York College

York College Library
Action Plan
2012-2017
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BACKGROUND

With everyone’s participation and the Committee’s effort, York College Library faculty successfully completed the first three stages (Initiation, Self-Study, and External Review) of its Academic Program Review in July 2012. At this concluding stage we now look forward to the challenges ahead and present the library’s Action Plan for the coming years.

This Action Plan is based on two sources: recommendations in the Self-Study and recommendations in the External Reviewer’s Report. The Action Plan has been made after a careful evaluation of all the recommendations. It must be noted that while all the recommendations are valuable, some may not be realistically attainable due to financial constraints. It has also been fifteen years since the library’s previous Academic Program Review, so it will take more than a few years to address these recommendations. As a result, not all the recommendations have been adopted in the Action Plan. Addressed first are those recommendations where significant progress towards resolution has already been achieved. Following these status reports is a more general set of discussion following the outline of the external reviewer, Dr. Wilma Jones, Chief Librarian of College of Staten Island, of the City University of New York.
RECOMMENDATIONS BEING ACTED ON OR COMPLETED

The recommendations quoted from Dr. Jones are in the order in which they were written in her External Review Report. Passages in italics have been taken verbatim from Dr. Jones’ report.

“The Chief Librarian should institute monthly department meetings for faculty and professional staff.”

Status of this recommendation:
Done

“Librarians and professional staff should be encouraged to seek and apply for grants.”

Status of this recommendation:
Library faculty continues to apply for grants. One faculty member is currently preparing a grant request, another recently attended a grant-supported conference, and a third faculty member applied for a National Endowment for the Humanities grant in March that was rejected. The library is also cooperating with Dr. Eric Metcalf, the Chair of the York College Senate’s Library Committee, to acquire a grant for a CUNY wide project to digitize archival photographs.

“York College must provide adequate resource allocation to purchase additional copiers, scanners, computers, and network printers to accommodate the growing body of students using the Library.”
Status of this recommendation:

Within the past two years, the library received funding for six new photocopiers (a 20% increase), two of which are our first color copiers. We just purchased our first stand-alone color scanner. The library also acquired its first color printer that is backed up by two networked color photocopiers that also release print jobs. The library, with the complete cooperation of the College IT department, continues to update and expand library technology including computer and printing services on an annual basis.

“The Chief Librarian should consider a re-organization of staffing for the Library according to the present and future needs of the Library.”

Status of this recommendation:

The Chief Librarian has within the current limited personnel re-organized the duties of some library faculty to help meet future needs of the library as well as the professional development of library faculty.

“The York College Library should conduct a thorough review of the relevance and use of the current Serials in print format and Microform Collection. Titles no longer relevant should be immediately cancelled and resources diverted to the purchase of much needed print and electronic monographs, and other newer formats.”

Status of this recommendation:

Microform subscriptions have been cut to a single title from approximately 260 titles for a savings of over $35,000.00. Print serial subscriptions have also undergone judicious
cancellations, and this category of expenditure has seen a two-thirds reduction over the last three years.

“The York College Library should find ways to provide access to the rich collections currently available in its Archives and Special Collections. Suggestions include cataloguing the various collections in phases and digitizing the collection to expand access to rare items.”

Status of this recommendation:

The “Bassin Collection of Hebraica and Yiddica” (consisting of 334 titles) has been cataloged, as well as a collection of 91 rare books. Future plans include the cataloging of both library and college archival materials. A grant application was submitted to METRO and another application is being prepared for submission to get funding to digitize other archive collections.

“A stand-alone scanner should be purchased so that persons wanting to scan do not compete with those who want to photocopy.”

Status of this recommendation:

Done. We recently purchased a stand-alone scanner in addition to the two photocopiers that also have scanning abilities.
DISCUSSIONS

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

As Dr. Jones suggested, the York College Library plans to articulate in its annual reports, newsletters, website, and other publications evidence of the Library’s positive impact on and contribution to student learning, student retention, and student academic success. The library will also develop a vision statement.

COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

Most of the points raised in this area of concern that can be easily addressed were given status reports above. The library will continue to make a good faith effort at meeting the goals found in this section of Dr. Jones’ external evaluation.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: FINANCIAL

The library has an on-going faith in having the College continue to provide the highest possible financial support which, in turn, will be planned, managed and allocated in a judicious fashion with student needs as our highest guiding principal.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: STAFFING

The library will continue to advocate for adequate lines (both professional and support staff) to support library services and to look for innovative ways to train and update the skills of current staff. The main concern of students that is most easily addressed, that would also most dramatically enhance library services, would be restoring the budget to keep this facility open beyond nine o’clock in the evening, as well as resuming Sunday hours. The example that follows illustrates how reluctant students are to leave the library.
at closing time: On September 5, 2012, approximately 100 students had to be escorted out at closing time by two public safety officers and an apologetic librarian. Restoring Sunday hours would require funds for one non-teaching adjunct library faculty and two College Assistants. Over the past year, the library has lost both a faculty (retirement) and staff member (transfer), neither of whom has been replaced.

As the enrollment at York College continues to grow, the library staffing has not kept pace; thus, this situation impacts all areas of the library services including reference services to faculty and students. The reliance on electronic information has grown exponentially and so has the requests of information literacy instruction classes. Like many CUNY Colleges, in the future, York College may wish to offer 1, 2, or 3 credit information skills classes taught by a Library faculty; provides walk-in library workshops and online tutorials; and reach students through social networking avenues. In her Academic Review Report, Dr. Jones recommended that York College Library faculty utilize new and emerging technologies such as Facebook, Blogs, and Twitter to better communicate with the users. In order for York College Library to embark on this recommendation and to compete with other CUNY libraries, additional fulltime faculty line is needed. In the event that the Library is able to replace a recently retired librarian, we would use that line to hire an Emerging Technologies/Distance Services Librarian who will be responsible for creating web-delivered instructional materials, introducing new technologies, teaching users and training library faculty how to use advanced web-based resources, and expanding the library outreach.
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: COLLECTION

The library is the environment in which the evolution of book into a medium that meets clearly defined user needs, and becomes an essential connection of high quality content and platforms that achieve excellence in teaching and learning outcomes. York College Library like all libraries is in the midst of migrating from print to electronic delivery of content; change is evident as users needs evolve based on technological advances. This further implies changes to the traditional role of college libraries to provide research resources and technology to facilitate students and faculty needs.

Copyrights have time limits, and older classic titles are becoming available in full text on the Internet, making access to book easier electronically, with increasingly sophisticated search platforms available to York College students. The York College Library Faculty have started and will develop instructional tools to help students to discover and effectively utilize electronic books. This is imperative due to the increasing percentage of titles our users have access to electronically from both before the copyright period and since the advent of server based distribution. It is noteworthy that the library has dramatically increased electronic monographs and electronic reference books over the last several years. With York College Library collection’s traditional strengths and increased sensitivity towards subject specialization, library faculty will need to hone their selection skills for both print and electronic collections.

At this point in time the majority of the library’s e-books are mass purchased at high cost from a small number of publishers through aggregators who provide the platform and
control the contracts of their use. The problem of mass purchases from aggregators includes having little control of collection size, subject content, and collection emphasis. Usually aggregators of e-book titles only lease and do not permanently allow access with a purchase price. These problems of information access and collection control are present throughout the academic libraries and are not unique to the York College Library.

Hard copy books are being overtaken slowly by e-books is just the latest stage in the evolution of information delivery. Periodicals, serials, journals, magazines and newspapers have long been available through on-line aggregators and more recently via publisher-provided websites. The York College community currently enjoys access to over 132,000 periodical titles online, and almost one hundred percent of journal literature being consumed is in a digital format. During the 2010-2011 academic year, physical journals were accessed 429 times while microfilm journals were used only eight times. The York College library faculty primarily teaches students how to access electronic peer reviewed journal literature. The Library will discontinue subscribing to microfilm and microfiche collections with the expectation of digitizing them in future. The Library will also greatly reduce subscriptions to hard copy version of journals, magazines and newspapers.
ACCESS TO SERVICES AND COLLECTIONS

The library will continue to advocate for more personnel in order to extend the operating hours. The library will sustain its constructive relationship with the College Information Technology department to ensure the expansion of technology including computers, printing, photocopying and other hardware services continues. The York College Library was an early adopter of laptop technology, and the experiment failed for several reasons, including the poor batteries of that generation of Dells, and because the previous print management system (OCS) did not allow wireless printing. Personal technology including laptops, notebooks, and smart phones are all used by a significant and growing percentage of the student body. For example e-cameras, whose photographs can be downloaded and manipulated on students’ home computers, are becoming replacements for traditional scanning and photocopying. Many times students ask for directions by showing the reference librarian their iPhone screen with a picture of a book’s catalog record. The students tend to be ahead of faculty in technology use.

