



I. SUMMARY

This study involves a projection of library use, assessment of existing facilities, and development of strategies and options for accommodating needs over the next 20 years for library services for the Evanston and Chicago campuses. Northwestern's continued growth as a research institution, increased emphasis on interdisciplinarity and internationalization at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and the development of continuing education programs will continue to affect the function and design of all campus information services. Internet access, electronic media, and computer technology have become the norm, and demand for new services within the library environment, such as classrooms, media production, informal interaction areas and group study rooms, are expected to increase. At the same time, space is effectively full for print volumes, acquisitions of which need to continue in many fields.

A number of smaller construction projects have been undertaken in recent years to adapt the main library to changes in pedagogy and in technology and to support cooperative initiatives, based on a master plan that was developed by Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott in 1996. The library's new strategic plan, however, has set an innovative direction for services and storage that will fundamentally change the way all library physical space is used now and for the foreseeable future. Additional study is needed to focus on a 20-year timeline for library master planning, and the larger question of distributed versus concentrated collections storage. The latter issue is becoming more acute on both campuses, as proposals accelerate for alternative academic uses within existing library buildings.

A summary of the library strategic plan is attached. The new plan focuses on the centrality of e-resources and their development, acquisition and use; places importance on the design of new collaborative user spaces; and prioritizes the ongoing significance of special research collections (in many formats) held uniquely by Northwestern. The strategic plan also places greater emphasis than in the past on partnerships with other libraries and academic units, locally and nationally.

The master plan study will focus on 1) an assessment of existing facilities and their reorganization and renovation to incorporate possible new and expanded program components; and 2) storage facilities, and a detailed plan for a long-term collections storage and retrieval program for the University. The purpose of the study is to examine the best uses for available library spaces, consider options that provide flexibility and adaptability for the immediate and future needs of the University, assess and forecast the need for different types of library facilities on both campuses -- especially spaces for collaborative teaching and learning as well as digital services and support -- and determine options and develop plans that may include

upgrades and/or consolidation of existing or outmoded facilities, as well as development of new facilities.

II. STUDY PRIORITIES

- Propose a long-term library space plan that encompasses the use of space in all of Northwestern's library units in Evanston and Chicago, and that accommodates anticipated changes in staffing, collections, user services and technology.
- Examine long term, 20-year, offsite storage needs, recommending strategies to transfer and shift adjacencies of the collections, and identify the most cost effective solution, taking into account technical specifications and needs for preservation and conservation of print materials.
- Critique the proposed capital projects that have emerged from the Library's strategic plan and recommend adjustments and practical ways to realize the objectives.
- Recommend ways to change Deering into a state-of-the-art special collections space.
- Help assess the feasibility of the possible merger of Math and Geology Library collections into the SEL, University Library and stored collections.
- Articulate how the University Library can be reorganized and refitted to reflect the strategies and outcomes of the strategic plan. Analyze potential changes in adjacencies of collections and service areas to improve functionality, and propose relevant relocations of collections or services to other on- or off-campus facilities.
- Combine these recommendations into a 20-year action plan clustered into four five-year staging plans.

The study will specifically provide:

- An assessment of the current and future need for different types of library facilities on the Chicago and Evanston campuses in relation to the facilities that currently exist;
- A better understanding of the challenges created by existing library space utilization (particularly the University Library in Evanston and Schaffner Library in Chicago), and options for addressing the space and service deficiencies that may result;
- An analysis of currently available patterns of use;
- An analysis of existing library facilities' capacities for material storage, seating and other functions;
- A better understanding of the deficiencies of the existing interior and exterior building infrastructure of the University Library, Deering Library and SEL, with estimates of costs to renovate these elements;
- Development and exploration of planning options (including assessment of possible consolidation of satellite libraries) with estimates of cost to improve, modify, expand and/or eliminate some facilities.

III. PROCESSES FOR STUDY

- Core workgroup of participants from the Library and Facilities Management.
- Faculty sub-committee, representing a broad cross section of academic disciplines,
- Focus groups with Library users,
- Web-based user surveys (separately designed for students and faculty, Chicago and Evanston) related to physical and electronic library facilities
- Extensive data gathering related to print and electronic collection patterns, usage of services, and staffing.
- Interviews with senior administrators from the Provost's Office, and from the University's ten schools and colleges, and potentially small groups of particular representatives from academic/administrative units.

IV. SCHEDULE

Work on this study will start by the middle of March 2008, and some very preliminary recommendations and/or options need to be provided by June 1, 2008, particularly related to: 1) approximate size of offsite storage facility likely to be appropriate, given that some substantial quantity of materials may need to be relocated as early as the Fall of 2008, and 2) the costs and feasibility of renovations to the Deering Library. The entire completed study, report, drawings, et cetera, are expected to be ready for distribution by November 1, 2008.

Summary by S. Pritchard, April 15, 2008