Shifting Borders: Changes in the Scholarly Landscape and Integration of Area Studies Libraries to Accomplish New Service Goals in an Academic Library

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In 2012, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library formed the International and Area Studies (IAS) Library as a part of the library-wide New Service Model (NSM) program's approach to librarianship (as described by Jacoby & Searing in Chapter 1) that emphasizes a deepened commitment to research services that aim to better coordinate and collaborate on patron-focused services. The NSM shift created, for the first time at Illinois, one library that combined the librarians, services, and collecting responsibilities representing African Studies; East Asian Studies; European Union Studies; Global Studies; Latin American and Caribbean Studies; Middle East and North African Studies; Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies; and South Asian Studies. Through the NSM merger, semiautonomous libraries, reading rooms, and units formed a singular IAS Library. One of the principle challenges of the consolidations was to ensure that the close working relationship among area studies faculty and the library could be maintained, if not enhanced, through a new model of service.

As this chapter describes, the creation of the IAS Library was perceived in various ways by librarians, teaching faculty, students, and staff. For some, it was an economical means to integrate important collections and expertise into the library and campus. For others, it represented a sudden erosion of autonomy and retreat from area studies' strengths developed over decades in partnership with US Department of Education Title VI-funded area studies centers and faculty leaders. As the history of area studies librarianship and contemporary views on the new library reveal, these changes form a distinct pattern of evolution through which a

focus on acquiring and building vast area studies collections has transitioned toward a greater emphasis on service and access. This transition over the past half-century shows the library instituting, on a continuing basis, new models of practice ranging from the current NSM to holistic librarianship in an effort to bring expertise to patrons and better facilitate research and teaching. Within this period, area studies has undergone consistent consolidation, change, and reformation as both librarianship and area studies have evolved and changed, responding to Cold War and post-Cold War research imperatives, creating increasingly broad networks of operation, and adjusting to changes in technology and practice that make area studies both more ubiquitous and further refined.

Evolution of Area Studies Librarianship at Illinois

Area Studies Collections Emerge

Although the library had been collecting foreign language materials for decades, the Cold War fueled an increasing emphasis and need for knowledge from across the globe. Programs such as PL 480, the Farmington Plan, and Title VI provided both funding and legitimacy to building collections in non-Western languages (Lenkart, Teper, Thacker, & Witt, 2014). By the mid-1960s, the rate of collecting foreign language materials began to impact the library, and in 1965 the Special Languages Department emerged to solve "problems arising from the Library's accelerated activity in the development of non-western language collections" (Miller, 1965). At the time, non-Western languages were a function of technical services and had little to no outward facing service structure. Reports on the special languages focused on cataloging output, purchases, and growing backlogs of uncataloged materials.

As the special language collections continued to grow, so did the need for services and space for users. Initially, the Special Languages Department included Slavic, Africana, and Asian collections and later split apart to form a distinct Slavic Library and a South and West Asian Library. By 1973, the need for enhanced and specialized services and space began to gain leverage within the library and campus administration. Ironically, it is also at this time that funding for area studies collections diminished with the end of the Farmington Plan and decreased federal funding (University of Illinois, 1973). At this time, the Slavic Summer Research Laboratory began to attract scholars from across the nation to use the collection and work with librarians, becoming a "major national resource" that developed into the Slavic Reference Service (University of Illinois, 1976).

The need for space, services, and scholars drove further change within the Special Languages Department. By the late 1970s the creation of an East Asian Library became one of the library's priorities. As the university librarian, Robert Downs, noted in his annual letter to the university president, "the Asian Libraries, in effect two libraries, one for South Asia and one for East Asia, really have no adequate library. Most of their research collections are housed either in storage in the main stacks or in the Law Library basement and many have to be retrieved by messenger, a very poor way of providing library service" (University of Illinois, 1977, p. 1). By 1979, the East Asian Library was open, and the Area and Special Studies Bibliographers Council formed to "promote coordination among area studies" (Gorman to H. Atkinson, October 11, 1979). The council included African, Asian, Latin American, and Slavic plus Afro-American and Women's Studies. The initial charge focused upon the essential need to have public service representation for area studies based upon the fact that the subjects had a well-defined clientele and public

service activities that overlapped with departmental libraries (Gorman to H. Atkinson, October 11, 1979). After two years, the council reorganized again to include "all assistant directors in Public Services" in order to increase communications from other administrative bodies in the library (University of Illinois, 1981).

