

2008-2009 Strategic Update

University of Guelph Library Integrated Plan in Year 3



Overview:

This “year 3” update to the integrated plan is intended to identify the Library’s key strategic initiatives for 2008/2009. There are new, current and evolving services and programs that require campus support and involvement in order to realize the full potential of the integration of information resources and services into the teaching, learning, research and administrative environments on campus. Ultimately, the Library’s successful contribution to the realization of the iCampus vision depends not only upon the strategic allocation of resources, financial and human, but also upon effective collaboration with campus partners.

Assessments and surveys of the Library’s user community strongly indicate that the Library’s primary objective should be to build and enhance its information collections. In order to do so, the Library continues to invest in consortial purchasing and management of electronic resources to maximize the Library’s buying power and increase the efficiency of information delivery and access e.g. the Ontario Scholars Portal and the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN). However, to ensure that the Library can sustain access to world-class scholarly information, the acquisitions budget must be brought into alignment with the average for such comparator institutions as UWO, Queen’s, Waterloo, McMaster, Saskatchewan, and Simon Fraser. The Library is also actively developing digital collections by identifying global, national, and regional digital conversion initiatives, such as the Open Content Alliance, OurOntario and Alouette Canada, and contributing our unique holdings.

We believe the Library and its Learning Commons can play an active role in supporting implementation of a number of recommendations contained in the Final Report of the Twenty-first Century Curriculum Committee (21C Report). Librarians and learning specialists can work with faculty to develop curriculum that meets student learning needs and builds student competence, knowledge and skills. Programs and departments that choose to adapt the modular university-wide research course (MURC) proposed by the 21C Teaching-Research Link Working Group will have the opportunity to collaborate with the Library to incorporate information literacy skills over several years of the undergraduate experience, building on work already being done with the BAS program. Other opportunities to increase and enhance support to students as they develop their critical thinking, writing and numeracy skills are provided through Supported Learning Groups (SLGs), Writing Central, and a numeracy and quantitative reasoning website, respectively. The Library is planning to incorporate Web 2.0 technologies in its website to allow for user-contributed content, community building and new methodologies for building subject guides and/or recommender services. And finally, we expect the Learning Commons will be part of a collaborative initiative to provide training in pedagogy for GTAs.

In order for this level of involvement in 21C implementation to occur and for the Library to accomplish its strategic priorities, it needs to realign and renew its human resources. A review of academic liaison is nearing completion and a comprehensive human resources analysis will be undertaken in 2008. While it is not possible to predict the outcome of these initiatives, they may enable the Library to realign existing positions to respond to the recommendations in the 21C Report, and address identified needs for service growth and enhancement. Demands that cannot be met by a realignment of positions will require funds for additional/new positions.

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The Library is also reviewing its management structure in order to ensure it is appropriate, and has undertaken an efficiency program designed to help it deal with pending budget adjustments and other inflationary pressures. This program is intended to help mitigate the need for more significant budget adjustments. The more successful this program is, the less the Library will have to adjust to meet predetermined targets in the future. It is hoped that, by questioning some of our current operating assumptions, or reviewing operating philosophies in light of more challenging financial times, we will make decisions that will have a positive impact on the Library.

Unfortunately, the current and future development of our unique collections is in jeopardy. In spite of the addition of compact shelving in Archival and Special Collections in 2007, the present facility will be completely full by 2012, and a minimum of 5,000 additional square feet is needed to accommodate growth expected over the next decade. The Library must plan for and find the resources for a significant renovation and extension of Archival and Special Collections to accommodate the growth of these collections ensure their long-term preservation, and increase access and visibility. Funding for longer-term expansion of the Archives is one of the priorities for the next U of G capital campaign and the Library will be working with Alumni Affairs and Development to appeal to donors with a strong interest in archives and preserving history.

The Library's role in support of new modes of scholarly communication and rapid advances in e-learning are evolving quickly. E-learning Operations and our Academic Liaison Librarians continue to work with faculty to integrate electronic information resources and services into the online learning environment and other web 2.0 or "NetGen" networks. In 2007/8 a scholarly communications program has been developed. The Library's successful online academic journal publication service will continue to advance as we participate in the CFI funded Synergies project and the University of Guelph institutional repository system will be launched for the upcoming academic year.

