



UNT LIBRARIES STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2015

A PLAN TO ADVANCE THE RESEARCH VALUE
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS LIBRARIES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of North Texas Libraries have adopted a five year goal of becoming a top tier research library by 2015. This overall five year goal will be accomplished by means of five strategic goals that will significantly advance the research value of the UNT Libraries:

1. **CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS:** Establish creative partnerships that enhance the academic experience through exploring and fostering ideas and discovery.
2. **INNOVATIVE SERVICES:** Develop programs that engage, empower, and inspire the University community in the pursuit of knowledge.
3. **SCHOLARLY USAGE:** Integrate the library into the research initiatives of the University and regularly assess this integration.
4. **QUALITY COLLECTIONS:** Create physical and virtual collections which support scholarship and research by connecting the past, present, and future.
5. **WELL-DESIGNED SPACES:** Provide well-designed physical and virtual spaces that foster academic community and encourage intellectual inquiry and exchange.

The selection of these five strategic goals was informed by a broadly based environmental scan and conversations with the UNT community. These goals will be implemented by meeting a series of targets during the coming years that are detailed in this plan.

The University of North Texas has a strong system of libraries. If this plan is successfully implemented, the UNT Libraries will be significantly improved in terms of services, collections, and facilities by 2015, becoming a top tier research library in the process. *The power of ideas begins here.*

STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTEXT, SCOPE, AND PROCESS

With the advent of new leadership in the UNT Libraries in October 2009 as Dean Martin Halbert arrived, a planning process was initiated to align the future directions of the libraries with the strategic aims of the University. The UNT libraries are poised to take many new steps that will dramatically improve their capability to support campus research activities, and this strategic planning effort is a systematic attempt to articulate these steps to the campus.

One umbrella goal and five constituent goals for the UNT libraries were developed from the campus strategic research plan and informed by an environmental scan. The umbrella goal of the UNT Libraries is to become a top tier research library by 2015. Five library strategic goals were developed to achieve this umbrella goal, and are detailed in the latter portion of this document.

This strategic plan has been developed in a period of rapid transition at the University of North Texas, and is intended to evolve over time as more information becomes available. Some of the objectives identified in this plan are quantitative and specific; others are more qualitative and prospective. The plan is intended to inform both unit planning efforts within the libraries as well as broader conversations with many other stakeholders. The plan has been finalized during the 2010-2011 period, after vetting and discussions with a variety of campus constituencies. This plan will maximize the research value of the UNT Libraries to the extended UNT community, and reinvigorate a conversation on campus of the ways that the library is relevant to 21st century research efforts.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

An environmental scan was undertaken beginning in the Fall Semester of 2009 to gain perspective on the current situation of the UNT Libraries as a preparatory step to inform strategic planning. This environmental scan was comprised of several activities:

- the Dean of Libraries participated in the development of the campus strategic research plan, the primary plan for the university over the next five years,
- internal library staff analyzed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (a form of analysis sometimes abbreviated as “SWOT”),
- a summary was developed by the Library Dean’s Council of the major library service programs, their most recent outcomes, and the most important aspects of the UNT Libraries’ collections,
- focus groups were held with graduate and online students, and the 2010 Survey of Organizational Effectiveness was conducted by the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work,
- discussions with leading research libraries identified strategies that UNT should and should not consider to become a top tier research library, and
- statistical comparisons of the UNT libraries with the libraries of other universities identified as peer institutions by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) were analyzed.

Each of these activities yielded different insights that are summarized below.

CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLANNING

The University of North Texas seeks to become a top tier research university, and possessing a top tier research library is a significant part of that broad institutional goal. As one of seven universities identified in Texas as “emerging research universities”, UNT is carefully considering the ways that the institution must advance its research infrastructure in order to attain this over-arching institutional goal. One of the key elements of first rate universities identified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is that such institutions possess a library that works closely with university faculty and students to advance their collective research capabilities.

The Dean of Libraries was a member of the team that prepared the campus strategic research plan. Participation in the campus strategic planning process brought with it direct perspective on the campus priorities for the next five years. For example, it is critical to understand that the single most important priority in the campus strategic research plan is to significantly increase the annual sponsored funding received by the campus in restricted categories of research activity. Other important goals include improving undergraduate education, PhD

programs, the cultivation of collaborations and partnerships, and many more elements essential to becoming a top tier research university. The entirety of the campus strategic plan was taken into consideration in the course of selecting strategic goals set forth for the library in this strategic plan.

INTERNAL SWOT ANALYSIS

An analysis of library strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) was conducted by soliciting the perspectives of the library staff. Discussions and feedback from library staff were analyzed by a working group and led to the following summary observations. This analysis provided useful internal perspective.

Strengths of the UNT Library:

An overwhelming majority of departments agreed that their staffs are skilled and specialized in their area. Any library must have high quality collections and services to offer its users, but great research libraries must also possess nationally renowned attributes that distinguish the institution and make it a unique asset and destination for researchers. The UNT Libraries have a number of such core strengths which add unique value to the research capabilities of the University of North Texas, and which can be further built upon:

- *Close Collaborative Relationships:* The UNT Libraries work closely with faculty and students and regularly seek to respond to emerging opportunities and problems as they arise. This close relationship is demonstrated in survey results and other feedback from the UNT community.
- *Digital Libraries:* More than \$4 million dollars in grants and contracts have been received by the UNT Libraries during the past decade for digital library projects. This has enabled the UNT libraries to undertake significant restricted research projects in web archiving and other emerging areas of information science, often in collaboration with UNT faculty.
- *Government Documents Program:* The UNT Libraries possess premier government documents collections and associated research services, one of the strongest such programs in the nation, with leadership that has twice led the Depository Library Council advising the US GPO.
- *Music Library:* UNT possesses one of the top three music libraries in the country, with more than one million LPs and musical scores, an internationally renowned professional staff, and the personal collections of Stan Kenton and other major figures in the historical study of music.

Weaknesses of the UNT Library:

Some departments believe their staff suffer from low morale, generally because they are spread too thin; with some reporting a shortage of staff for the amount of work and low pay for some positions as weaknesses and/or threats to their department. Some believed that training procedures for Graduate Library Assistants, student workers, and new staff members were not systematic or effective, and some departments wished for better training opportunities as well as better training procedures, instead of the ongoing struggle of training new staff on top of their existing workload.

Opportunities:

Technology was brought up in most discussions concerning opportunities. Departments feel as if their use of technology is a strength, but that there are many more opportunities to utilize technology. Many specified the areas in which they currently use technology (e.g. digitization of materials) and were equally specific about other ways they would like to expand their use of technology. For example, Reference would like to set up an instant reference service integrated into online classes. Certain departments wish to reach distance learning students in other ways, for example, ILL would like to be able to send their books to students via snail mail. This would require additional staff, funding, and possibly space.

Another class of opportunities that were discussed concerned the acquisition of new special collections to support growing campus research initiatives. The main barriers to such acquisitions include lack of space, staff, and funding, all of which are required for acquisition of major archival collections.

Threats:

Lack of space was perceived as one of the most significant weaknesses of the UNT Libraries, in fact, it was the largest perceived threat listed. Lack of space threatened collection growth, staff offices and work areas, students, and virtually every area of work in the Library. The IT groups felt threatened by the university-wide consolidation of IT services. They are concerned with how this will affect the growth and usability of the digital library, digital collection building activities, preservation activities, and research in digital libraries.

Many departments believe that they struggle to find qualified candidates for their positions, partly because of current salaries for some positions and partly because of the small pool of candidates with the required skills and knowledge. Finally, certain departments are experiencing a wave of retirements which will leave the department with a lack of specialized professionals.

SURVEY OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The University of Texas regularly administers the Survey of Organizational Excellence to hundreds of agencies in the state of Texas in an effort to advise organizational leaders about the current state of their work force and quality of services provided. The staff of the UNT Libraries participated in this survey in 2010 (as they had in 2008, 2006, and 2004), and their responses were collated into a survey report. The survey report generally echoes and confirms many of the same statements from the internal SWOT analysis. The report (a range of selected excerpts are provided in Appendix B, and the full report is available for any interested readers) highlights strengths and weaknesses in the UNT Libraries compared with other workplaces:

Relative Strengths:

- Staff members feel that quality in customer service is a significant part of the library organizational culture and valued by everyone.
- The staff of the UNT Libraries fundamentally like their jobs and the work environment overall (although there are particular things they are dissatisfied with, see below).
- The staff perceives that the library communicates with external groups and constituencies fairly well.
- Library staff members feel that they have a good benefits package compared with other organizations.