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

The York College Library in conjunction with other support departments has been planning for an expanded Information Literacy Classroom, AC3G09, for years and will no doubt make meaningful progress over the time frame of this study. We trust the administration will expand the current Information Literacy Classroom in 2012-2013 academic year. The expansion and upgrading of AC3GO9 is critical due to increasing requests of information literacy sessions from classroom faculty. Furthermore, the library will also use this classroom to conduct walk-in workshops and to hold
professional development programs for library faculty. Library faculty have full capability of going above and beyond the classroom faculty initiated workshops addressed to specific assignments, but at this point, the creation of independent walk-in workshops would be developed by individual librarian initiative.

The concept of objectives for this goal probably falls into the area of “maybe.” However our classroom based workshops increases in demand each semester and our faculty is already stretched to meet this demand on top of one-on-one information literacy/research instruction provided at our very busy reference desk. The library currently has three broad research guides on its web page and finding professional time to up-date these as well as create new subject guides as recommended will become a priority of library management in the near future. “Finding time” will remain a challenge, however, since the library has four junior faculty members taking contractually-mandated research leave.

FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGIES

Dr. Jones wisely and perpectively pointed out that, “If York College’s enrollment continues to increase; the Library’s footprint will need to be renovated or expanded. A space utilization consultant should be hired to examine the facilities in the Library and make recommendations. A suggestion for short-term would be to explore relocating underutilized materials to an off-site location (i.e. print serials and microform materials) in order to transform the vacated space into high functioning spaces.” Unfortunately, the library has lost a great deal of space over the past decade, and the last time space allocation study was carried out, the library lost approximately 20% of its space. The
college student body will continue to grow as will student use of the library as a computer lab, study center and recreational social hub. The need for space for print periodicals continues to shrink. The microform collection, currently maintained as is, could also be shrunk dramatically by removing redundancy with secure on-line titles (JSTOR titles for instance) and updating our microform technology to a single microfilm scanner. This moving of the bound collection to the 2nd floor and space savings from a smaller microfilm collection will allow space for a small 3rd floor service desk. In addition, discarding the antiquated equipment and redundant titles from the microforms room will also allow space for one or two faculty offices which in turn, will allow for the return of up to three group study rooms to the students at the south end of the 3rd floor. This can easily be accomplished within five years that this report covers and will be a great service to provide more group study space from offices that were squeezed into study space after the last space allocation study. If the library recovers the space in the 2nd floor stacks occupied by the SEMAA Lab, we can relocate bound periodicals to that space and therefore double the seating capacity in the quiet study area on the 3rd floor.

In her report, Dr. Jones suggests, “York College Library should explore utilizing Aleph’s reservation module to effectively manage access to Group Study Rooms.”

The York College Library, in conjunction with the IT department, is already studying different alternatives for the improvement of computers and group study rooms’ access that will allow reservations of specific library work stations and study rooms.

According to the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers (2006), libraries are important consideration when students select a university or college, and, as a result,
academic libraries can help institutional admission to boost enrollment and retention. The report further points out that libraries ranked 2\textsuperscript{nd} in terms of facilities importance in the selection decision process. While there have been some improvements in custodial and Public Safety services, cleanliness and noise pollution control in the library are still in need of serious attention. Since York College enrollment has been increasing for the last several years, the library trusts that custodial and public safety support will be upgraded in the near future.

**CONCLUSION**

The library hopes to accomplish the goals and ideas expressed in the Academic Program Review within the next five years.
Appendix: 2011-2012 York College Library Academic Program Review (APR) Committee Members

Daniel Cleary, Assistant Professor (Co-Chair)
Anamika Dasgupta, Assistant Professor
John Drobnicki, Professor
Njoki Kinyatti, Associate Professor & Chief Librarian
Robert Machalow, Professor
Christina Miller, Instructor (now Assistant Professor)
Scott Sheidlower, Assistant Professor
Di Su, Associate Professor (Co-Chair)
Sandra Urban, Assistant Professor