Master Planning For University Libraries

ROBERT H. MULLER

A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION on long-range library planning was sent to all seventy-six university libraries of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) early in January 1969. Responses were received from all but nine, reflecting a high degree of interest in the subject matter. Only ten of the responses indicated that little or no formal planning was being done. Fifty-seven of the responses showed evidence of thought having been given to planning for future needs and, in a majority of these, a great deal of attention had been paid to formal planning.

The data showed that there are no hard and fast rules governing planning work. Much ingenuity, thoughtfulness, imagination, and risk-taking are required for developing plans that will open up new and better service opportunities. Planning is not a pedestrian exercise. The impetus for planning for university libraries comes from several directions:

1) Those in top-management positions in libraries feel that some of their most important responsibilities are to set goals for the future, to anticipate library developments, to attempt to envisage the future in terms both of size and feasible spatial patterns for the best possible service.

2) There is an understandable anxiety among top managers and faculty library committees about the possibility or likelihood of running out of space long before funds become available for creating new space. Administrators wish to forestall space crises involving emergency storage arrangements, overcrowded reading areas, excessive shifting of book collections, and inadequate and unsuitable work space for the staff. Librarians are all too familiar with sorry situations where good library service became difficult or virtually impossible because of lack of foresight on the part of those responsible for

Robert H. Muller is Professor, School of Library Science, and Research Consultant to the University Library, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

providing funds, determining priorities for capital developments, and making long-range plans.

3) University authorities are placing increasing emphasis on planning as a separately identifiable function. The establishment of planning departments and the appointment of university vice-presidents or assistant vice-presidents for planning (e.g., at Pennsylvania State University, the University of Michigan, Temple University), and the establishment of planning offices or departments in state-wide offices of higher education (e.g., at the University of California), has led to procedures that demand planning several years ahead rather than merely budgeting a year or two ahead as has been customary in traditional budget procedures. When such demands for program and space projections come to a library director's desk, he is often unsure as how to proceed.

4) In some institutions, the planning procedure has become standardized to the point of involving an annual filling out of a special form. An example is the University of Oregon's "Form W," on which data for the past three years and estimates for the forthcoming seven years have to be submitted to the University's Office of Business Affairs. The form covers assignable square feet for reader seating (based on projected enrollment), library volumes, and services and administration. By comparing available with required square feet (based on accepted or assumed standards), the additional space required or the surplus expected to be available is determined for each year. The form compiled in 1967-68, for instance, shows that the deficit on the Eugene campus will amount to over 10,243 square feet in 1971-72; 23,461 in 1972-73; 37,177 in 1973-74; and 51,315 in 1974-75; the completion of proposed capital construction providing space for an undergraduate library of 50,000 net square feet in 1974-75 is expected to reduce the deficit to 1,315 square feet. This example demonstrates the demand for orderly planning with which library managers are increasingly faced.

Another less quantitatively oriented example is Pennsylvania State University, where an elaborate "planning packet" must be filled out by the director of libraries and returned to the vice president for planning. Questions asked include the following:

> What is your overall long-range view of what your department or office should be doing? How does this differ from today's objectives or missions (please state them) and those of 10 years ago? What opportunities do you have or do you foresee that, if you

could take advantage of them in the next five years, would help you fulfill your mission(s)? What are the specific goals you are currently undertaking or would like to undertake in the next five years, in working toward the objective(s) stated above? How do they relate to opportunities? From the goals given above, identify the goal to which you would assign highest priority. If you were to attain this goal as desired, what would be the consequent effects (good or bad) on your area, on other areas in the university, and on areas outside the university?

These questions call more for narrative than merely statistical answers, and the answers given relate, in part, to library plant expansion needed. Library administrators can expect to become increasingly subjected to this sort of routine—periodic probing about future needs —and if their answers are properly responded to by university and budgetary authorities, the sort of space crises often found in university libraries are likely to be averted.

5) There is a growing awareness of the need for campus planning to include libraries as an integral part. Librarians are all too familiar with the helter-skelter type of campus enlargement that has taken place on many campuses in the past. Buildings have been erected without sufficient regard to the subjects which would be taught there; library spaces have been routinely included in new classroom buildings without regard to possible consolidation of library services within a given campus area; library buildings have been placed in locations that, over a span of years, became too remote to be useful.

In the future, we can expect increasing emphasis on long-range campus planning that takes proper account of library needs. On new campuses, such as the University of California at San Diego, and on campuses that are developing at highly accelerated rates (of which Southern Illinois University, Michigan State University, and the University of California at Davis may serve as past examples and Northern Illinois University as a current illustration), total campus-wide library systems can be made to develop in a more rational manner than was true of slowly growing, established institutions, many of which, even today, are saddled with seemingly unalterable library accretions that keep them from evolving into effectively coordinated library systems.