Holistic Librarianship

In early 1984, the university librarian, Hugh Atkinson, instituted a new model for librarianship that aimed to bring the subject expertise of catalogers and acquisitions specialists into public service areas. Known as holistic librarianship, this change sought to break down barriers to service and expertise presented by divides between public and technical services (Ognar, 2003). Instituted as a top-down administrative initiative, holistic librarianship moved technical service librarians and functions into departmental libraries. Within the library, this was a controversial move. In a memo to the university librarian, the director of general services complained bitterly about the changes and the manner by which they were implemented without consultation or notice to librarians and unit administrators (Gorman to H. Atkinson, January 30, 1984).

The move to holistic librarianship impacted the area studies units variously. For some, such as the Slavic Library, the change had little impact since technical and public service staff had been integrated and in collaboration since the beginning of the Special Languages Department. The Africana bibliographer, however, was moved from a technical services unit to Central Reference. Other librarians, who operated in small service oriented units, added technical services to their professional profiles. In both cases, the organizational shifts were viewed as disruptive. As a member of a one-person area studies unit noted in an appeal for space and resources for

cataloging, "Now that I am a holistic librarian, I am expected to do original cataloging" (Stafford to D. Montanelli, April 3, 1984).

Although the implementation of holistic librarianship was controversial, the practice continued a trend toward emphasizing services and access to collections that impacted the University Library as it moved toward the new service model of the 21st century.

Role of Faculty and Centers

During this period of rapid area studies development, faculty and area studies centers played an important role in supporting and encouraging the creation of area studies collections. Beginning with a federally funded center focused on Russian studies, faculty leaders from across campus served as outside advocates and partners in developing what would become nationally prominent collections in a short period of time. This close partnership between centers and the library created a symbiotic relationship through which the library's strength helped to secure outside funding to support area studies on campus. The area centers then leveraged grant support to lobby for additional library funding to strengthen and staff the area studies libraries. This relationship is exemplified in a memo from the director of the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center to the university librarian in 1987:

> As you know, the Latin American Library is one of the main assets of the Center, and its continued growth and expansion are very important to us . . . We sincerely hope that in the near future further funding for staff and acquisitions will be made available from library sources, and as in the past, the Center will continue to seek support for

acquisitions to maintain our efforts to enhance the Latin American Library. (Mayer to H.

Atkinson, August 28, 1985)

Twenty years later, this reciprocal relationship between the area studies centers and "their"

libraries continued. As a result of this strong relationship, the library needed to consider the

perceptions of area studies faculty as much as the evolving research needs of the campus as it

attempted to strengthen services and collections.

International and Area Studies New Service Model

On April 21, 2008, the University Library published a final report of the Budget Group Plus, a

committee that advised the university librarian on priorities, directions for new service models,

and final recommendations on funding. This committee was comprised of senior library

administrators and included the university librarian. The series of official documents and

directives attached to this final report provided the administrative rationale for the transformative

program known as the "New Service Model."

Among the 25 proposals listed in this final report, one focused on area studies services and

collections at the University Library, calling for the consolidation of area studies public service

programs into a single unit. The rationale behind this proposal, according to the Budget Group

Plus, was

> the model of narrowly-defined Library units was economically unsustainable, and the
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> result was a fragmented program of Library service and support. There were also ongoing
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> concerns about the need for coordinated and long-term approaches to issues related to the

acquisition and timely processing of materials meant to support academic programs in the area studies. (University of Illinois, 2008b, p. 21)

Moreover, the University Library administration issued a supplemental statement to this report, *Challenge, Change, and the Service Imperative*, which highlighted the changes taking place within higher education and the environment in which academic libraries functioned:

> Whether the measure is the number of degree programs offered, the changes internal to one or more disciplines, or the movement toward increasingly interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to the scholarly, it is clear that the departmental library service model is not sustainable in its current form. Each discipline cannot have its own physical library, and the handpicked collections housed in physical libraries cannot keep pace with changes to individual disciplines. (University of Illinois, 2008a, p. 3)

These changes in academia, particularly for the area studies, demanded another reexamination of service points, management of collections, and more importantly, how these service points were meeting the needs of diverse (multilingual) interdisciplinary academic communities in a global context. To address these systemic changes in area studies collections and services, the University Library administration initiated the NSM for area studies.

