

Progress Report #4 on Library Blue Ribbon Committee Recommendations

This report summarizes the Library's progress from February, 2011 through September, 2011 in implementing the Recommendations of the Library Blue Ribbon Committee.

It addresses (1) budget and expenditures for FY10 through FY12 and their overarching effects on the Library, (2) progress in specific cost savings and efficiency measures, (3) progress in repositioning Library resources and personnel to meet evolving UMBC needs, and (4) continuing assessment efforts.

Budgets and Expenditures

Subscriptions: After a significant cut in the serials budget in FY10, the campus added funding so that the FY12 serials budget was restored to its FY09 level. Even with these additions to the serials budget, serials expenditures came in over budget in FY10 and FY11. Due to better funding than expected and lower cost increases than expected, both serials budgets and serials expenditures were higher than anticipated by the BRC Report. However, because of 4% to 7% inflationary cost increases per year for subscriptions, even with campus additions to the serials budgets, we needed to cut subscriptions by 4% in FY09, 10% in FY10, 3% in FY11 and 3% in FY12. These cuts cumulated to 20% over four years. In contrast, the journal publishing industry is doing well; e.g. the *Economist* (May 26, 2011) reported the Elsevier operating profit margin as 36% on total revenues of £2 billion.

Monographs: The FY12 monographs budget is 4% lower than FY09. The Library has had to hold monographs funds in reserve in anticipation of possible cuts. Fortunately, most of the reserved funds have been restored to the monographs budget, but expenditure rates have been irregular due to this pattern of reserving and then releasing funds. The net FY09-FY11 under-expenditure of monographs funds is \$31,092, i.e. 7.6% of the FY11 monographs budget. This funding has been rolled forward into FY12. \$25,000 of this funding is set aside for ebook purchasing. Some ebook packages have been purchased and a "Patron Driven Acquisitions" pilot program has begun.

Operating: The FY12 operating budget is nominally only 1% lower than it was in FY09. However, it was under-expended in FY10 and FY11, and the unexpended balance contributed toward serials expenditures.

Personnel: The net personnel budget change from FY09 to FY12 is \$18,428 – not a difficult cut to absorb. However, in order to reserve funding for possible future cuts and to accomplish reductions in staffing without layoffs, lines have been kept frozen beyond what was required by budget cuts. Consequently, personnel expenditures have consistently been under budget in FY09-FY11. For example, in FY11 the under-expenditure was \$120,876. Much of the under-expenditure in FY09-FY11 personnel has in effect covered the over-expenditure in

subscriptions. However, as will be treated elsewhere in this report, the lack of personnel has reduced the Library's capability to respond to several of the BRC recommendations.

Overall: Library budgets for operating expenses, books, and personnel have been cut more than the serials budget, contrary to the BRC recommendations. The non-serials accounts were all under-expended to minimize subscription cuts. The net effect of these actions has been to impede progress in most Library initiatives.

Cost Saving Measures

Specific cost savings measures recommended by the BRC report are largely complete. Their status is approximately the same as reported in Progress Report #3. The net effect has been to absorb the budget cuts in personnel and operating and to push funding to subscriptions.

Progress in Repositioning Library Resources and Personnel to Meet Evolving UMBC Needs

As stated in Progress Report #3:

Priority for Library exploitation of technology was mandated in the BRC Report: "The Library must be aggressive, dynamic and innovative in the use of new and emerging technologies to meet the changing needs of the campus both in terms of pedagogy and research." The Report included the following more specific guidelines:

- Shift from immediate response services to asynchronous services.
- Shift staffing effort toward development of online presence tailored to users.
- Digitize and provide online access to UMBC's unique holdings (i.e. materials that are not widely available in print and have not been digitized by other libraries).
- Enhance the current strength in developing or applying digital methods for providing services and give priority to staffing up in this area."

One of the two frozen positions in Library Information Technology Services is now being filled and the other is occupied by a contingent employee. Consequently we can expect this key unit to be fully staffed in 2012, after more than two years of understaffing. We hope to again make significant progress in Library technology development by mid-2012.

Requests for Hiring Exceptions for the three remaining frozen lines are now under consideration by the campus administration.

The Library and the Provost have made great efforts to minimize cuts in subscriptions. FY12 subscription cuts were reduced to 3% and small serials budgets (under \$10,000) as well as Reference databases (Indexes, abstracts, etc.) were exempted entirely. There is some hope that there will be a smaller than 3% cut in FY13. However, these efforts are having serious

negative effects elsewhere in Library budgets and therefore in the development of services and resources which were recommended by the BRC and which are crucial for UMBC's success.

One bright spot in this picture is that Interlibrary Loan requests have declined slightly, contrary to expectations -- possibly due to greater availability of articles on the open web and through colleagues -- so that we have not had to increase interlibrary loan staffing and operating budgets.