Matters would be more comfortable if we could clearly see the future campus and the future character of higher education. In a book like *Campus 1980; The Shape of the Future of American Higher*

Education, edited by Alvin C. Eurich,[1] one finds a prediction that universities will be very different in the future. Eurich says, "Buildings that will grace or disgrace the campus in 1980 are being built now—but the needs of a college may change drastically in the next decade." [2] A contributor to the volume, Harold B. Gores, the president of Educational Facilities Laboratory, predicts "that the library will no longer be buried physically in the heart of the campus simply because symbolically information is at the heart of the enterprise. More likely, especially in commuting institutions, the library will be located on the perimeter of the campus, there to provide maximum access at all hours and at all times." [3] If such is to come true, many libraries are currently being placed in the wrong spots; Gores' prediction, however, may not necessarily come true. What of his other prediction, that "the physical campus will respond by becoming mostly library and living room"? [4] If so, what are the implications for library building planning? This sort of prediction does not help us avoid designing library facilities that may in ten or twenty years turn into white elephants as several library buildings completed in the 1940's and a few in the 1950's are today.

The present unrest among a portion of college students may also exert an influence in a way that one would not have predicted a short time ago. The freedom and openness of recently built library buildings may give way, in part, to greater concern for protective devices. A head librarian of a campus of the University of California writes: "I can sense as I believe all of us do, great impending changes. If one certain trend continues, of course, libraries may have to revert to the old closed stack system and be more or less set up as fortresses, but I sincerely hope that this will not be necessary." [5] Libraries and their catalogs have become targets of vandals and disruptive militants. The difficulty of properly protecting dispersed and open collections may force libraries, in part, into more centralized patterns although it may also be argued that a decentralized library system is less visible as a target and, therefore, harder to destroy or mutilate.

A related concern is expressed in speculation on the future at Harvard University where it is felt that the physical security of the collections will require restriction of use of books to the library building. This will entail much more space for readers than has been needed in the past.

On the quantitative level, space planning for libraries involves estimating space needs for the book collection, reader seating, service

areas, and staff work space. If present facilities are inadequate, the first task is to determine what the presently available space amounts to and then to indicate what the size of the present space should be if agreed-upon standards were to be met. (There are various standards for book volume space requirements, for the percentage of the enrollment to be provided with seating, for the number of square feet per reader, for the number of staff members in technical services required for a given rate of acquisition, for the number of square feet per staff member, etc.)[6] The next step is to project the space requirement into the future. Such projection is most frequently done for ten years hence, but in some cases for fifteen or twenty years.

The size of the future book collection can either be arbitrarily set in terms of what is considered desirable or necessary for the envisaged educational and research program on the basis of some accepted formula, or it can be a mathematical projection of past growth into the distant future. Such projection, if it followed the technique of the study by O. C. Dunn, W. F. Seibert, and Janice A. Scheuneman, *The Past and Likely Future of 58 Research Libraries, 1951-1980,*[7] is most likely to reveal a parabolic increase rather than a straight-line growth.

For seating requirements, one would have to know future enrollments for undergraduates and graduates, and the size of the faculty for the various subject fields. The percentage to be seated would vary from campus to campus.

Work space needs in technical services would be closely tied to the anticipated rate of acquisition, arrearages, and special projects (such as reclassification). It would vary with the types of material expected to be acquired.

There are considerable variations in detail, method of justification, and refinement of technique followed by different universities. It is beyond the scope of this essay to review and evaluate such variations. Those searching for models or samples to guide them may find the plans prepared at or for the following ARL institutions informative and instructive: University of Alberta, University of Arizona, University of British Columbia, Harvard University, University of Illinois, Joint University, University of Kansas, University of Kentucky, M.I.T., the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, University of Oklahoma, University of North Carolina, Ohio State University, University of Minnesota, Syracuse University, Prince-

ton University, Purdue University, Southern Illinois University, and the University of Washington.

Noteworthy in these examples of master planning for university libraries are not so much the specific techniques used in quantitatively estimating future needs, but rather the configurations of library service envisaged for the future.

The controversy of centralization *versus* decentralization is still unresolved on many a campus, with librarians tending to favor maximum feasible centralization in order to provide improved and more sophisticated machine-based services, to encourage and facilitate the interdisciplinary approach in research and education, and to avoid wasting the institution's funds through excessive duplication of materials and excessive service points that must be manned for increasingly long hours of opening. In some cases, campus geography makes branch libraries unavoidable, of course; but there is an increasing recognition of the inefficiency resulting from excessive dispersion of library collections because of the extra labor it imposes on those research workers and students who need to use more than one branch library. The faculty member requiring only the use of a single library in a narrow subject specialty will become a rarity. One Harvard professor of sociology reported that he had used fifteen different units of the Harvard Library's "coordinated system."

