OVERVIEW

On a built-out campus such as UC Berkeley there is great pressure on space to serve increasing enrollments, attract new faculty and house new programs and research centers. In the last ten years, a number of libraries on campus have ceded space to colleges or departments for non-library use; there are continuing space pressures. Some faculty and campus administrators perceive that libraries’ space needs have decreased as more journals, books and archives are online. Lacking an overall strategic plan, the Library has reacted to demands for space on a case-by-case basis. As pressures on central campus library space increase, the Library must be prepared to address them with a plan that identifies new roles for the Library in fulfilling user needs and serving the University’s educational mission.

In the print world, libraries and units within them, had well-defined spaces and duties, and the relationships among them were understood. In a digital, multidisciplinary environment, the work of library units is interdependent and old relationships have broken down. Everything libraries now do, from public services to collection management to technical processing and preservation, depends on the quality of the digital infrastructure and its ability to evolve quickly in order to provide services that are relevant to our users and enhance the Library's role in serving the University. The degree to which we craft new functional relationships both within and external to the Library will determine what the new services need to be and the kinds of spaces needed to deliver such services.

An excellent task force report* has identified the kinds of new teaching and learning spaces that will respond to Moffitt’s students and faculty as they work in a more comprehensive, coordinated digital environment. A similar study, charged to look at new teaching and learning spaces, as well as new services, for the rest of the campus libraries needs to be undertaken with a view to developing a strategic plan to guide the rebuilding of library services and spaces for the 21st century.

NATIONAL TRENDS

- Library space is a growing issue on most university campuses.
- Some large library systems have opened an academic commons or science learning center, housing library and non-library services.
- Many large university libraries are moving significant portions of their print collections to storage facilities off the main campus.
- Libraries are looking at innovative ways to use technology and teams of staff to provide services to academic departments without providing them with in-house library facilities.
- Many library spaces are being converted to collaborative learning spaces for students.

LOCAL ISSUES AT BERKELEY

Outside the Library Organization:
- Increasing enrollments and the changing environment of teaching & learning require more and different types of space.
- Some campus administrators and faculty believe that libraries occupy too much space for storing little used print materials.
- Many students & faculty believe that everything important is already digital and available on faculty and student computers.
- Many faculties no longer use print as a medium for exchanging knowledge, although there is still support for the need to browse print collections on campus.
- Students find many library facilities outdated and uncomfortable for their study purposes; they want food and drink available, lots of technology, and an environment that supports various approaches to studying and learning.
- There is a growing trend toward interdisciplinary and collaborative research and teaching in some academic departments. This may affect the types and locations of library services required by students and faculty.

Inside the Library Organization:
- The Library has no priorities for space utilization or long term strategies for repurposing space in Doe and the Subject Specialty libraries.
- The Library does not have a good understanding of the actual, current requirements the faculty and students have of print resources.
- The top funding priorities for library resources for many academic departments must be digital.
- Are there redundancies of space and services in the libraries? What could be achieved if staff could be deployed in different ways to provide new services?
- Librarian and staff perceptions of who they are and what they do are closely tied to the space where they work.
- The Library needs to develop strategies for reducing the intake of print materials for those departments that no longer need or value the format, and develop workflows for easy processing of e-materials into our discovery systems.
- The Staff Survey indicated that some staff believe that the current space configurations are fine and need no major changes.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW DIRECTIONS

There is an opportunity now for the Library to develop a strategic plan for campus library spaces and services. This Plan will focus on changes that will improve user services and experience, uphold the Library’s core commitment to excellent customer service and enhance the Library’s role in serving the teaching and research mission of the University. It should identify results-oriented changes for the short, medium and long term time frames (1-2 years; 3-5 years and 5-10 years).

A Strategic Plan will benefit the Library in the following ways:
• Enable the Library to make clear decisions with realistic objectives about space usage and services and to identify opportunities and potential threats.
• Enable the Library to build partnerships with colleges or departments to mutually decide on the use of collaborative spaces. And position the Library to publicize and promote new learning environments and services as exciting philanthropic opportunities.
• Enable the Library to build a foundation that will prepare it for a changing environment and to use this framework for collaborations and adaptability.

The assumptions underlying a Strategic Plan need to be clarified, and should include a focus on:
• Developing user-centered services and spaces that will remain relevant to current and future students and faculty.
• Developing and redesigning spaces in partnership with academic departments to support a variety of flexible and multi-purpose uses.
• Developing and creating spaces considered to be destinations by students: spaces with lots of technology; quiet, group, and collaborative study areas; innovative learning/teaching places for librarian/faculty joint efforts; and be attractive community gathering places.

A comprehensive Strategic Plan for Library Space and Services will have many components, require conversations at all campus levels and need a compilation of both quantitative and qualitative data. The following questions will have to be answered:

1. How do we strengthen our relationships with faculty and student user groups? We need to analyze the impact of our changing environment and affect the direction of those changes.

2. How do the libraries free up space and manage our legacy collections for new uses?

3. What strengths and strategies should be followed to demonstrate the value of an onsite library and involve academic departments in any review of spaces and services?

4. Are there possibilities of recovering central campus space from library units not needing to be where they are? All library space should be reviewed.

5. Could reference desks be replaced by on call, online and mobile phone reference services? What technology could be used to deliver services? Could "circuit rider" subject teams provide services required in high demand departments? (instruction, group consultations, personal appointments, e-reference, etc.)?

6. What is the best way to serve multidisciplinary centers and research programs? Could collaborative use of library spaces provide solutions to help with new programs and curricular changes?
7. Could better services and spaces result by consolidating libraries? What would the advantages be to users if, for example, all the science and engineering libraries were combined into a new space? Could space in Doe be freed up and re-purposed to address the need for technology use in the humanities? Would it free staff for other priorities?

8. Are there ways to minimize repetitive and redundant work by consolidating certain types of work? If units are not consolidated, are there changes in the management structure that would reap benefits to staffing?

9. How will any changes impact staff? This will be undoubtedly be well-covered by the snapshots on the “New Roles and Opportunities for Library Staff”.

Starting points:

1. Appoint and charge a task force to review all campus libraries and identify new teaching and learning spaces and services that will be vital to a thriving research-oriented university.

2. Evaluate recent library projects as an opportunity to assess use of print and digital materials, services, and the relationship with faculty and students.

3. Appoint a group to develop outreach programs to the departments & colleges, faculty, student groups or support units with the aim of integrating libraries and librarians into their work.

4. Open discussions with campus leaders and develop plans to utilize library space in much broader terms, integrating library plans into the campus Long Range Development Plan.

5. Identify areas where multifunctional teams will be best able to develop services across formerly siloed areas. For example, providing public services on mobile computing devices may require a team of people from public services, systems, IS & T and technical services.

6. Appoint a small group to explore ways for librarians to curate specific subject-based feeds or web pages to facilitate easy virtual browsing of new materials in all formats in a timely manner.

7. Start a free delivery service of on-campus materials free to faculty at their departmental mailboxes.