Relative Weaknesses:

- The staff feel that there are unfairly underpaid compared to other equivalent libraries.
- Staff members do not feel that communication inside the library among departments is effective.
- There is a perception that people do not work together effectively, and that there is room for improvement in elements such as: "team membership, the selection, support and training of supervisors, the maturity and experience of employees and the nature of the specific work being performed."
- Further, staff members feel that they do not have a shared understanding of the goals of the organization, or where the library is going.
- There is a feeling by staff members that they lack control over their jobs and work efforts because of a lack of empowerment in the decision-making process.

GRADUATE AND ONLINE STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

Many practical recommendations concerning possible improvements to library services emerged from focus group sessions with students. The following are summaries of major recommendations identified in the course of these focus groups (for additional details, see the Appendix A reports associated with each of the focus group areas):

- Graduate students made a number of very specific and constructive suggestions about ways to improve communication and outreach to graduate students, ranging from website features to a library speaker series.

- There were a number of suggestions about improving the library workshops now offered. These ideas varied from simple steps in more convenient scheduling to sophisticated online offerings.
- Students suggested customizing reference services by discipline in order to improve effectiveness.
- Several suggestions included ideas for the library to pursue in working with faculty to better structure the students' encounter with information and library services.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A TOP TIER RESEARCH LIBRARY?

There are many types of higher education institutions, ranging from top research institutions to community colleges, etc. Universities are most often characterized using the Carnegie Classification of institutions of higher education.¹ The ambition of UNT is to transition from the second tier designation of "high research activity" (or RU/H) to the top tier designation of "very high research activity" (RU/VH). Virtually all experts (including the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board) agree that possessing a top tier library is an essential component of this transition. But what differentiates such libraries?

One of the most debated topics in the library's strategic planning effort concerned precisely this question of what it means to be a top tier research library. The characteristics of many top research libraries were studied both through qualitative means in a series of discussions with research library experts from around the country and through quantitative means in statistical comparisons with aspirational peers. These discussions led in turn to internal reflection and debate concerning the strategies by which UNT can build on its unique strengths to become a top tier research library, and these strategies informed the selection of goals in this plan.

QUALITATIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH RESEARCH LIBRARY EXPERTS

Several experts were consulted on the question of top tier research library characteristics. While many of these discussions were informal and opportunistic during professional meetings, some were explicitly instigated as part of this planning process and are highlighted below.

DISCUSSION WITH JULIA BLIXRUD

Julia Blixrud of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) was approached for guidance on the question of characteristics of premier research libraries. Blixrud is the ARL Assistant Executive Director for Scholarly Communication and the primary ARL officer responsible for considering characteristics of ARL institutions prospectively. Blixrud was instrumental in highlighting many elements of what ARL sees as important to research libraries. Citing the ARL website, she indicated that successful research libraries are distinguished by characteristics such as:

- Sustained institutional commitment to the library over time (as evidenced by the nature and extent of resources allocated) and continuing investment that will support distinctive research-oriented collections and resources of national significance in a variety of media and services to the scholarly community, including the availability of electronic resources;
- Participation in national and/or international library-related programs
- Uses made of the collections and services by faculty, students, and visiting scholars;
- Preservation of research resources;
- Leadership and external contributions of the staff to the profession;
- Effective and innovative use of technology;

Julia also provided a brief analysis and critique of UNT in terms of what it should do to become a stronger research library. Her advice included the following:

- The most important quantitative assessment that ARL uses is its *investment index* score, a composite measurement of library expenditures and staff available to provide services. The funding that UNT has provided to its libraries has in recent years been static or declined in relative terms, and this

¹ See "The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education", published by the Carnegie Foundation (<http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org>)

challenges the ability of the libraries to support the university's ambitions. If they are to support a top tier research university, the UNT libraries must receive commensurate steady growth in funding.

- The UNT Libraries have particularly strong digital library and music library collections and associated staff expertise. We should capitalize on these strengths in our future plans.

DISCUSSION WITH JAMES NEAL

James Neal is Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian at Columbia University. Neal is also widely recognized in the field as a thought leader in research library services. Neal was consulted on the question of the characteristics of top research libraries; this discussion highlighted the following points:

- Neal highlighted the importance of depth in research collections and quality of support for research activities provided by a library. The strength of the collection development program and library leadership in this programmatic area is a crucial element of what distinguishes great research libraries. In addition to the breadth of general print collections, the uniqueness and research value of special collections held is also very important.
- He also related that innovation in new digital library services and collections are equally important to the quality of a research library, albeit harder to assess than traditional metrics such as number of print volumes held. Neal was impressed by the caliber of the UNT digital library program, and agreed that it was one of the greatest strengths of UNT.

DISCUSSION WITH MARY MCCONNELL

The libraries of the University of Calgary are widely regarded as having rapidly improved in recent years, and a conference call with Mary McConnell (Calgary Associate University Librarian for Planning and Administration) was conducted to seek advice on strategies for becoming a top tier research library. McConnell emphasized the following points:

- Becoming a top tier research library takes a significant amount of time and organizational effort. It requires a comprehensive, sustained effort on the part of the entire library staff, operating in conjunction with the university administration and faculty.
- McConnell highlighted the surrounding context of the university that the library serves; the university must be a top tier institution engaged in large scale, cutting edge research for the library to plausibly and appropriately become a top research library. Calgary has great strength in its professional schools and the caliber of research efforts undertaken there, and the library works closely with researchers to support their efforts.
- Scale again emerged as a key factor. For instance, the University of Calgary library holds some 2.5 million volumes (UNT has 2 million), a large physical accumulation of research materials. Thomas Hickerson (the Vice Provost for Libraries and Cultural Resources) oversees not only the libraries but also a major museum, a cluster of campus and state archives, and the university press. The Libraries and Cultural Resources program of the university thereby serves an integrated support role for research in many areas in a comprehensive manner.

SYNTHESIS OF DISCUSSIONS

These and other discussions were very helpful in clarifying the characteristics of top tier research libraries. The strengths of the UNT libraries are in its digital and special collections, and in its close collaborative partnerships with university scholars, both faculty and students. Unlike many of the traditional ARL institutions, the strength of UNT is not in the scale of its traditional commercially-purchased print holdings, but rather in its special music collections, innovative large-scale collections of digitized materials, and collaborative relationships with scholars.

Therefore, in order to become a distinctive top tier research library UNT should accentuate its strengths. Rather than seeking to simply acquire a very large collection of print volumes, the UNT Libraries should seek to build on the strengths of its digital and special libraries, make the most of the close collaborative relationships with its community, and emphasize quality and efficiency in all of its offerings. These strategies have been incorporated in the strategic goal areas described in this plan.

QUANTITATIVE COMPARATIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

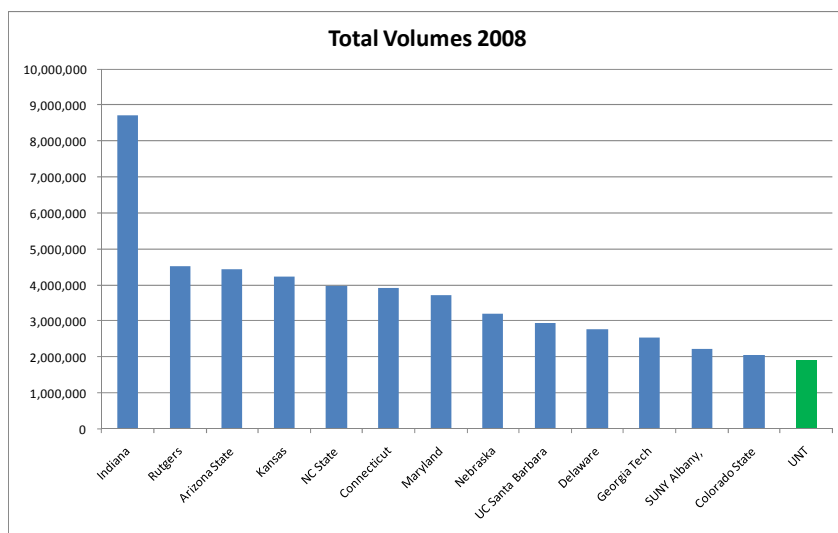
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) identified a list of aspirational peers for emerging research institutions in Texas such as UNT, and it is useful to compare the libraries of the institutions with those of UNT. The statistics for the libraries of thirteen of these fourteen institutions are published through ARL, and specific metrics can be compared with UNT.