Access to the Library's information resources and services relies upon a complex IT infrastructure and the Library itself has become an important computing facility for our students. The Library's integrated plan identifies the need for renewal of information technology and proposes a life-cycle management program. Some significant investments will be required in 2008/2009: over 100 public computers (already out of warranty) will need to be replaced; we will invest in a new discovery layer for our TRELIS catalogue and the extension of its scope to include digital or electronic resources outside of the Library's collections; and identify a strategy for the next integrated library system implementation with TUG and OCUL. A website redesign has improved access to our resources and services and the next step is to Incorporate Web 2.0 technologies in the website allowing library users to contribute to and participate in library services.

We participated in the 2007 LibQual survey and evaluated student learning outcomes and information literacy skill levels by piloting ARL's Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills instrument. The Library will be assessing the results of these assessment instruments to determine whether we have achieved our stated goal of "success on your terms" and will be developing strategies to address areas where improvements are required.

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Strategic Priority 1: Enrich the user's experience – enhance the learner's success, partner with faculty, and support research

Key Area: Create a vibrant “academic town square”

- Implementing the recommendations of an accessibility review of the Library's "soft services", which will complement the physical facilities review already completed and enable full participation in the “academic town square” for people with disabilities.
- Create an overall communication strategy, to make users aware of the Library's core services and resources (including academic liaison, information literacy, research services, e-learning services, learning, writing and supported learning programs) and to work with the Library's Senior Communications Officer to develop material for the next campaign.

Key Area: Provide support and expertise

- Act on the recommendations of the review of academic liaison services with the goal of ensuring that the roles of librarians are aligned with the changing nature of the information environment, the needs of all of the relevant user groups, and the overall goal of enhancing our support for teaching, learning and research. Within the context of the current and evolving strategic priorities of the Library and the University, the recommendations arising from the academic liaison review will take into account ways of enhancing the productivity and efficiency of those currently providing this service in the Library, as well as identifying any additional human resources support or expertise that might be required for the future evolution of liaison services.
- Position E-learning Operations to meet increasing demands for information resource integration into the e-learning environment, and to respond to recommendations for improvement to services arising from the Library and campus task groups working to define and streamline e-learning support services across the University.
- Investigate the feasibility of creating a cost-recovery service in response to requests from external private and public sector research organizations for library services such as document delivery, selected dissemination of information services, and enhancing information literacy for research staff.
- Increase the provision of course-integrated information literacy instruction by regularizing the BAS pilot program undertaken in 2006/2007 (recommendation in the review of the BAS programme). Redistribute librarian and associate work to allow increased staff time devoted to IL instruction and planning needs.
- Position Writing Services to meet increased demand for individual writing consultations and faculty-requested workshops.

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- Maintain provision of a range of learning support services which directly assist the University's academic mission; including:
 - specialized learning support (e.g. academic probation, student athletes, examSMART, workshops)
 - training and supervision of Learning Peer Helpers
 - training and supervision of SLG Peer Helpers
 - assignment and scheduling of SLG sessions each semester

Strategic Priority 2: Create and sustain an agile information space: IT infrastructure

Key Area: Provide computing facilities that meet the needs of library users and staff

- Enhance operational management oversight for Library Information Technology Services, to ensure that ITS can continue to address the needs of the Library and the campus community in a responsive manner
- Act on the recommendations of the 2007-2008 review of in-library computing needs. The review will have considered the replacement of some portion of 133 public desktop computers (two years out of warranty by spring 2008), the retrofitting of dedicated public desktop computing space to accommodate use of wireless laptops, and alternate means of providing computing capacity.
- Replace the current networked distributed printing service system to allow for seamless wireless and wired printing and possibly eliminating the need for a separate payment card.