Retriever Learning Center

The RLC opened September 6, 2011. It was an immediate success, measured by attendance and by user comments. Card swipes at the entrance numbered 3,870 for the week of October 2 – 8, 2011. We have observed a large number of entrances in which one card holder lets in other users. This and reviews of attendance via video monitoring indicate that weekly use is more likely to be around 4,500, breaking out into over 700 per day, Mondays through Thursdays, and 300 to 500 on Friday through Sundays. Peak usage occurs from 2:00 p.m. through 5: p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays. At peak times it is often difficult to find a seat, so we may be losing users who would like to use the RLC at those times. Use statistics were gathered before the installation of some equipment and furniture. Once the RLC is fully outfitted, attendance may rise further.

The attendance trough is between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. when the number of people present can dip below ten. We have not observed it to be empty at any time, so far.

We are also seeing a 2% increase in the gate count at the main entrance of the library, as compared with last year. There may be several factors contributing to the popularity of the Library, including the walk-in traffic to the Technology Support Center, the increased use of the Learning Resources Center, and increased quality and seriousness of UMBC students. We should note that the consolidation of TSC and LRC services in the Library, in conjunction with the RLC, was predicted to increase use of these services and thus be beneficial to students.

The RLC project faces several "problems of success." For instance, the movable white boards are heavily used. We have spent \$210 on white board erasers, cleaning cloths, cleaning fluid, and markers as of October 21, 2011. Total costs for dry erase supplies are likely to be over \$1,200 per year. With seven portable white boards, two fixed white boards and one writable wall, there is a shortage of surfaces compared to demand at peak times. However, it is exhilarating for an educator to see this equipment in use: the white boards are filled with academic work in all disciplines, especially in Chemistry and Mathematics. Students crowd around them.

Another problem is the shortage of seats and tables: we have yet to order some furniture which will be chosen later in 2011 after gathering data on needs and preferences of users and in close consultation with the SGA which has contributed \$30,000 toward furniture. We have

moved some furniture from other parts of the Library into the RLC as a stop-gap measure until additional furniture can be added. We have observed the success of our “flexible furniture” strategy. Students configure and re-configure tables and chairs constantly for study groups of various sizes, normally ranging from two to eight people.

We are approaching the limit of the number of people that the RLC can handle. Air handling capacity has been strained and we have had complaints of its being too hot in September.

Also in progress are plans to add Pay-for-Print service in the RLC, an automated reservation system for the Seminar Room, further integration of TSC and Reference Services, additional vending and/or Pura Vida service, improved access to the lower level from the second floor, and an upgrade of wifi (which is strained now in the RLC).

While there is still much to be done in perfecting the RLC, it is time to consider further expansion of Library technical, media and wayfinding assistance for users. In terms of space, the development of the central area of the second floor is crucial. In the online environment, services for handhelds, point of need guidance in discovery, access, assessment and assimilation of information resources, as well as physical wayfinding (e.g. QR-code labels tied to web pages, a building directory in the atrium, a system of video monitors for general information) need to be developed. To meet these goals, a greater emphasis on staff development in technology and additional staff with an information technology orientation are needed.

Other initiatives

Digitization: The Library is expanding its online special collections resources and archives with materials scanned from our collections. Further development of online capacity for digital archiving UMBC’s born-digital documents is needed.

Institutional Repository (IR) planning is underway. Several interested academic departments have been identified as potential partners in rolling out a pilot IR.

Online information discovery tools: The Library has developed its World Cat Local resource as an alternative discovery tool to the LIMS online catalog. Further development of WCL and possibly another discovery tool is being explored at UMBC and in the USMAI.

Ebook purchases have been ramped up in 2011 with the acquisition of collections from Springer Verlag, etc., and a Patron Driven Acquisitions program. Further development of PDA is needed, especially in negotiating more favorable contracts with suppliers and in organizing USMAI-wide and/or MDL (Maryland Digital Library) ebook acquisitions.

International Media Center: The Library is developing contingency plans for absorption of some or all of the functions of the IMC. Implementation of such plans will depend on campus decisions.

Assessment

In May, 2011, the Library Policy Committee issued its “**Report on the Impact of BRC Recommendations.**” This report was based in part on surveys of Library users. It, and other BRC-related documents are found at <http://www.umbc.edu/provost/planning.html> It concluded that:

- (1) The implementation of new procedures for managing subscription cancellations and additions was successful; the new process is well received. Further assessment of it is planned.
- (2) Since a number of proposed cost savings measures in Library services were subsequently rejected by library users, “...the committee recommends that cost saving goals from the BRC report be lowered to align with the actual cut amounts.”
- (3) UMBC is reaching the limits of its ability to cut subscriptions without substantially harming scholarship. The LPC recommends close monitoring of the cuts and their effects over the next few years.