Specific metrics in this context are just that, measurements of specific things that can be counted, such as dollars expended in the past year, etc. These objective measures of a library's resources are central to understanding the scale of a library and its ability to serve a large research university. They must also be contextualized with additional qualitative assessments of a library's programs, especially the effectiveness of the library in advancing the research capabilities of faculty and students. The charts in the following sections primarily use 2008 statistics, the most recent set of statistics for ARL libraries available at the time this strategic plan was developed, and are available at <http://www.arl.org/stats/annualsurveys/arlstats/>. We will continue to update these comparisons using newer data as it becomes available.

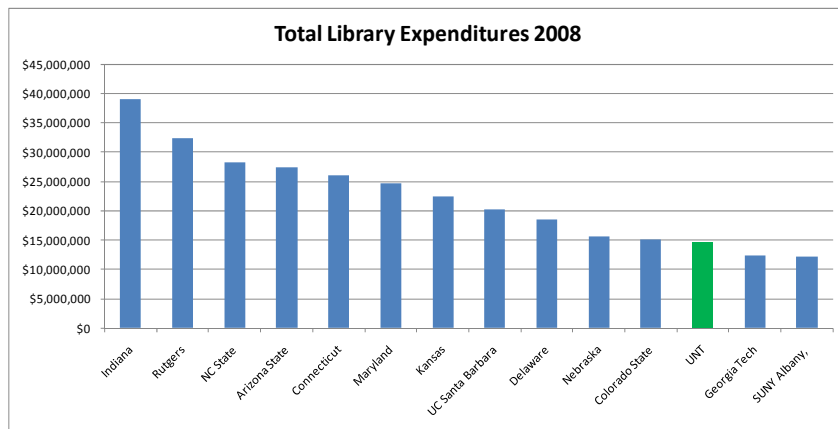
What quickly becomes apparent when reviewing most specific metrics is that UNT is smaller in many traditional dimensions than most other libraries in the THECB aspirational peer list. This has been generally understood by most librarians at the UNT libraries, but reviewing the characteristics of the UNT Libraries in comparison with other members of the THECB peer list of institutions is instructive.

ABSOLUTE COMPARISONS

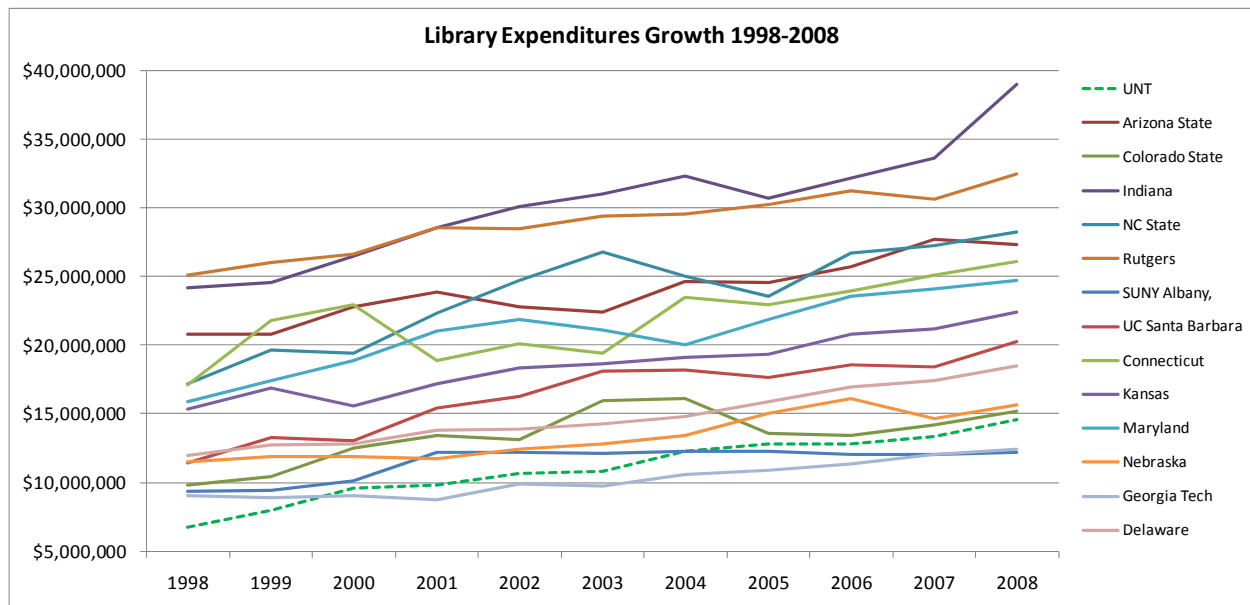
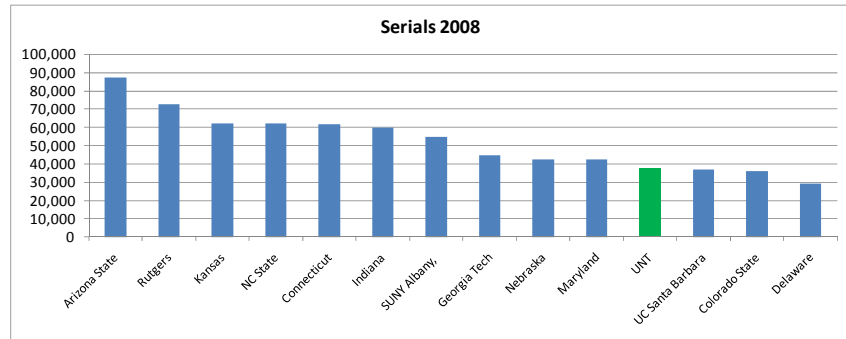
A classic example of a specific metric is volumes held in the library. UNT is smaller in its holdings than all the other members of the peer group. This reflects the fact that UNT is a relatively young institution, whose library has been acquiring books and bound serials for a much shorter period of time than the other libraries in this sample. This also reflects the fact that these institutions are *aspirational* peers, or in other words, institutions which UNT is not yet like but should seek to emulate in characteristics.



Although usually near the bottom of the rankings among members of this aspirational list, UNT is not *always* last. For example, the total library expenditures at UNT were higher than either Georgia Tech or SUNY Albany in the last reported ARL period. Similarly, UNT surpasses (albeit barely) the count of serials at three of the peer group institutions in the 2008 statistics. While almost always near the bottom, UNT is not at the bottom.