International and Area Studies New Service Model Team

The International and Area Studies New Service Model (IAS NSM) Team consisted of seven library faculty members, two teaching faculty members from the area studies centers, one administrative liaison in the form of the associate university librarian for services, one employee

from the civil service staff, and one academic professional. According to the team's final report, *Recommendations: International and Area Studies New Service Model Team Report*, the IAS NSM Team conducted from December 2008–March 2009 "wide-ranging discussions from many perspectives and an intensive series of meetings," which involved affiliated area studies centers, university administrators, teaching faculty, and library staff from the Area Studies Division (University of Illinois, 2009, p. 15). These deliberations produced multiple documents, which focused on reference and technical services, proposed locations and space allocation and, importantly, analyzed library usage. Although these usage analyses of libraries did not collect student preferences, the data collected from the library usage survey, gate counts, and reference statistics allowed the IAS NSM Team to compile a list, titled "New Service Models Assumptions," for area studies collections and services, which included the following:

- Library service points must be consolidated.

- There will be no new resources for staff or collections in the future.

- We must make the best use of library financial and staff resources.

- Library must think broadly about the entire campus and its international needs.

    (University of Illinois, 2008c)

Because the planning stage involved staff, library space, and entrenched departmental identities, the IAS NSM Team encountered internal and external challenges. One of the team members interviewed for this chapter recalled the difficulty of forging a consensus around the proposed set of assumptions for the IAS-wide NSM. According to this team member, the consensus building process aimed to reassure affiliated area studies faculty that the service portfolio and identity of

subject specialists, technical service staff, and collection strengths would continue. Moreover, this team member noted that the team looked at the organization and administration of area studies at 16 other academic libraries. With the contributions of two teaching (non-library) faculty members, the IAS NSM Team concluded in its final report that the unit have a single unit head and each of the affiliated international and area studies programs and centers at the University of Illinois have a designated service liaison (University of Illinois, 2009).

International and Area Studies Implementation Team

To address the next stage in the NSM process, the University Library administration formed the implementation team for the proposed new unit, the IAS Library. According to the *International and Area Studies Implementation Team Final Report*, the team consisted of eight teaching faculty from affiliated centers and departments, six library faculty members, one administrative liaison (associate university librarian for collections), and one staff member from library civil service (University of Illinois, 2010, p. 15). Since the team was tasked with forming a new library, we interviewed the following individuals to gain their insights into the process: the team leader, the administrative liaison, and the NSM coordinator. The three members interviewed reflected on the changes sweeping higher education and library services in North America. At Illinois, they highlighted the differing levels of service associated with each section within area studies.

To deliberate the service structure of the proposed unit, the team leader with the help of the eight teaching faculty, formed three working groups for assessing collections and space, services, and staff. In addition, the team leader was also tasked with forming a consensus with various

stakeholders and academic communities. All three interviewees, when reflecting on the needs of area studies centers and teaching faculty, recalled the symbiotic roles of area studies centers and the University Library. In their view, this relationship is an essential component of research and innovation at the University of Illinois.

Impact and Trajectory for Area Studies and the NSM

In August of 2012, the newly formed IAS Library opened, and by December of 2012, a new permanent unit head joined the faculty to continue the NSM implementation. The consolidation of the various area studies libraries into a single entity brought about numerous changes.

