Seizing Opportunities From Crisis

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September 29, 2009
Transformation

MILES DAVIS Kind of Blue
Sometimes Not

Ford Nucleon 1958
What's Different?

- Global Economic Crisis
- Digital Content and Services
- User Behaviors, Demands, Expectations
- E-scholarship
- New Partners
- Bigger is **Not** Better
Transformation
Most Low-Hanging Fruit Already Picked
New Service Models

- Changes posed fundamental challenges to our services
- University expects to have no additional funds to invest in the Library
- Stress maintaining and expanding the three most important components of a preeminent research university library: expert library faculty and staff, rich array of collections and scholarly content, and effective consultation and communication
Core Values

- Commitment of service to teaching, scholarship, cultural heritage
- Commitment to excellent services and collections
- Belief that the 21st century academic library will be distinguished by its service programs
- Embrace change
Core Commitments

- Assign subject specialists documented responsibilities
- Acquire and provide access to collections and content
- Foster regular communication and collaboration
- Make use of full array of library facilities
Process

- Solicited and vetted ideas for change
- Involved the campus community – widespread series of discussions, including several open meetings
- Produced final report
- Began implementing recommendations
  - Labor and Industrial Relations (virtual lib, embedded)
  - City Planning and Landscape Architecture consolidated in ACES
  - Library and Information Science (embedded, portal)
  - Centralized Tech Services (physical and virtual)
  - Central Access Services (reduced service points)
And Then....

Paula Kaufman
Dean and University Librarian
230 Library
MC 522

Dear Paula,

Thank you for the recent update on the activities associated with the Library’s “New Service Models” program. I appreciate the ongoing efforts by you and the faculty and staff of the Library to plan for the future of the University Library in an open, inclusive, and creative way. The announcements you shared regarding the future of the Library & Information Science Library and the Scholarly Commons demonstrate that, even in difficult economic times, we can make good decisions about how best to invest our resources to ensure that the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will continue to be a leader in research library services for the twenty-first century, as it was for the twentieth.

Although I appreciate and commend the efforts you have made, I must ask if there is more that can be done to meet my earlier challenge to envision a sustainable vision of library services for the future. The “Final Report” of your Budget Group Plus outlined a number of potential changes that would both improve library services to Illinois faculty and students, and encourage economies of scale and effort. Those economies were forward looking in 2008, but they are a necessity in 2009. Given the scope of the financial challenges facing the University, the State of Illinois, and the nation, I must ask you to consider how to move more quickly into a new service infrastructure that will allow us to protect our core commitments to library collections and services while also allowing us to make the best possible use of our financial, physical, and human resources.

To this end, I ask that you immediately expand your work to integrate library collections and service points in a way that will allow the greatest economies of scale, while also recognizing the need to support an array of library services that are appropriate to the needs of different populations and disciplinary communities. I believe that these changes are in the best interests of our faculty and students, but also that these changes will allow you to better serve and protect our commitment to faculty, staff, and student positions in a way that will be more difficult if we cling to our traditional, highly-decentralized model of library facilities, collections, and services.
Additional Changes

- Physics and Geology to Grainger Engineering (Physics done)
- Library and Information Science (Done)
- Scholarly Commons (I3, ICHASS, ALTAS, IPHR)
- Biology
- Applied Health Sciences/Health Sciences
- Social and Behavioral Sciences
- International and Area Studies
- Government Documents consolidate with Reference (Summer)
- Reduce service points (ongoing)
Different Reactions: Unscientific Observations

- Many scientists eager or willing to consider changes.
- Many social scientists very happy with changes made two decades ago and now willing to consider others.
- Humanists – can’t generalize at all.
- Some evidence of greater acceptance of change related to e-content and international accessibility.
- Students want predictability and consistency.
- Subject specialists who ran small libraries appreciate being free from managerial duties.
Major Themes

- Iconic symbolism
- Brand identity
- Study space
- Content
- Subject specialists
Space and Facilities
Concluding Thoughts

- Opportunities to provide enhanced access, service, and communication
- Willingness of so many to engage in discussion with open minds and broad perspectives
- Courage of many deans and department heads to challenge thinking of their faculty
- Courage of my leadership team and many other Library faculty and staff
- Most important – starting without fixed ideas and listening carefully
At the end of the process....