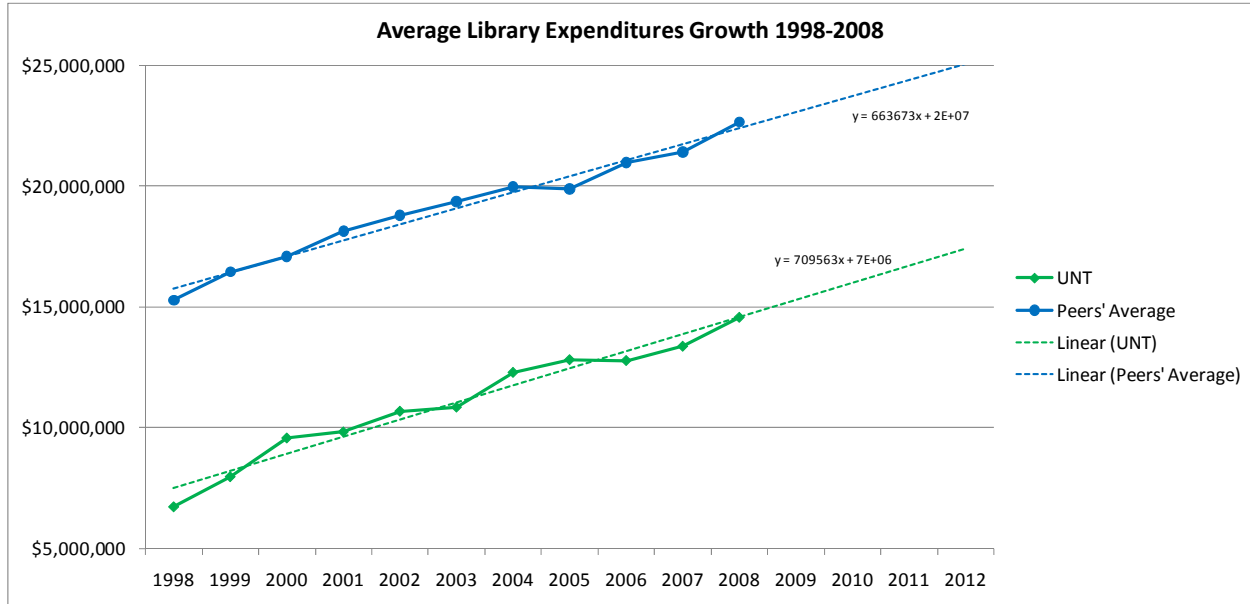


The fact that the relative position of UNT in this group of institutions has changed over time means that comparisons such as this also need to be studied over time in order to understand the overall trajectory of how the position of UNT is changing. It may therefore be useful to track UNT in a comparative context of change among these 13 ARL institutions.

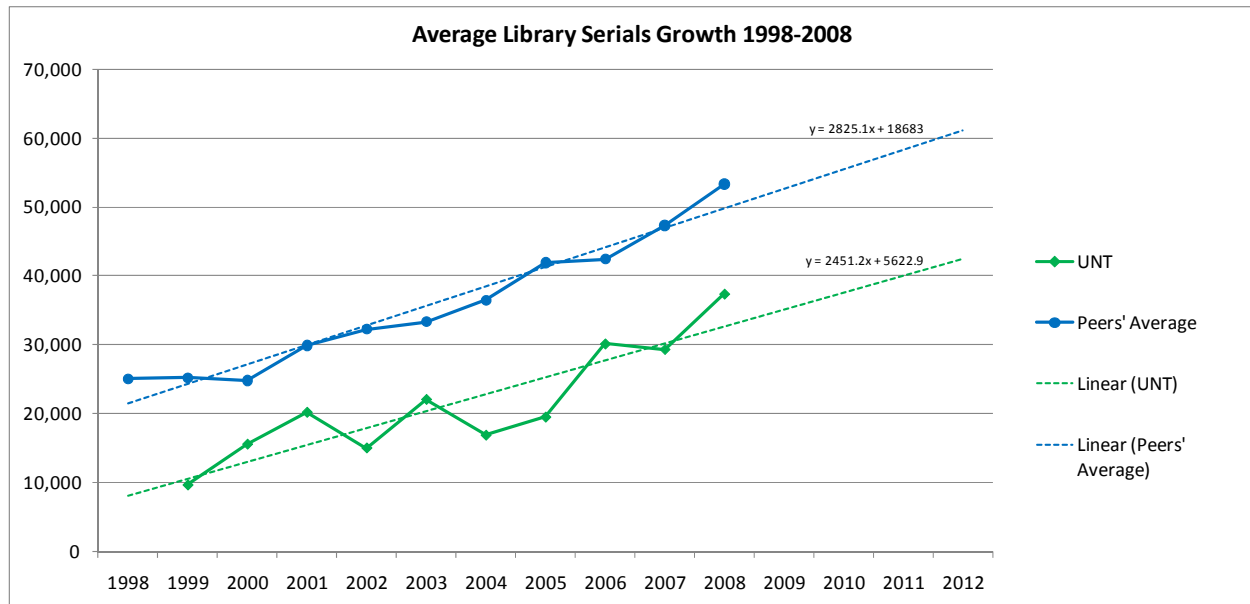


Notes: There is a significant spread between members of the peer group. Kansas and Maryland are good examples of “median” institutions in the middle of this spread. Nebraska and Delaware are good examples of institutions that are aspirational models for UNT, as their budgets are higher but “within striking distance”.

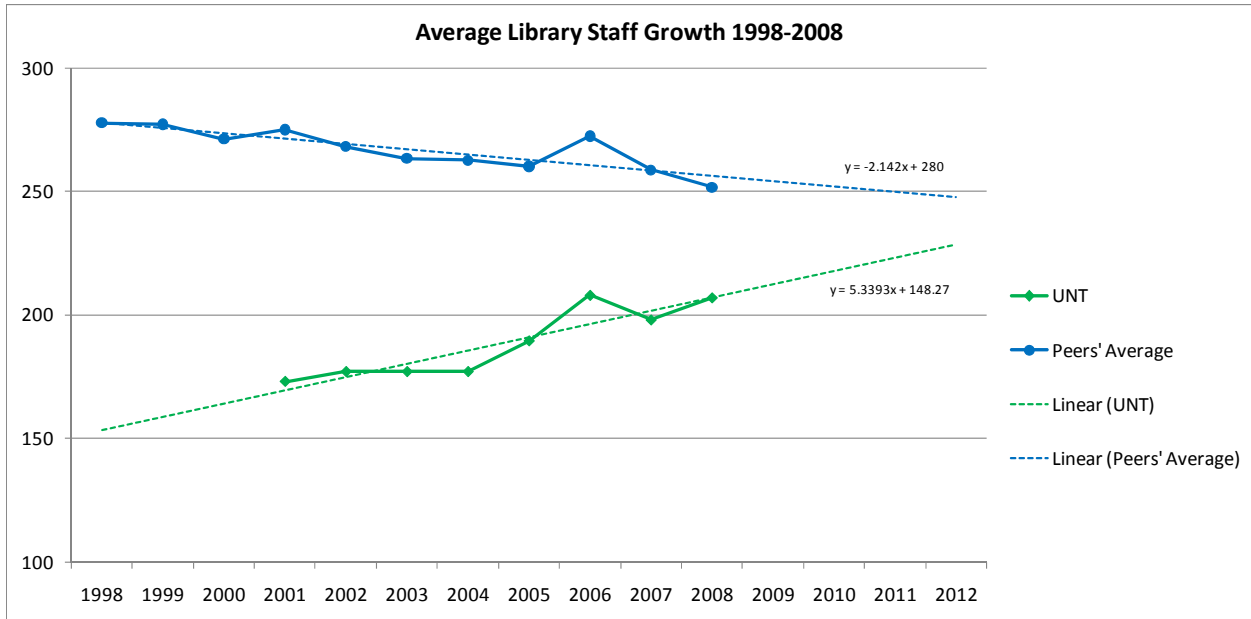
With 14 institutions, such charts quickly become very dense in terms of lines changing over time, and it may also be useful to track the overall average of our peer group together with trend lines for both the 13 peers and UNT over time. Summarizing the comparative statistics in this way can make them more intelligible and clear, especially for long term strategic planning.



Notes: UNT averages \$8M less than the mean expenditures of members of the peer group. The linear trend analysis suggests that UNT library expenditures are actually growing at or slightly faster than the mean for the peer group, although it has a long way to go before catching up to its peers.