Librarians will assist the LPC in gathering further feedback and assessment of Library progress.

The Library Reference Department is conducting a survey of the RLC and its needs, and also a broad assessment of services offered by and/or in the Library.

Summary

The Library has made significant progress in implementing BRC recommendations. In addition, the Library and the campus have managed to keep the FY11 and FY12 cuts to the Library, especially to subscriptions, well below the levels predicted by the BRC in March, 2010. The main impediments to further progress are caused by failure to implement the budget and staffing recommendations of the BRC, specifically the recommendation to cut evenly among the Library’s budgets and to shift funding and staffing toward the development of online services.

See attached table of cost savings.

Blue Ribbon Committee Update - FY12

BRC Rec. #	Suggestion	Description	BRC Est. Savings	FY11 Actual Savings	FY11 Cut to Base	NEW FY12 Actual Savings	NEW FY12 Cut to Base	Update / Comment
1	Serials Desk Hours	Cut back on Serials Desk hours open	\$ 8,300	\$0.00		\$5,120		effect. 5/22/10, salary savings deferred until vacancy occurs; 20 student assistant hours @\$160 per week will be saved over 32 work weeks/yr.
2	Slide Library	No staffing in Slide Library	\$ 25,000	\$13,824				effect. 1/1/11, Slide Library Lib Tech vacancy salary savings \$13,823
3	Gift Program	Reduce Gift program/ book on book sales and cataloging gift materials	\$ 74,400	\$29,773	\$29,586			Tech Svc Staff line \$31, 632 + \$2,034 from Tech Svc Faculty line = \$33,666; \$4,080 of this total savings attributed to #7 below. \$187 of actual savings not yet cut from base, will use in FY12
4	Binding	Reduce binding of most journals already in place	\$ 19,000	\$ 24,000	\$5,000			\$19k removed in FY10 cut to base plus add'l \$5k FY11 cut to base
5	Saturday Closing	close library Saturday during winter/summer breaks	\$ 2,960	\$ 1,600				effect. 5/22/10- savings staff \$1,360 (deferred) & students \$1,600
6	Friends Events	Discontinue organizing/presenting Friends events (with exceptions))	\$ 4,700	\$0.00				Deferred: Friends decided to also keep Bartleby event/ faculty savings: \$3k/ staff \$1,700
7	Dept. Notifications	Stop dept monograph order notifications	\$ 4,080	\$4,080	\$4,080			effect. April 2010
8	Recreational Materials	Cut recreational materials at end of McNaughton Contract / Fall 2010	\$ 4,000	\$0.00				McNaughton Contract ends by December 2010; funding was from booksale
9	Library Instruction	Curtail library instruction/ no promoting		\$0.00				Ref. dept stopped actively promoting however faculty continue to request instruction
10	Promote Independent Users	promote user independence/online self-service	unknown	\$0.00				Ref. continues to create tutorials/recorded Wimba instruction to assist library users
11	Study Rooms/Lockers	Charge for study rooms/lockers	\$ 7,300	\$0.00				Not yet implemented due to feedback may be burden to students
12	Workflows/Cross Training	Review workflows/cross training for more efficiency	unknown	\$0.00				all depts actively reviewing workflows for efficiencies
13	Student Assistants	cut student assistants allocations	unknown	\$ 7,834				library depts adjusting as needed and monitor student hours allocations
14	Lead Students	Use lead students in place of staff vacancies	unknown	\$0.00				current vacancies unable to cover by students
15	Circulation/Security	Reduce Circulation/Security desk staff as vacancies occur	unknown	\$0.00				Currently have one frozen Library Tech III position due to promotion.
16	Limit ILL	Limit ILL for undergrad	\$ 5,000	\$0.00				not implemented/ would inhibit research
17	One time Cut				\$90,931			
		Subtotal	\$154,740	\$81,110	\$129,597	\$5,120	\$0	
Savings Not Accruing from BRC recommendations:								
none	Media line	Reduction due to turnover	0	\$4,399	\$4,399			
none	Reference Salary Savings	Wages saved due to illness		\$5,262	\$0.00			Est. till June 2011
none	Filled 3/4 Lib Tech	Savings during vacancy PP1-9	0	\$7,075	\$0.00			
none	Misc cuts in operating	Reductions in costs	0	\$5,906	\$5,906			
none	Media line	Reduction due to turnover (Loman's line)	0	0	0	\$22,079	\$22,079	
none	Slide Library Salary Savings: Cronise line	due to retirement	0	0	0	\$15,356	\$15,356	
none	Materials	Cut to base FY12				\$37,816	\$37,816	
none	Misc cuts in operating (FY12 budget)	Reductions in costs	0	0	0	\$4,768	\$4,768	
		Total		\$103,752	\$139,902	\$85,139	\$80,019	