Only a few campuses have achieved substantial centralization. Examples are Johns Hopkins, Iowa State, Michigan State, Oklahoma State, Southern Illinois, and Tulane.

Whether a degree of centralization is achievable depends on the size of the campus, although less so if frequent bus transportation is available at all hours on a large campus and if parking facilities are adequate. Some of the emerging large universities of the future, such as Northern Illinois University, may attempt centralization. Once departmental libraries become established, as at such large universities as Michigan, Ohio State, University of California (Berkeley), UCLA, University of Washington, Yale, Harvard, etc., it becomes exceedingly difficult to consolidate them in the face of faculty resistance. For instance, a consolidated central science library had been considered at Stanford University, but plans are reported to have been shelved.

A more realistic possibility than centralization is what, at the University of North Carolina, has been termed "planned decentralization" in contrast to "expedient decentralization." Planned decentralization

means the establishment of large area libraries serving the subject disciplines or schools located within a given area. Such multi-disciplinary libraries have also been referred to as "cluster libraries." It would obviously be better if a campus would group its instructional buildings by subjects that are broadly related (physical sciences, biomedical sciences, social sciences, humanities); campus planners attempt such groupings but have not always succeeded because they came to the scene too late. In a letter to this writer,[8] Chief Librarian Robert H. Blackburn, of the University of Toronto, put it succinctly: "If we could start from scratch, to build a complex university of 25,000 students, I should try first of all to get the teaching divisions clustered in three or four groups, each group centered on a large subject division of the centrally administered library system." He feels that "a single large central library becomes too unwieldy and inflexible and distant to provide what is needed, and a large number of small departmental libraries do not add up to anything useful." The trouble is that most universities cannot start from scratch and are not prepared or able to undertake massive relocations of academic facilities. A very large central campus library of, say, a million square feet gross, may or may not be an unwieldly monstrosity, depending on outside transportation facilities, parking, ample vertical transportation inside, adaptability, etc. Of course, such a central library would have to be supplemented by duplicate working collections near classrooms, laboratories, and offices.

A few general observations and comments may be in order on the various segments of the library systems in existence or planned for.

The *central research library* remains the focal point of the library system. In many cases, however, it is being restricted to the humanities and social sciences. It is unusual to find humanities housed separately from the social sciences as is planned at Yale University.

The *undergraduate library* concept has found wide appeal. At least forty ARL libraries operate undergraduate libraries, are about to open one, have one under construction, or are planning or considering one in the future. In only a few instances is there outright rejection of the idea, e.g., at Northwestern University, but even there the idea of a non-circulating "core library," a duplicate collection of 50,000 titles (but without reference tools or periodicals) incorporates much of the undergraduate library concept. The same can be said for the planned very large "intensive-use" collection planned at Yale Uni-

versity. The ideal location of an undergraduate library is somewhat controversial, with a central location near, or in the same building with, the central research library a distinct favorite. Three ARL libraries (University of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania State University, and Ohio State University) expect to have their undergraduate library services in three separate locations on their respective campuses; such dispersion is understandable on a large campus, but for budget reasons it is likely to result in much smaller collections being available in any one of the three locations.

The idea of a combined or consolidated *science library* has won wider acceptance than one would have expected a few years ago. The health sciences are usually separately provided for and may be found combined with biological sciences into a biomedical library (e.g., at UCLA). A division into a physical sciences and technology part and a biological sciences part also is planned or proposed in a few instances. Chemistry and mathematics are two disciplines that tend most to resist consolidation with the other sciences. There are still relatively few consolidated science libraries in actual operation, among them: a physical science library at the University of California, Davis, with a biological science library planned, science library services at Florida State University, at the University of Georgia, at Wayne State University, and a physical science library at Yale University. At least twenty-three science libraries are in the planning or consideration stage. On some very large campuses, a combined science library (e.g., at the University of California at Berkeley or at Indiana University) is considered impossible because of the wide geographic dispersion of science departments, but on new or developing campuses the idea of combining the science library collections deserves encouragement since the resulting services, many of which will be machine-based in the future, are likely to be far superior to those currently available in small departmental libraries. At the University of Massachusetts, a physical sciences library is under construction, and a biological sciences library is planned.

The *storage library* concept also seems to be spreading. Storage is unpopular with the faculty, but several libraries were forced into storage situations due to delays in planned building expansion. Converting an outmoded library into a storage library is occasionally suggested (the University of Arizona is an example). Existing storage libraries, e.g., at the University of Michigan (400,000 volumes, two

miles away), and at the University of California (400,000 volumes, twelve miles away), have proved to be useful, but storage placed closer to the main campus would be more desirable. Harvard University stores some overflow in the New England Deposit Library. The University of Texas also has a deposit library. The desirability or necessity of storage is touched upon in 12 of the documents received. At Princeton University, for instance, removal of 25 percent of the collection to storage is considered essential for bringing about relief from space shortage.

