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Inside Pandora's Box -- Changes In Technology Provide Opportunities for Organizational Change: A Case Study

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products, making it one of the exciting learning venues of the meeting.

MLA has a long history of providing continuing education at the annual meeting. This year was no exception. Some thirty courses were offered to members, including a number of hands-on classes. A special meeting symposium, "Leadership Reconsidered: Developing a Strategic Agenda for Leadership in Health Sciences Libraries," was sponsored by the Leadership and Management Section of MLA and the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries.

Two of the events that always attract large audiences are the Presidential and Inaugural Addresses. This year's president, **Carol Jenkins**, director of the Health Sciences Library at the **University of North Carolina**, Chapel Hill, gave members a vivid picture of the year's activities and initiatives in her talk, "Investing in Our Future: Health Information Leadership in the 21st Century." This was a year in which national events brought forth immediate responses from the health sciences library community. Librarians were called upon to meet urgent information needs during national disaster/bioterrorism situations and to safeguard patient safety. The association responded to the tragedy at **Johns Hopkins Medical Center** where a healthy volunteer died during a clinical trial. The investigators had not searched the literature with sufficient depth and span of coverage to identify the dangers of the drug involved. The association has established an **Expert Searching Task Force** to promote best practices in searching and to promote the value of the librarian in providing literature searches. Her talk included progress in the areas of technology, legislation, education, and research.

The theme of incoming president, **Linda Watson**, director of the Claude Moore Library at the **University of Virginia Health System**, was "Extreme Librarians: Champions for Quality Health Information." She called for members to cultivate an expanded and energized workforce, to foster a learning and evidence-based culture, and to reach a shared community of users to improve health. Her initiatives will assure that we have a busy and exciting year ahead.

Lest you think we worked too hard, there were a variety of social events, including a welcome reception that opened the Hall of Exhibits and an Awards Luncheon that honored recipients of the **MLA** honors. Of special note is the presentation of the **Marcia C. Noyes Award**, **MLA's** highest honor and this year it was presented to **Robert Braude, Ph.D.**, who recently retired from the Samuel J. Wood Library of the Weill Medical College of **Cornell University**, New York City, for his lasting contributions to the association and the profession. Last, but not least, we enjoyed the western Denim and Diamonds Ball. You will find more details and pictures on the association's Website, **MLANET**.

Next year will be Year 103 of **MLA** annual meetings and we will meet in San Diego. 🐾

Inside Pandora's Box — Changes In Technology Provide Opportunities For Organizational Change: A Case Study

by **Rhonda Glazier** (Emporia State University)

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During 1998 William Allen White Library (WAWL) at **Emporia State University** began the process of implementing a new integrated library system (ILS). This new system had many capabilities not available in the previous system, including a real-time acquisition's module. With this module in mind, the procedures for allocating, tracking and accounting for the materials budget were analyzed. After that analysis, several problems were identified and changes made.

Prior to 1998 the acquisition's budget was given out on a "first come, first serve" basis. This meant that orders were placed as received, with priority given to university faculty in the departments on campus, followed by library faculty. Library faculty were given specific subject areas in which to order materials, but there was no clear relationship between the area of selection and the departments on campus. This meant that the library faculty who ordered early in the fiscal year were guaranteed their materials, while orders placed later in the year might not be funded due to lack of money. It also meant that more than one library faculty member represented some departments on campus and other departments had minimal representation.

A second problem identified during the analysis was that the amount spent for each department could potentially vary greatly each year. Since all reports were based on an amount spent by Dewey call number, more than one department could potentially receive reports that allocate the same money to multiple departments. This made it very difficult to clearly reflect the budget and how it was spent. In addition, questions would occur as to where the different Dewey number expenditures should be reported. Because of this confusion, working on accreditation reports became very time consuming. Finally, if a request came early in the year from a department wanting to know how much money they had to spend, an accurate answer could not be given since it depended on the library faculty getting materials ordered ahead of their colleagues.