Key Area: Provide maximum availability and performance of online services

- Meet the library's increasing need for media streaming in support of e-reserves, digital collections, and other learning purposes by installing an electronic content (media) server. A local server allows for the provision of controlled access, security and file maintenance as well as higher quality delivery than some vendors provide.
- Partner with Waterloo and Laurier on the implementation of a commercial E-Learning Management system that will allow us to eliminate many manual processes and enhance access to electronic reserve materials by building upon our shared consortium ILS.

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Key Area: Develop and evolve the Library's web services to provide seamless access to information resources and services

- Incorporate Web 2.0 technologies in the Library's website to allow for user-contributed content, community building and new methodologies for building subject guides and/or recommender services.
- Implement and continue the development of a new discovery layer for our Trellis catalogue and the extension of its scope to include digital or electronic resources outside of the Library's collections.
- Identify a strategy for the next integrated library system implementation with TUG and OCUL. The strategy could involve a shift to a larger regional catalogue with additional OCUL partners.
- Develop a core infrastructure for local digital collections initiatives that meets national and international standards for data harvesting, metadata, access, and preservation.
- Enhance programming and development support for digital and scholarly communications initiatives.
- Continue the development of an online GIS Metadata server and an ArcIMS service for the Data Resources Centre. These services allow students, faculty and staff to search on-line for geospatial data and download the data to their local computers without staff mediation. These two services were left in mid-development in 2007 and are currently running as alpha-tested services. External sources of funding as well as partnership opportunities with other universities will be sought to support this work.
- Provide adequate operational support for web content management (by re-focusing existing staffing resources, and by investigating new content management system options)

Strategic Priority 3: Building information collections – the digital imperative, the transformation of scholarly communication and responsible stewardship

Key Area: Build and enhance information collections

- Secure additional funding for our information resources in order to ensure that the Library can continue to provide access to world-class scholarly information. Our current funding levels have fallen significantly behind comparator institutions such as Western, Queen's, Waterloo, and McMaster. The Library is extremely challenged to respond to the following complex pressures on the information resources budget:
 - ⇒ rising cost of inflation on information resources averaging 6% annually
 - ⇒ restrictive publishing and licensing regimes (limiting the use of electronic information and requiring the payment of premiums for copyright clearance and permissions)
 - ⇒ aging tools and infrastructure to access library's collections and resources
 - ⇒ multi-year licensing and funding commitments for electronic resources

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- ⇒ new and fast-growing services such as e-learning support and open access publishing
- ⇒ the demands of new academic programs and new research initiatives

- Continue to invest in consortia purchasing and digital management of electronic resources in order to maximize the Library's buying power and increase efficiency of information delivery and access in support of research, teaching and learning e.g. the Ontario Scholars Portal and the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN).
- Provide adequate operational support for creating and maintaining digital collections metadata and electronic resources management (potentially by re-focusing existing staffing resources)
- Enhance management of several key Information Resources services, including vendor services, management of digital and print collections, and document delivery and interlibrary loan.

Key Area: Supporting scholarly communication through open access to digital collections

- Enhance the development and coordination of emerging digitization and scholarly communications initiatives (potentially through reallocation of existing human resources).
- Roll out the new scholarly communications programme in collaboration with campus partners by:
 - ⇒ Promote and establish our services in support of scholarly communications including: online academic journal hosting; the institutional repository; author rights, copyright, and publication options consultation; open access digital collections development; and a current awareness website.
 - ⇒ Launch an awareness campaign for faculty and students about their rights in a digital environment.
 - ⇒ Leverage our relationship with vendors and publishers to advocate for publisher agreements that allow authors to retain as many rights as possible over their intellectual product
- Develop a formal digital collection strategy, policy and infrastructure to increase visibility and access to unique holdings. We will continue to digitize a number of special collections (Scottish books, L.M. Montgomery collection, theatre set models, oral history tapes, Massey-Harris Ferguson films, Sleeman papers) and to participate in global, national and regional digital conversion initiatives, including the Open Content Alliance, Alouette Canada and Our Ontario.
- Increase professional expertise in the Library for the preservation, digitization and management of archival & special collections, in order to respond to the growth in activity in Archival & Special Collections (size and number of collections, number of user transactions, implementation of new digital collections services), the changing nature of the work (we need to provide more applied archival expertise), and to anticipate a major expansion of the Archival & Special Collections facility over the next four years.