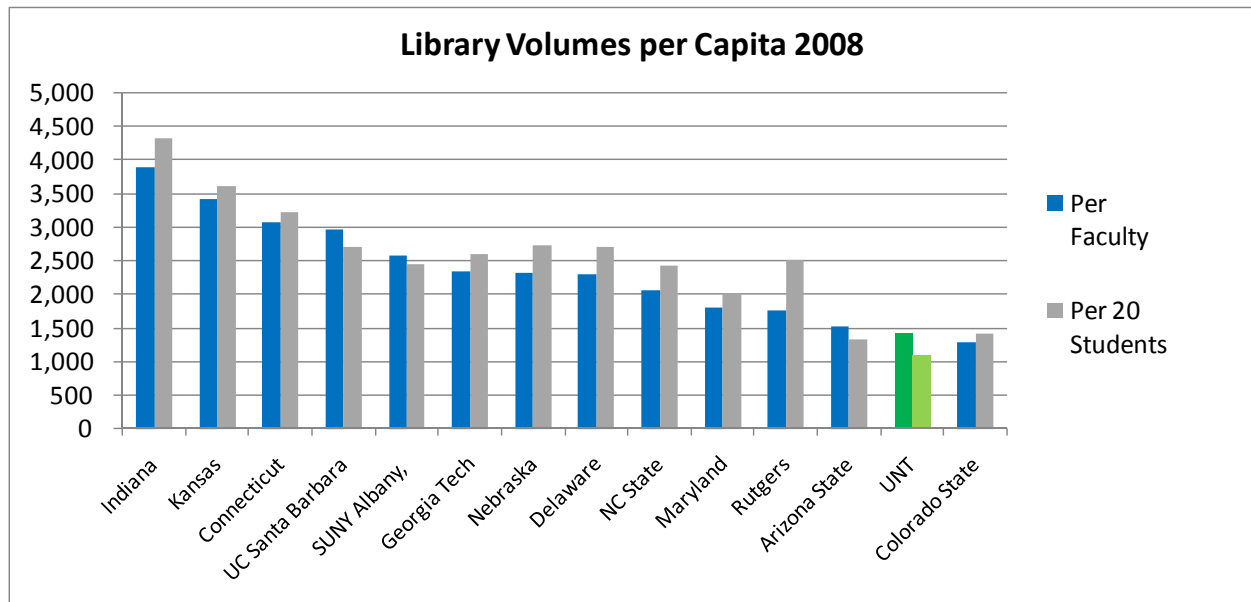
Notes: UNT has an average of 15K fewer serials than the mean for the peer group. UNT again can be seen to collect at a lower rate than the research libraries in this peer group.



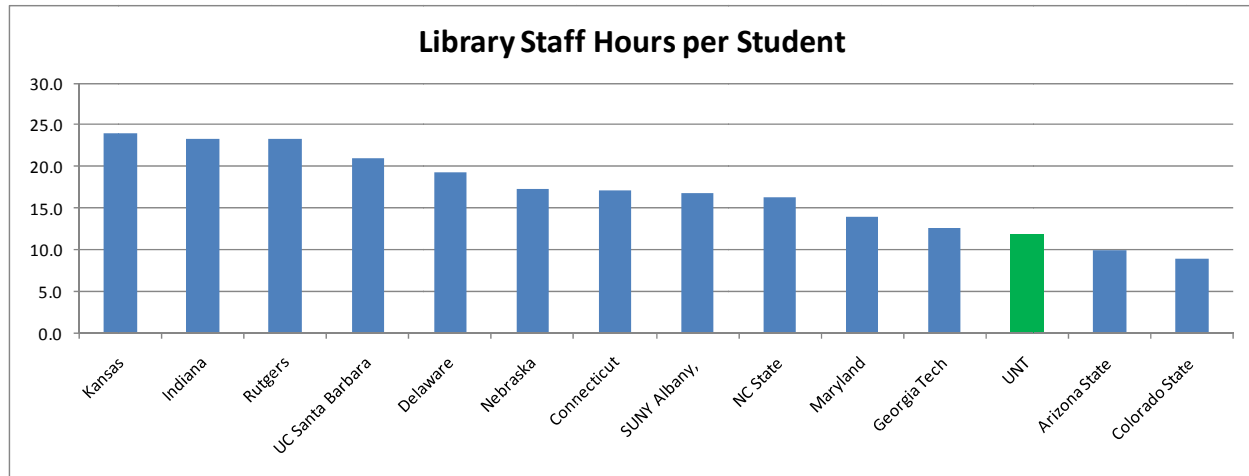
Notes: Unlike other statistical comparisons, UNT is here clearly improving whereas other libraries are declining. The trend analysis suggests that UNT has been able to hire an average of more than 5 new staff FTE per year, whereas other research libraries are losing an average of 2 staff FTE per year. UNT has been able to hire new staff in recent years by means of at least two strategies: 1) using grant funds, and 2) hiring graduate library assistants.

PER CAPITA COMPARISONS

It may also be useful to understand how UNT stands in terms of *relative per capita ratios*. The following charts show some examples of comparative ratios of one specific measure to another.



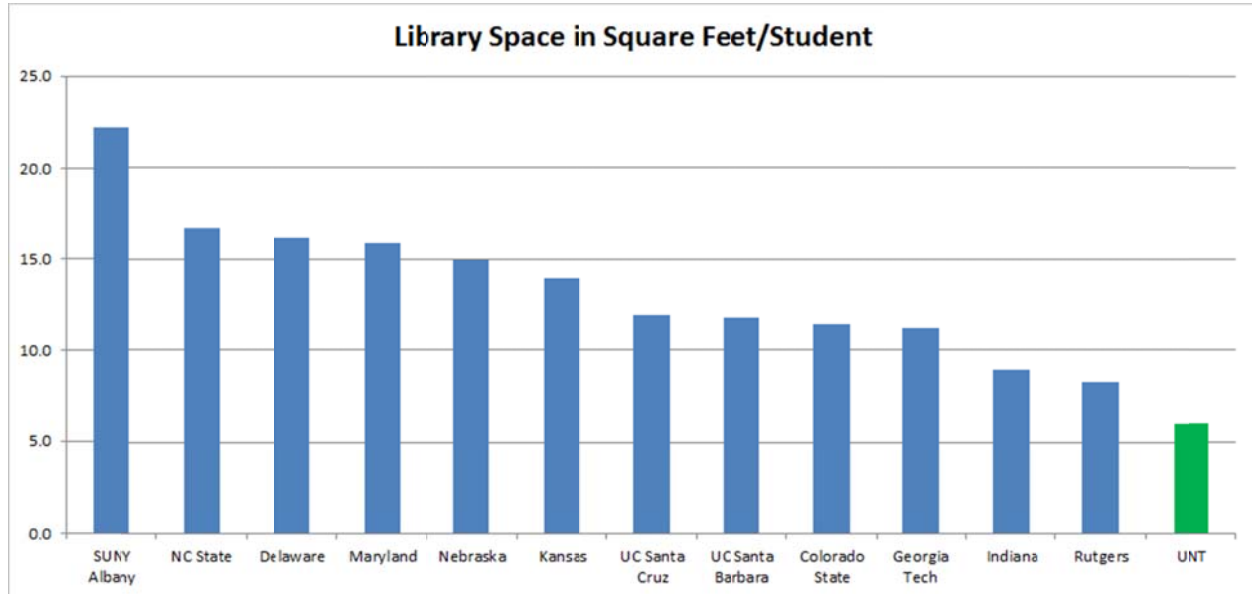
Notes: Only Colorado State has fewer volumes per faculty member than UNT. UNT has a lower ratio of volumes per student than any member of the peer group.



Notes: UNT is just above Arizona State in its ratio of library staff FTE / student, expressed here as the number of hours of library staff labor expended on average annually per student (but also note that Arizona State has more than 67K students!). UNT is weak as a research library in terms of many statistical characteristics. It borders on the characteristics of a teaching institution in some statistical comparisons. Improving these characteristics will be an important aspect of improving UNT as a research library.

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS FROM LIBRARY MASTER SPACE PLAN

The UNT Libraries undertook a master space planning effort within the 2010-2011 time period as well, and this project also produced a set of comparative statistics. Notably, the project analyzed the amount of library space per student for UNT and selected institutions from the THECB peer group, as shown in the following chart.



Notes: UNT is clearly deficient in space compared to other aspirational peer institutions. At 6 square feet of library facilities per student, UNT stands at less than half the average of the peer group (13.6 sqft/student). UNT needs to pay attention to the quality of its facilities in strategic planning. While the Library Master Space Plan is being published separately (and provides extraordinary detail concerning UNT library space needs), this strategic plan directly addresses library space needs through a targeted goal area.

VISION, MISSION, TAGLINE, AND VALUES

To steer the UNT Libraries during the coming months and years, the key guiding statements of the institution were carefully re-crafted. A vision statement was developed to articulate the ideal future of the libraries. A mission statement was written to define the function and purpose of the libraries. A tagline was crafted to succinctly articulate a memorable message about the libraries in an evocative way for its clientele. Finally, the values shared and embraced by the library staff were identified to understand what informs the culture and decisions of the UNT libraries.

VISION STATEMENT

The UNT Libraries will advance top tier research and scholarship through innovation and collaboration.

MISSION STATEMENT

Providing leadership in innovation and learning, the UNT Libraries are an essential force in teaching and research. The Libraries provide expertise in all areas of scholarship and work to meet the ever-changing needs of a vibrant, student-centered research university.