One of the most important shifts occurred in the area of personnel. In this consolidation, the number of professional staff increased despite a number of retirements. The consolidation and NSM recommendations included the need for more full-time library faculty members to support areas studies and develop a baseline level of service across regional specialties. This included the end of several multi-institutional partnerships and part-time assignments. The former Asian Library experienced a deconstruction, with the major countries in the region receiving dedicated library faculty (Chinese, Korean, and Japanese studies, although the latter two are not full-time appointments for the areas). The Latin American and Caribbean Studies position moved from part-time interim to full-time tenure track. The contract work that had been occurring between Illinois and Indiana University in Middle Eastern Studies resulted in the development of a full-time Middle East and North African Studies tenure track position while the former African Studies position was rearticulated to better coordinate regional overlap. In addition the South Asian Studies librarian position that had remained unfilled for several years because of a

retirement was filled as a full-time position. Finally, the Global Studies librarian, who also oversees the European Union collections and services, became a member of the new library unit. Although this position is fully embedded in the Center for Global Studies, the change resulted in a closer working relationship that emphasizes collaboration within the unit.

Discussions with a wide range of individuals involved in the planning and implementation of the new unit provided an understanding of some shared aspects of the changes that have occurred. In addition to an increase in staff, changes in the areas of communication, services, and collections occurred.

Communication

When interviewed, individuals of the current library and teaching faculty, both inside and outside of the IAS Library, indicated a good deal of satisfaction related to improved communication between area studies specialists, library faculty, and liaison departments on the whole. Prior to consolidation, the various units met formally on a monthly basis as part of the Area Studies Division. The unit now meets twice each month in staff meetings plus one monthly division meeting, allowing for discussions and joint work on both the operational and professional issues. Moreover, under the leadership of the unit head, IAS Library has formed internal workings groups for assessing services and library-wide engagement initiatives. The result is not only more interaction with other librarians in related areas but also shared input and expertise. These meetings have been articulated as particularly helpful by those individuals who are new to the unit (personal communication, June 10, 2014). Attendance is augmented, especially at division meetings, by members of other international and traditional subject-based units in the Main

Library. This provides everyone with a broader understanding of the changes in the library and the profession and enables attendees to look beyond any narrow interests they hold in their specific regions. The IAS Library has begun to address the concept of "silos" through collaborative collection development projects that span regions, a digital archiving project that focuses on environmental NGOs around the world, and shared exhibits that focus on trans-regional themes. Despite these initiatives, more substantial work remains to be done between regions and disciplines.

Interviewees also noted the greater proximity to other area studies faculty provides for the easy sharing of information, projects, and interchange of ideas (personal communication, June 10, 2014). All librarians are not in the unit at all times with one position split between libraries and one faculty member embedded in one of the campus's Title VI National Resource Centers, but ample opportunities for casual conversation encourage collegiality and informal information sharing. These conversations have resulted in collaboration on several exhibits and events as well as research projects.

Service

The rapid growth of vernacular and area studies research resources in the form of indexing/full-text databases, microfilm/microfiche/digital collections, and an increase in use of vernacular language materials via interlibrary loan services required a new service realignment. Building on the Slavic Reference Service (SRS) model, the IAS NSM Team envisioned a service that incorporated these emerging resources with innovative research services for students, faculty, and staff. The SRS is an internationally known resource for scholars in the field of Slavic, East

European, and Eurasian studies. Prior to the initiation of the NSM processes, other area studies libraries had been approached to work on expanding the services of this sub-unit to other language areas. Although this move was resisted at first, leveraging resources from one of the Title VI centers enabled the expansion of the SRS model to include bibliographic tools to support access to materials in Turkish, Persian, and Arabic. The NSM work provided the basis for the development of a full-time international reference librarian position to support and expand these services into other regions and languages.

One of the surprising results of the original survey that was presented to the Title VI Area Centers was the realization that the teaching faculty really did not know about the services that were available to them, including a variety of instruction resources such as webpages developed specifically for their classes. It is difficult to compare statistics between the current and previous models, but it is clear that instructional services have greatly increased with related area studies courses under the NSM. In addition, a new consolidated website for the IAS Library provides access to information regarding reference, instructional services, and related services within the unit. The site, which was first pulled together based upon the old models of service delivery, is currently being revised employing user-focused development tools that include teaching faculty and students in the process.