A final problem identified had to do with the electronic database budget. There was no specific budget for electronic databases and no formal means for selecting or evaluating the

databases purchased by the library. Over the years individual library faculty members approached the library dean about purchasing electronic databases. It was at the director's discretion to approve and find funding for these new databases. Since it was done on an individual basis, that meant that the library faculty were never sure if a new database would be approved, and many times no extensive analysis was done of a database before it was added.

The initial step taken to change how materials were purchased at WAWL was the formation of a selection committee. This committee was comprised of all library faculty currently selecting materials for the library. Each faculty member was then assigned specific departments to represent and criteria for setting up a liaison relationship with that department. Most of the library faculty received departments that were closely associated with the type of materials they had been selecting in the past. Those departments that were not represented in the first round were split between the library faculty according to size and selection load. If a library faculty member was already ordering for a large department, a smaller department would be added to their load, instead of another large department.

One of the initial goals of this committee was to try and routinize and structure communication between the library and the departmental faculty. The ideal was to have each library faculty member, representing at least two or three departments, delivering the same type of information to each department. Library faculty members were asked to meet with each department they represent at least once each semester. In addition, whenever special events were happening at the library, the library faculty member was responsible for sending that information out to the departments they represented.

After being assigned to specific departments, each library faculty member determined what fund codes (or subject areas) they wanted broken out for that department. No limit was placed on the number of individual fund codes that could be assigned to a department. For example, the English Department has fund codes for popular fiction, literature and English. The School of Library and Information Man-

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agement had only one fund code for library and information science.

Once the fund codes were established, a means for allocating money to these funds had to be devised. Making the process more complex was the problem of standing orders. Standing and firm orders were allocated from the same budget line. In addition to not allocating specific amounts for firm orders from the beginning, standing orders had also not been closely monitored. Once the library ran out of money, no more orders were accepted and standing order invoices were held and paid out of the next fiscal year. Some years the library dean would pay outstanding standing order invoices from another budget line.

The basic procedure followed for paying for materials was that all invoices were paid as they entered the library. After the materials were cataloged, invoice amounts were broken down statistically by the Dewey number assigned. Monthly reports were sent out to the library faculty indicating how many books were cataloged in each Dewey category, representing the acquisitions for the month. Fortunately, a breakdown as to whether the material added came through a standing order or a firm order was also indicated on the report. Since standing orders needed to be verified, a four-year analysis of titles purchased on standing order was done. The use of four years of data was decided upon because many of the materials that came in on standing order were on an every-other year basis. Since the library had not received a significant increase in the materials budget for more than 15 years, one of the main devices used to control the budget over time was to change a standing order title to receive it every even or odd year instead of every year. However, no authoritative record of which titles were purchased this way was available, therefore the need to do the four-year analysis. Once a "fairly accurate" budget amount was identified for standing orders, that amount was subtracted off the top of the materials budget, and the remainder was used as the base amount for the firm order budget.

With no circulation figures, or any historical precedence, it was decided that an average amount spent in the last five years by Dewey category would be one of the criteria used to determine base line allocations for each fund. After an over-all 5-year average was determined for each Dewey classification, the average book price for each Dewey number was calculated. All monthly statistics had given the amount spent and total number of books, so this average was easy to determine. Once the averages were determined, the next step was to assign each Dewey number to a department. Once the department was identified, a fund code for that subject area was either created, or the amount was added to an existing fund code for that department.

Standing order cost averages were not used in the formula to determine fund code allocations because the majority of the standing orders were for reference, library science and music. Instead, when adjustments needed to be

made in the allocations, after applying the formula, those funds were not given additional funds above the 5-year average, with the exception of rounding up the total. A second average of the standing orders was also calculated with the reference materials being broken out by subject area instead of the general category of reference. This was just done for informational purposes and discussion.