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Key Area: Ensure permanent access to and physical storage of information resources

- Secure the funding required for a significant renovation and extension of Archival and Special Collections to accommodate the growth of these collections (projected maximum capacity by 2012), ensure their long-term preservation, and increase access and visibility.
- Participate in the “Collaborative Collections” initiative sponsored by the Ontario Council of University Librarians, which is developing a province-wide strategy for managing and reducing overlap of low-use print collections between academic libraries.

Strategic Priority 4: Building collaborative relationships to achieve goals

Key Area: Collaborating in the learning environment

- Work with Learning Commons partners to support:
 - ⇒ Additional analysis of the 2007 Graduate Student Learning Initiative (GSLI) survey results
 - ⇒ Development of an online registry and support for students to find study partners, resources
 - ⇒ Coordinated orientation for new students
 - ⇒ Continue to advance numeracy through the enrichment of learning objects available via the numeracy website
 - ⇒ Collaborate with faculty to develop embedded learning, writing and research skills in the curriculum.
- Build upon the work of the ESST E-Learning Working Group by working with campus partners to collaboratively plan the development of an e-learning community which will formalize collaboration across units and promote the development of an effective campus e-learning vision and strategy the sustainable use of resources, integrated planning, consolidation and rationalization of our efforts, and effective engagement with users.

Key Area: Partnering with research

- Seek ways to enhance integration of and support for Library services and resources with the University’s research enterprise based on recommendations arising from an investigation completed in summer 2007 and the Academic Liaison Review.

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Strategic Enabler A: Develop our people

Aligning our skills and human resources with our strategic priorities:

To Enrich the User Experience:

- Provide adequate support for the transition to a new or renewed academic liaison model including training and team development initiatives.
- Review staff training and development policies and procedures to ensure fair and adequate support for the continuing development of Library employees.
- Complete a comprehensive human resources analysis to assist in future planning, and to address identified needs for service growth or enhancement to support:
 - library users with disabilities
 - scholarly communications initiatives
 - collection management
 - learning and writing programs and services
 - academic liaison services
 - information technology
 - users of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) services
 - archival and special collections

To Build Information Collections and Support Scholarly Communications:

- Bring a proposal to the TUG Annex Steering committee which will recognize and respond to growth in the number of transactions at this facility over the past three years, and recommend increased support for ongoing collection management projects.

Strategic Enabler B: Fostering a culture of assessment

Measuring the success of our strategic priorities:

To measure how well we are Enriching the User Experience:

- Analyze the results of the spring 2007 LibQual+ assessment of library service, to determine if there are areas that require further investigation, and develop plans to improve our service.
- Evaluate student learning outcomes and information literacy skill levels by continuing to use the Association of Research Libraries SAILS (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills) instrument, successfully piloted in 2007.
- Assess and evaluate use of the “virtual library” through internal measures such as online service statistics, web usage analysis, help statistics.

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- Work collaboratively within the Learning Commons to develop instruments to evaluate and assess programs and services.
- Assess and implement recommendations resulting from an efficiency programme initiated in fall 2007 in order to achieve cost savings and offset increasing costs.

Strategic Enabler C: Transforming our spaces

Specific space enhancement goals which the Library will undertake include:

- Work with physical resources staff to do a needs assessment and conceptual planning for expanded space for the Library's rapidly growing archival and special collections. The present facility will be completely full by 2012, and a minimum of 5,000 additional square feet is needed to accommodate growth expected over the next decade.
- Consider the feasibility and impact of reconfiguring Library Receiving areas and the loading dock as part of the conceptual planning for an expansion of Archival & Special Collections (located in the Library's lower level), to enable better workflow and movement and storage of materials into and out of the building.
- Create new learning spaces by minimizing the Library's print collection footprint even as the book collections continue to grow. The McLaughlin Library was built to accommodate a student population of 6,000, and with current enrollment at 18,000 students, there is a severe shortage of public seating in the building. Replacing traditional library shelving with compact shelving will be a key strategy for accommodating the need for more seating spaces.