TAGLINE

The Power of Ideas Starts Here

VALUES

PROFESSIONALISM: *This value encompasses Integrity, Teamwork, Dependability, Trustworthiness, Commitment, Cooperation, Trust, and Honesty*

SERVICE: *This value encompasses Accessibility, Approachability, Helpfulness, Respect, Compassion, Appreciation, and Kindness*

EFFECTIVENESS: *This value encompasses Accuracy, Making a Difference, Excellence, Accomplishment, Organization, Resourcefulness, and Usefulness*

CREATIVITY: *This value encompasses Knowledge, Flexibility, Intelligence, Learning, Imagination, Vision, and Enthusiasm*

STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic library goals for the next 3-5 years must be driven by the priorities of the campus strategic research plan and prospects for long-term benefits to the UNT community. The following umbrella goal has been chosen carefully with this in mind.

UMBRELLA GOAL: BECOME A TOP TIER RESEARCH LIBRARY

Key Measures of Success:

- **Success in Five Strategic Goals**

A top tier research university requires a top tier library. Research must be informed by access to the ongoing record of scholarship. Becoming a top tier research library encompasses a broad range of aims, which are elaborated by the five strategic goals articulated below in this document. All of these strategies will advance the research value of the UNT Libraries for the university community, building closer and more effective relationships with the faculty, students, and other extended members of the UNT community. The specifics of these steps to build research value are detailed in the five strategic goals and will take effect over the next few years, deepening the research support characteristics of the UNT Libraries to top tier status.

The following five constituent strategic goals are intended to prepare the UNT Libraries for this candidacy, and advance the research value of the UNT Libraries for all members of the extended UNT community.

GOAL ONE: CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Goal Statement: *Establish creative partnerships that enhance the academic experience through exploring and fostering ideas and discovery.*

Targets:

- 1.1. *Receive an average over a three year period of \$1 Million annually in grants and contracts submitted and administered through the UNT Office of Research Services by 2015. Collaborative research with peer institutions nationally and internationally for library projects and collaboration with UNT faculty members are the primary focus.*
- 1.2. *Solicit and receive a total of at least \$1.5 Million by 2015 in external donations to the library as counted by UNT Advancement to support facilities, collections, and program enhancements.*
- 1.3. *Ally UNT libraries with other academic libraries and cultural memory organizations in the DFW area, nationally and internationally to provide leadership in the field of librarianship, maximize collection growth, enter joint purchasing agreements, collaborate for research, and collaborate on other efforts that are mutually beneficial.*
- 1.4. *Build campus support for cooperative digital scholarship to collaboratively engage faculty from the College of Information, the College of Arts and Sciences and other colleges and schools. This will be done in order to encourage research using library collections, form partnerships for research, quality library services, building quality collections, and preserving digital collections.*
- 1.5. *Expand already existing relationships with the UNT Press and the Texas State Historical Association to develop mutually beneficial and innovative collaborations.*
- 1.6. *Work with faculty and external alliances to maximize Open Access to scholarship at UNT and other institutions.*
- 1.7. *Identify additional funding sources to increase the library budget and to minimize the adverse effect of possible reductions in any single funding source.*

Discussion: Collaborative research partnerships with UNT scholars manifested in project proposals and new joint endeavors will begin to appear over the next 1-2 years. Our ambition beginning in the next year is to lead

the creation of nationally recognized programs in digital scholarship based on collaboration between researchers, librarians, and external communities. This ambition is achievable, given that this programmatic area builds on a decade of steady successes in the area of digital library projects at UNT, which has attracted an average of more than \$500K annually and attracted national recognition for the UNT Libraries as an innovator in scholarly communication. We plan to make further investments to build up the capabilities of the UNT Libraries to attract more restricted research funding. One of our goals beginning next year is to enable librarians to obtain an average of \$1M annually in funding over the next five year period for digital scholarship projects in collaborative partnerships between the faculty and the library.

GOAL TWO: INNOVATIVE SERVICES

Goal Statement: *Develop programs that engage, empower, and inspire the University community in the pursuit of knowledge.*

Targets:

- 2.1. *Implement a robust unified resource discovery architecture before or during FY13 to enable faculty and students to easily search all information both licensed and locally digitized by the UNT Libraries. This will be a major project that must involve all parts of the library in a broad discussion of what discoverability means in a 21st Century library. This project will also entail many related projects to establish bibliographic control over library collections that are currently hidden or obscured in silo discovery mechanisms. This comprehensive metasearch system may be either a commercial tool (examples include Proquest Summon and ExLibris Primo) or a locally developed open source system such as other research libraries have implemented (examples include Villanova University's VuFind and University of Virginia's Blacklight).*
- 2.2. *Offer long-term repository services to UNT scholars seeking to deposit digital versions of scholarly works such as articles, datasets, multimedia, departmental reports, and presentations. Initial versions of this service will be in place by the Summer of 2011, and will grow over time. These repositored works will be discoverable through both library systems and major Web search engines.*
- 2.3. *Supply scholarly communication advisory services by Fall 2012 to the UNT community members regarding copyright issues, plagiarism, open access principles, author's rights, economics, and publication options.*
- 2.4. *Provide the capability for UNT scholars to publish electronic journals on emerging research areas. A pilot program for this service will be offered in 2011, and a full service program put in place by 2012.*
- 2.5. *Actively continue to explore innovative new services and improve existing services to engage and inspire users.*
- 2.6. *Undertake outreach and marketing efforts to increase awareness of library services and collections and to improve UNT's perception of the library's value by creating a unified UNT Libraries brand.*
- 2.7. *Conduct quality programming for the UNT extended community to increase the libraries' presence and visibility and to enhance the student experience.*

Discussion: As a major research library, UNT will actively develop the range of library service offerings provided to the extended university community. These services will continue to evolve over time, taking advantage of new technological innovations. By providing the range of innovative services described in these statements, UNT will advance to the forefront of research libraries. Further, these services will be guided by well-established assessment efforts such as LibQUAL, and will relate closely with goal #3 below, a concerted effort to establish a more effective and systematic assessment program at the UNT Libraries.

Great research libraries are the heart of the intellectual life on a campus, providing services that inform and advance the scholarship and research activities of the universities. UNT will continue to further excel in performing these functions as it becomes a top tier research library.

GOAL THREE: SCHOLARLY OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Goal Statement: *Establish an assessment program that evaluates contributions to student and faculty success, organizational performance, and progress in meeting strategic goals.*

Targets:

- 3.1. *Develop and implement a balanced scorecard to assess progress towards meeting strategic goals by August 2012. Balanced scorecard measures an organization's performance against its strategic goals.*
- 3.2. *Establish assessments to evaluate library division/department/unit performance by August 2012. Organizational performance assessment will include staffing (levels, retention, and training), transaction counting, and user satisfaction surveys.*
- 3.3. *Develop and implement continuing learning outcomes assessments to evaluate library contributions to faculty research and publication, student achievement, and information literacy.*
- 3.4. *Establish definitions and counting rules for all quantitative assessments to ensure consistency within and across all library divisions by December 2012.*
- 3.5. *Obtain software to manage the assessment data and provide reporting capabilities by August 2012.*
- 3.6. *Establish a library-wide assessment working group to centralize reporting of assessment activities and evaluate progress in meeting our strategic goals by December 2011.*

Discussion: Cultivating a more effective and systematic assessment program will be essential to maintaining high quality services. We must be informed and guided by direct feedback from our clientele concerning what services and collections are useful and which ones need refinement.

Statistics and other forms of assessment are only beneficial insofar as they are effectively interpreted. All of these programmatic elements of assessment and their outputs will be closely scrutinized to inform the process of improving services and collections provided to the extended UNT community.

The goals described here will begin to establish a framework for more objective analysis of the ways that the UNT Libraries contribute to the overall success of the university and its scholars. Developing this framework for assessment is itself a major undertaking that will require work over the entire five year period of this strategic plan, and will necessitate a significant amount of new research by the UNT Librarians. We hope that UNT will become an exemplar for good library assessment techniques, and develop a reputation as a leading institution for such research.