This means that the final suggested allocation was based on the 5-year average expenditure by subject area plus average book cost. The proposed allocations were taken to the Library Selection Committee, discussed, and revised. Most of the initial changes occurred in the fund code structure. Some of the library faculty, who had initially asked for four or five different funds for a department decided they wanted to use broader categories once the allocations were made. These changes were made and the money from a deleted fund code stayed in the same department that the original fund code represented. This process took several meetings, but once dollar amounts were agreed upon, the final step was setting up this fund structure in our new acquisition system.

The library has now been using specific funds and allocations for three years. Each year a few of the funds have been combined or deleted. In addition, several new funds have been added. Finally, standing orders have been clearly identified and cost projections are now accurate. With this authoritative list, the library faculty did a systematic evaluation of all materials on standing order. Through this analysis, over \$12,000 in standing orders have been canceled. These cancellations have occurred through a consensus of the selection committee, which in turn has contacted faculty in the departments on campus who would be affected by the cancellation. Information on alternatives for the source being considered for cancellation was communicated, and in most cases an agreement to cancel the material was reached. If departmental faculty felt strongly about retaining a resource, it was retained and alternative resources were chosen for cancellation. Duplication in format was also examined in the process. The goal has been to make sure that all materials are purchased in the best format to meet the user's needs and to limit duplication whenever possible. In other words, if the department needing the material has a large distance education program, an electronic version of the information was sought whenever possible. If the program was more likely to use the material in the library, or the electronic version was too expensive, it was retained in print.

In terms of the electronic database budget, an authoritative list of all databases, renewal date and how the database was purchased (direct, through a consortium, etc.) was compiled. The selection committee also developed a proposal for the dean requesting that a specific line item be added to the budget for electronic databases. The amount was not based on current costs, but included additional funding with an argument that additional databases needed to be purchased and that the library should commit whatever money available to this line, regardless of current expenditures. This proposal was accepted and electronic databases are now tracked

through a specific budget line. In addition, the dean has been successful in getting additional campus support for electronic databases. Now, as databases come up for renewal, usage statistics, current curriculum needs and other data are gathered and discussed before it is renewed. New databases are added after a trial and lengthy discussion.

At this time, the library process for allocating funds for library materials has become routinized. With reorganization last year, a library faculty member was appointed as collection development librarian. The responsibilities of this position include the development of a collection development policy and allocation of the library materials budget. This librarian is also chair of the Library Selectors Committee. Allocations for this year were changed to incorporate circulation figures, student FTE and average cost of books for a given subject area. Since the previous three-years were based on historical purchasing, the use of circulation and student FTE had a major impact on the fund allocations. Several of the funds were cut by three-fourths while others tripled in allotment. This obviously caused concern and was not acceptable by the majority of the library faculty. After a lengthy and heated discussion, a compromise was finally reached. Because of an extremely tight budget year, it was decided that no fund should lose more than \$500 and no fund should gain more than \$500 this year. With this in mind, all funds that met the criteria (gained or lost more than \$500 using the new formula) had their funds redistributed. Ironically, the amount of difference between the two criteria was \$120. This money was divided between the funds that had originally received the lowest amounts. This compromise should help ease the allocation of firm order money away from the historically funded areas to this new formula.

While assigning specific amounts of money to subject funds at the beginning of the fiscal year has certainly made the purchasing of materials for the library more effective, the real benefit has been the formation of a Library Selection Committee. This group meets weekly to discuss library acquisitions issues. Materials that are considered "large ticket items" are brought to this group for discussion before purchasing. The major project that this committee is working on at this time is a serials evaluation. Due to a tight budget, the library will need to cut \$24,000 in periodicals. This committee has coordinated the outreach to other departments on campus and has undertaken a systematic evaluation of the periodical titles purchased by the library. This process has helped the individual library faculty members to assure the departmental faculty that the decisions are being made in an impartial and systematic manner.

The most important benefit that has come from the analysis and implementation of a new way of handling the materials budget at WAWL is that over the last three years the library faculty have developed closer ties with the rest of campus, and through these closer collaborations, the over-all perception of the library has improved. And, finally, the library can now easily answer questions from faculty about how much money is spent each year for their department and the justification for the allotment.