Technical services (acquisitions and cataloging staffs) have traditionally been housed in the main library and preferably near the public catalog. With space on the central campus becoming increasingly scarce and expensive, it comes as no surprise that the idea should occur to campus space planners to find less expensive space at some distance for technical services. The idea has been tried at the University of Toronto where technical services have been one and a half miles away for five years as a temporary unavoidable expedient. According to Chief Librarian Robert H. Blackburn, it "has not proved as disastrous as originally predicted, but is unhandy enough that we plan to centralize them again in the new building." The University of Michigan has a $2.3 million technical services building on its priority list of capital expenditures; the building is expected to be located some distance from the main campus. Another large university library expects to look into the possibility of removing technical services from its main building. Such relocations may increase operating cost and lower staff morale, but on many a crowded campus there may be no alternative.

A separate *rare book and special collections library* is found on a few campuses and is generally considered desirable, especially if a donor can be attracted, as has been done at Harvard, Yale and Indiana University.

Where there are large dormitory or residence hall complexes, a need is felt for a moderately-sized undergraduate *dormitory library* nearby to encourage liberal education through readily accessible reading materials. However, the placement of the main undergraduate library near dormitories is generally not recommended.

Underground construction to create additional central space is proposed in a few instances (e.g., Harvard, Yale, University of Illinois,

Johns Hopkins). The question of whether such construction is more expensive or not is still in the debating stage among architects, but on most campuses cost will be less of a decisive factor than the need for expansion in a given location and psychological considerations.

Unsupervised study halls without books outside of libraries, as a way of relieving library space needs, do not seem to find much favor, except possibly near dormitories. The justification of library seating used by students reading their own books rather than library books is a moot question. At the University of Minnesota, a strong case was presented to justify such use of library space on psychological grounds because of the quiet environment associated with book resources. The economic implications of such use have not been given much attention.

The incorporation of *audio visual and automated dial access facilities* ("learning resources") into libraries has not received as much emphasis in planning studies of ARL universities as one might have expected. At some libraries built in the past (e.g., Purdue University, Southern Illinois University), the multi-media approach is evident, but this aspect is not too prominently reflected in planning studies.

One of the questions addressed to directors of university libraries related to a possible ideal pattern. Herman Fussler, of the University of Chicago, commented that "the inability to transfer such a concept to an existing institutional environment makes the exercise probably of relatively little benefit." Nevertheless, certain elements of an ideal pattern may be worth listing. Among them, expressed in composite statements, are the following:

1) As much centralization as is logically feasible plus decentralized units in largest possible staffed segments. Controlled decentralization.

2) Consolidation of science branch libraries into a single library to be kept open twenty-four hours a day. The collection should contain what scientists actually need. Personalized services by library specialists with science backgrounds. Computer linkages and other machinery.

3) Holdings of small current-awareness working collections near faculty offices, duplicated in the main library if the institution can afford the expense. Not to be limited to a few sciences. Opposition to full-scale, non-duplicated branch libraries, except medicine, law, and a few other professional fields.

4) Compact storage for infrequently used materials if storage decisions can be made almost automatically and correctly so as to avoid too many returns.

5) Separate service to undergraduates, preferably in the main library or nearby. Long hours of opening.

6) Separate service to each graduate department or program, in the main library.

7) Duplicate residence hall libraries, on a large campus, each containing a selection of what can also be found in the central undergraduate library.

8) Readier access to regional and national collections through machine-based interinstitutional cooperative schemes, eventually resulting in limiting the size of collections on individual campuses.

9) Greater attention to the multi-media approach.

10) Campus-wide quick delivery of library books to faculty departments, with quick, sure access to central records.

11) An interlinking rapid-transit system between libraries.

12) Campus planning to aim for subject groupings of instructional buildings, so that area libraries can serve broad subjects. (Applicable to new and developing campuses.)

Some institutions may have put off planning in the expectation that the new technology will somehow solve the space problem of libraries. Yet the consensus seems to be that, for the next decade at least, no great help can be expected as far as space is concerned, from microreduction, computer applications, cooperative networks, and facsimile transmission.

Too often, needs appear before facilities are available. The motto for planning should be, as University Librarian Jerrold Orne wrote in his annual report for 1961-62 at the University of North Carolina: ". . . facilities must precede the need, or very serious consequences follow."[9]

References

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3. Gores, Harold B., *In* Eurich, ed. *Campus 1980; The Shape of American Education, ibid.*, p. 290.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

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9. Orne, Jerrold. *Annual Report, 1961-62.* University of North Carolina, p. 9.