GOAL FOUR: QUALITY COLLECTIONS

Goal Statement: *Create physical and virtual collections which support scholarship and research by connecting the past, present, and future.*

Targets:

- 4.1. *Improve collection quality through systematic comparison to peer institutions, assessment of content, and strategic acquisitions.*
- 4.2. *Accurately count and report volumes and serials.*
- 4.3. *Increase serials count by an additional 6,000 titles by the end of 2013. The new titles may include a mix of both purchased and open access titles.*
- 4.4. *Double the size of the UNT digital collections by the end of 2012 to 300,000 digital objects to contribute to the total volumes held and to improve access to materials.*
- 4.5. *Develop quality collections and acquire unique collections to meet the research and informational needs of the UNT community.*
- 4.6. *Analyze and assess current collections and subscriptions to ensure a balanced collection and effective use of resources.*

- 4.7. *Identify and process collections without bibliographic control to improve access.*
- 4.8. *Preserve physical and digital collections to ensure long-term access for researchers.*
- 4.9. *Develop a collections shifting methodology to optimize use of library spaces.*
- 4.10. *Examine and evaluate workflows and processes to maximize productivity and improve efficiency.*

Discussion: The above objectives outline the initiation of a dramatic enhancement of the library collection development and management program. Enhancing this program is essential to bring the monographic and serial collections of the library up to the standards needed for top tier research activities. The collection development program will include a gap analysis of UNT collections as referenced against the holdings of aspirational peer institutions. A gap analysis will identify priorities in monograph and serials acquisitions to guide collection development investments, and remediate gaps in the holdings of the UNT libraries.

GOAL FIVE: WELL-DESIGNED SPACES

Goal Statement: *Provide well-designed physical and virtual spaces that foster academic community and encourage intellectual inquiry and exchange.*

Targets:

- 5.1. *Complete a Library Master Space Plan by fall 2011. This Master Plan will inform subsequent planning efforts with the campus and system, informing the extensive process of making a case for new library renovation and construction.*
- 5.2. *Complete the Collaboration and Learning Commons (CLC) by spring 2011. The CLC will enable experimentation with new forms of high technology enabled library spaces as a proving ground for new concepts that may then be incorporated into renovations of the main library.*
- 5.3. *Regularly evaluate and enhance Student-Centered Spaces to create an environment that promotes intellectual inquiry and exchange.*
- 5.4. *Construct the Research Collections Library (RCL) by the end of 2012 to house research collections and material for our Special Libraries Division. The RCL will provide archival quality storage space for special collections and open space in the Library Annex, currently at capacity, for other collections.*
- 5.5. *Initiate regular improvements to the library facilities through incremental renovations of specific spaces throughout the five year period.*

Discussion: A key element of this goal that will lay out the path for many other elements of the UNT Libraries strategic plans is the Library Master Space Planning Effort, which began in late 2010 and concluded in October of 2011. In cooperation with campus facilities planners, the UNT Libraries sought out a nationally recognized architectural leader in university library assessment and development (PSA Dewberry) to provide a comprehensive review and analysis of the existing UNT Library facilities, related infrastructure, systems, building codes, programs, and services. The architectural firm worked with students, faculty, and staff on the University of North Texas campus resulting in the development of a comprehensive twenty year Master Space Plan. Given the complex nature of the facilities and the array of programs and services offered it was critical that the firm selected demonstrate a solid understanding of university libraries and have the necessary skills and resources to address the diverse mix of services, programs and infrastructural challenges that this project will present. PSA Dewberry accomplished this task extraordinarily well. The Master Plan for the Libraries includes:

- A description and current state assessment of the Libraries' buildings and spaces, both architecture and engineering;
- An outline of the Libraries mission, vision, and goals developed from interviews with librarians and other stakeholders, including an account of how they align with the University's vision and mission;

- A program statement describing the Libraries' plan and projections for growth, expansion, and transformation of resources and services in response to the changing needs of the University community;
- An extended analysis of the square foot deficits and gaps between the libraries' projected facility needs and its current state, including utility infrastructure, codes, and regulations, and program support;
- A recommended sequence of intervention, renovation, and construction to incrementally develop library facilities to support the needs of the campus and the academic community, and move the UNT Libraries toward realization of its long-term vision.

Bringing the UNT library facilities up to top tier research institution standards within the next five years by some combination of mechanisms will be critical in order to provide space for student learning and collaboration, for collaborative library research activities with faculty partners, and for adequate additional collections storage and processing facilities to accommodate growth in research collections.

NEXT STEPS

This strategic plan will be used in continuing campus discussions and as part of subsequent planning efforts by both library operational units, committees, and by external groups (such as the architectural firm to be engaged for library space planning). This strategic plan is intended to be a working plan subject to refinement over time as more information becomes available. It is intended to provide sufficient specificity in strategic targets to inform subsequent planning without unduly constraining such planning. Further updates will be forthcoming as progress is made toward the goals articulated in this plan.

The University of North Texas has a strong system of libraries. If this plan is successfully implemented, the UNT Libraries will be significantly improved in terms of services, collections, and facilities by 2015, becoming a top tier research library in the process. *The power of ideas begins here.*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: GRADUATE AND ONLINE STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS - HIGHLIGHTS

These focus groups were conducted by Dianne Wahl as part of ongoing assessment activities. There were a number of specific recommendations concerning possible improvements to library services that emerged from these focus group sessions. The following are summary statements of the major recommendations identified in the course of the focus groups (for additional details, see the reports associated with each of the focus group areas).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING LIBRARY SERVICES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

1. Make information of interest to graduate students easier to find on the library website.
 - a. Create a graduate student portal on the library website that provides information on library services useful to graduate students.
 - b. Make "Ask Us" (upper right side of the library website homepage) more visible on the library home page as well as other locations, such as the UNT online catalog pages and the electronic resources pages.
 - c. Make "News and Events" (lower left side of the library website homepage) more visible and inclusive.
2. Improve communication with and outreach to graduate students:
 - a. Use discipline specific distribution lists, blogs, or Blackboard announcements to communicate regularly with graduate students about library services, events, resources of use in their disciplines; use care to communicate only when there is information to share, and not because of a schedule that has been established.
 - b. Prepare both general and discipline specific brochures about library services/resources and make them available in the appropriate academic department offices. Make the more general brochures available in service areas on campus and online that are used by graduate students.
 - c. Develop giveaways to distribute at orientations, workshops, etc. that include library contact information useful to graduate students (reference by appointment, ILL, etc.).
 - d. Work with academic departments/colleges/schools to ensure that new graduate students are exposed to a librarian with knowledge in their discipline during their first semester. This may be at a meeting already scheduled by the department or in a meeting or workshop set up for this purpose. This practice is already in place for some disciplines but should be expanded to all disciplines.
 - e. Establish a faculty speaker series that takes place in the Libraries and that features an informal setting for faculty members to talk about their research with students. Ensure that the series is scheduled at a time that encourages graduate students to attend.
3. Increase graduate student participation in library workshops targeted to them.
 - a. Work with the graduate school to establish an incentive program to encourage graduate students to attend library workshops.
 - b. Make in person workshops convenient. Schedule workshops at times convenient not only to graduate students on campus full time but also at times convenient to graduate students who commute and/or work full time and attend evening classes. Provide food, both as an incentive and to save time for often overscheduled participants.
 - c. Establish pre-registration for graduate student workshops. This practice may create more commitment to attend on the part of the registrants and will also allow planning for food, providing certificates, etc.
 - d. Make instruction available online, including both live and archived webinars, videos of instruction sessions, and brief tutorials.
4. Customize reference services for each discipline.

