistent access to resources across campuses that will help ensure seamless transfer for students and will improve student retention, success, and completion while minimizing financial barriers. Furthermore, investing in these resources will encourage and reward innovation through the support of basic and applied research.

Figure 1. UWSP administrative communiqué.

renew. This time UWSA did *not* assist with supplemental funding. For UWSP it remains a struggle to understand these negotiations and reasoning as group costs went from \$264,600 to \$362,450. UWSP canceled and with downturns in FTE, drops in usage stats, and budget support, it will continue to lack sustainable funding as changes in the marketplace environs persist. Next up for UWSP are challenges to reign in streaming media costs with Kanopy expenditures soaring. UWSP is joining in the collective effort to combat Macmillan Publishers' new library e-book lending model that places embargoes on new e-book title releases. Next up, UWSP and UW SYS face a looming Elsevier "Freedom Collection" renewal accompanied by fee increases. We have been informed the UW SYS VPs likely will not assist with shared funding.

In the scope of this, most troubling is that libraries have seldom been asked to participate in stakeholder discussions as pricing model decisions occur and the marketplace shrinks. Commonalities in questions abound concerning spend levels, pricing models, and OA access. UWSP, other UWs, and all academic libraries need to look to erstwhile movements trying to bring reason back home. Vendors need to be alerted, even challenged on their pricing and rationale. The time is now to get a place at the table to talk of many things: cooperative negotiations and collective action by academic libraries, unified calls for sustainable pricing models, and taking a stand for open access and full discovery. We are not out of time for the return of reason! Education is driven by hope, UW–Stevens Point and its libraries remain strong, and we can rebound. Consortia between libraries and with our campus administration, academic departments, our faculty, staff, students, and communities, offer keys to the future. United, we can have a place in stakeholder discussions and develop reciprocal partnerships with vendors for reasonable collection development and management practices. Many vendors do recognize this, and the author has plans for a future conference presentation and paper recounting successful negotiations with major vendors such as ProQuest and EBSCO, along with smaller, less profit-motivated information resource entities.

In the meantime, "walking away from the American Chemical Society" and Elsevier are well documented on the Web, as are affronts over Kanopy's pricing model, MLA's exclusivity with discovery, and the Macmillan embargo on new e-books.

<http://www.attemptingelegance.com/?p=1765>

<https://confessions.scientopia.org/2012/10/01/around-the-web-suny-potsdam-vs-american-chemical-society/>

<https://walt.lishost.org/2012/09/when-youre-wrong-on-the-message/>

https://blogs.sciencemag.org/pipeline/archives/2012/09/14/walking_away_from_the_acs

<https://citesandinsights.info/v12i12b.htm>

<https://www.metafilter.com/120356/Librarians-Vs-The-ACS>

The American Chemical Society: Paving paradise to put up a parking lot

Harvard University says it can't afford journal publishers' prices

<https://sr.ithaka.org/publications/red-light-green-light-licensing/>

<https://www.universityaffairs.ca/opinion/in-my-opinion/cuts-to-journal-subscriptions-an-opportunity-not-a-crisis/>

<https://sparcopen.org/our-work/big-deal-cancellation-tracking/>

https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/American_Chemical_Society

<https://blogs.plos.org/absolutely-maybe/2019/01/17/open-access-2018-a-year-of-funders-and-universities-drawing-lines-in-the-sand/>

<https://blogs.sciencemag.org/pipeline/archives/2019/03/01/california-tells-elsevier-to-take-a-hike>

Taking a Stand for Open Access, University of California Terminates . . .

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/79397-in-bold-stand-for-open-access-university-of-california-terminates-elsevier-deal.html>

LSU <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/75701-lsu-libraries-elsevier-quietly-resolve-suit-over-journal-access.html>

Untenable expenditures > need for new pricing model by Kanopy

UWSP expenditures triple original streaming fund allocation

New York City Public Libraries Drop Kanopy Free Streaming . . .

<https://variety.com> › digital › news › kanopy
-dropped-new-york-city-publ . . .

How Much Is Your Library Paying for the Kanopy Video . . .

<https://www.forbes.com> › sites › adamrowe1 ›
2019/07/31 › how-much-is . . .

Unkind Rewind | Library Babel Fish—Inside
Higher Ed

<https://www.insidehighered.com> › blogs ›
unkind-rewind

Joining together for collective action . . .
response to MLA and ALA call

Exclusive Deals in Scholarly Discovery: How They
Hurt Users . . . [https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet](https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org)
.org › 2018/12/04 ›

Consortial Letter of Opposition to MLA's
Exclusive . . . - ICOLC

<https://icolc.net> › statement › consortial-letter
-opposition-mlas-exclusive-re . . . ebsco

Blog 2018—ProQuest's Statement Concerning
the MLA . . .

<http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2019/07/ala-denounces-new-macmillan-library-lending-model-urges-library-customers>

Comment on this conference session and paper title:

As a Bob Dylan scholar and superfan, the author metaphorically chose to connect Dylan's song entitled "Love Minus Zero/No Limit" and album *Bringing It All Back Home* to the chords and rhythms of current library experiences.