- a. Establish discipline specific “office hours” staffed by subject specialists for the various disciplines on a weekly basis, using instant messaging or other technology. Focus group feedback on what technology students would like to work with would be appreciated.
- b. Enhance existing subject specific services, including reference by appointment with a subject librarian and the subject guides and market them to graduate students.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING LIBRARY SERVICES FOR ONLINE STUDENTS

1. Increase the Libraries’ presence and visibility in Blackboard:
 - a. Add library links to My Blackboard and to the Blackboard sign on page. Create a library gateway on the sign on page.
 - b. Provide an entry page (which would be a one-stop shop for library resources/services) on the library website with information on and links to online services and resources. Include a link to this page from the new library gateway on Blackboard.
 - c. Create an attractive and self-explanatory icon for the online library services, and place the icon at applicable locations to attract and increase online users’ attention.
 - d. Use the Blackboard Announcements to publicize library collections and services. The announcements can be directed to departments, faculty, students, other groups, to keep people from having to sift through items of no relevance to them.
2. Provide library instruction opportunities to online students that don’t require being at the physical library:
 - a. Build an online users guide to the Libraries in Blackboard. Design it in such a way that a student can access an orientation type overview of library services or can key in on short – 5 minute or less – instructional segments focusing on specific services, tools, etc. Consider using podcasts or vodcasts stored at iTunes U.
 - b. Establish discipline specific “office hours” staffed by subject specialists for the various disciplines on a weekly basis, using instant messaging or other technology. Focus group feedback on what technology students would like to work with would be appreciated.
 - c. Develop a research paper calculator in Blackboard. This tool will allow a user to enter their research project due date and get a schedule of activities and when they need to be finished in order to complete the assignment on time. Over time, links to modules providing information about how to perform the various activities will be added. Here are some examples of calculators in use at other universities: <http://mulibraries.missouri.edu/guides/assigncalc.htm>
3. Make the UNT Libraries’ website easier to search. Ensure that terminology used on library web pages includes keywords likely to be used in a Google search for information on the topics covered by the web pages. This activity will involve training web page creators and then having them use what they have learned to improve the searchability of their web pages.
4. Publicize and provide online instruction in using search software that looks for information on a specified topic in a variety of databases, including the library catalog, simultaneously.
5. Communicate and collaborate more effectively with faculty members that teach online classes.
 - a. Provide appropriate library information, including links, in the course syllabus template.
 - b. Communicate with/instruct faculty on the value of maintaining library information in their syllabi. Communication should be both general (Blackboard Announcements directed to faculty, listserv announcements) and specific (one on one discussions between faculty and CLEAR instructional consultants or faculty and subject librarians). [CLEAR stands for Center for Learning Enhancement, Assessment, and Redesign; CLEAR’s role on campus is to “assist faculty in the creation, design, implementation, and assessment of distributed learning courses.” For more information, see <http://clear.unt.edu/index.cfm?M=1>.]
 - c. Collaborate with faculty in development of their unique course syllabi, emphasizing the role of library resources for online classes and resulting in customized pages for the specific classes that are library gateways to the content needed for the classes. Pilot this approach with a subgroup of online faculty.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS - HIGHLIGHTS

The University of Texas regularly administers the Survey of Organizational Excellence to hundreds of agencies in the state of Texas in an effort to advise organizational leaders about the current state of their work force and quality of services provided. The staff of the UNT Libraries participated in this survey in 2010 (as they had in 2008, 2006, and 2004), and their responses were collated into a survey report.

The survey report generally echoes and confirms many of the same statements from the internal SWOT analysis. The following selected excerpts from the report highlight particular statements about the strengths and weaknesses in the UNT Libraries:

RELATIVE STRENGTHS:

Quality Score: 383

General Description: The Quality construct focuses upon the degree to which quality principles, such as customer service and continuous improvement are a part of the organizational culture. This Construct also addresses the extent to which employees feel that they have the resources to deliver quality services. Quality comes from attention to detail, customers and overall effort.

Employment Development Score: 377

General Description: The Employment Development construct is an assessment of the priority given to employees' personal and job growth. It provides insight into whether the culture of the organization sees human resources as the most important resource or as one of many resources. It directly addresses the degree to which the organization is seeking to maximize gains from investment in employees.

Job Satisfaction Score: 367

General Description: The Job Satisfaction construct addresses employees' attitudes about the overall work situation. This Construct looks at the degree to which employees intrinsically like their jobs and the total work environment. It focuses upon both the job itself and the availability of resources to do the job.

External Score: 367

General Description: The External Communication construct looks at how information flows into the organization from external sources, and conversely, how information flows from inside the organization to external constituents. It addresses the ability of organizational members to synthesize and apply external information to work performed by the organization.

Benefits Score: 366

General Description: The Benefits construct provides a good indication of the role the benefit package plays in attracting and retaining employees in the organization. It reflects comparable benefits that employees feel exist with other organizations in the area.

RELATIVE WEAKNESSES:

Fair Pay Score: 291 (Source of Concern)

General Description: The Fair Pay construct addresses perceptions of the overall compensation package offered by the organization. It describes how well the compensation package "holds up" when employees compare it to similar jobs in other organizations... Failure to successfully remedy Fair Pay problems is one of the more serious mistakes that leadership can make. These scores suggest that pay is a central concern or reason for satisfaction or discontent. Problems with pay can come from two or three causes and may suggest a number of remedies. In some situations pay does not meet comparables in similar organizations. In other cases individuals may perceive that pay levels are not appropriately set to work demands, experience and ability. At some times cost of living increases may cause sharp drops in purchasing power and employees will view pay levels as unfair. Remedying Fair Pay problems requires a determination of which of the above factors are serving to create the concerns. Triangulate low scores in Fair Pay by reviewing comparable positions in other organizations and cost of living information.

Internal Score: 316

General Description: The Internal Communication construct captures the flow of communication within the organization from the top-down, bottom-up, and across divisions or departments. It addresses the extent to which communication exchanges are open and candid and move the organization toward goal achievement. Average scores suggest that room for improvement

exists and lack of attention can lead to dropping scores. Employees feel that information does not arrive in a timely fashion and often it is difficult to find needed facts. In general Internal Information problems stem from these factors: an organization that has outgrown an older verbal culture based upon a few people knowing "how to work the system", lack of investment and training in modern communication technology and, perhaps, vested interests that seek to control needed information. Remedying Internal Communication requires careful study to determine the correct causative factors. Triangulate low scores in Internal Communication by reviewing existing policy and procedural manuals to determine their availability. Assess how well telephone systems are articulated and if e mail, faxing and Internet modalities are developed and in full use. Use the employee feedback sessions to make a more complete determination for the causes of low Internal Communication scores.

Team Effectiveness Score: 323

General Description: The Team Effectiveness construct captures employees' perceptions of the people within the organization that they work with on a daily basis to accomplish their jobs (the work group or team). This construct gathers data about how effective employees think their work group is as well as the extent to which the organizational environment supports cooperation among employees. Average scores suggest that room for improvement exists and lack of attention can lead to dropping scores. Much and often most work in organizations require regular collaboration with others, the work team. Problems with Team Effectiveness can come from many causes and may suggest a number of remedies. In general team effectiveness stems from these factors: team membership, the selection, support and training of supervisors, the maturity and experience of employees and the nature of the specific work being performed. Remedying Team Effectiveness requires careful study to determine the correct causative factors. Triangulate low scores in Team Effectiveness with Supervisory Effectiveness by reviewing how supervisors are selected and their training. Use the employee feedback sessions to make a more complete determination for the causes of low Team Effectiveness scores.

Holographic Score: 345

General Description: The Holographic construct refers to the degree to which all actions of the organization "hang together" and are understood by all. It concerns employees' perceptions of the consistency of decision-making and activity within the organization. It reflects the extent to which all parts of the organization and all employees share some common organizational understandings and goals. Average scores suggest common organizational focus and understanding is ready for improvement. In general a holographic orientation stems from these factors: common values and languages, experience of employees in many areas of the organization and critical events that serve to knit the organization to a common purpose. Remedying Holographic orientation requires experiences that take employees across the organization. Cross functional teams to critique existing processes, services and products and to plan new ones serve this goal. Job rotation and career paths that emphasize moving across the organization rather than simple vertical advancement further Holographic orientations.

Empowerment Score: 347

General Description: The Empowerment construct measures the degree to which employees feel that they have some control over their jobs and the outcome of their efforts. This construct provides a picture of whether employees view the organizational structure as a supportive, effective environment or as one in which the formal and informal hierarchy hinders progress and innovation. Average scores suggest that room for improvement exists and lack of attention can lead to dropping scores. No area in an organization is more important and often more resistant to change than the middle areas of the organization. Whether adequate levels of empowerment exist is very much a consequence of middle management leadership. In general Empowerment stems from these factors: the selection and conduct of supervisors, the maturity and experience of employees and the nature of the specific work being performed. Remedying Empowerment requires careful study to determine the correct causative factors. Triangulate low scores in Empowerment by reviewing how supervisors are selected and their training.