In addition to services for local scholars and students, the architects of the IAS Library wanted a reliable platform to support interlibrary loan requests for vernacular language materials and a growing number of visiting scholars. Discussions with library faculty who are not members of the IAS Library revealed some unexpected opinions on what might be considered to be the core

of area studies libraries. Interviewees from the classroom faculty expressed a change in attitude regarding the most important aspects of librarianship in this area. The concept of service was articulated as outweighing the depth of collections in respective area studies. Scholars displayed a growing interest in what the librarians can do for them regarding instruction, liaison activities, and support for new digitization projects (personal communication, June 13, 2014). This may, in fact, not be related to area studies but reflective of a more broad-based concept of what the University Library can provide. With the adoption of new digital technologies, scholars engage physical collections much differently than even a few years ago. No longer working primarily within the library, classroom faculty reported being less exposed to the materials in their physically organized form. This is evident in faculty attitudes regarding the consolidation of area studies libraries. A large concern of the consolidation was impact to access that would be posed by the integration of many non-Western language materials into the Main Stacks. For at least one interviewee, this original concern about closing the "Asian Stacks" was just about forgotten with new enthusiasm for accessing the library's increasing digital collections (personal communication, June 13, 2014). These changes are reflections of the way in which electronic delivery of services has changed both area studies and the profession as a whole.

Collections

The divergent positions of the individuals interviewed provide a variety of perceptions related to the collections and how they may change or are changing in the new environment. One individual spent some time talking about "legacy" collections and the importance of maintaining and enriching these (personal communication, June 13, 2014). The University Library has long

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recognized that it is impossible to collect everything in any given field. As a result, the strategy is to support collections that are important for scholars at Illinois, particularly unique, or those that are assessed as nationally outstanding. The latter is true of the Slavic, East European, and Eurasian collection as well as the Latin American and Caribbean collection, which both compare extremely well against other holdings in the US. There is little doubt that the University Library will continue to provide strong budgetary support for these areas in the future as long as it is financially possible.

One teaching faculty member had originally felt lack of support for collections in his area; after the changes, particularly with the addition of a full-time library faculty member, he now describes IAS Library work as being on the "vanguard of digitization," providing quick access to many important works. Primarily, his visits to the physical collection occur only when he is showing them to his students or a visiting scholar. He added that he regularly introduces scholars to the librarian for his area when they are on such tours (personal communication, June 13, 2014).

Another library faculty interviewee, who is new to the IAS unit, remarked about concerns related to the concept of unique collections and posed questions about what makes an item or a collection unique and how to best leverage scarce funds to continue developing the collection. Working within a wider unit, however, this librarian expressed appreciation for additional resources, strategies, and colleagues to draw upon to develop strong and unique collections (personal communication, June 10, 2014).

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The NSM process also provided additional funds to the unit for strategic purchases. These funds, which supplement many of the losses of federal support received through Title VI Centers, have allowed area studies libraries to collaborate in new ways. For example, a centralized budget pool enables smaller collecting areas to develop new strengths as has been the case for a growing South Asian comic book collection. Further, subject specialists are able to use these strategic funds to partner in developing collections focused on groups and populations missed in regional collections. One example is the collaboration between Middle East, Central Asian, and South Asian subject specialists to jointly develop collections focused on stateless minorities.

Currently, the biggest change to collection development for most of the former units is the requirement for purchases to be coordinated with the acquisitions department, a further retreat from the holistic librarianship model of the 1980s. This change to the purchase of materials is difficult for individuals who had traditionally done ordering independent of the main acquisitions unit, but it is having positive impacts on the control of expenditures while providing newer members of the unit with a clear procedure for acquiring new materials. In addition, the approach helps to expose systemic technical service needs to support non-Roman languages that were previously perceived as isolated within small units.

Conclusion

As the NSM program continues to be implemented, it is clear that the changes instituted by the library to bring the area studies units together are historically significant and have already begun to impact the manner by which these collections are developed, organized, and used. The unique

aspects of area studies—multidisciplinarity and language focus—had set them apart from other specializations in the library and in the classroom. This in many ways disengaged these units from the broader view of the university and its library. Internationalization initiatives on campus and the engagement of faculty and students in understanding global and transnational phenomena require a more interdisciplinary approach. Universities, policy makers, and individuals everywhere are beginning to recognize that answers to global problems based upon singular approaches will not find success. The NSM for area studies attempts to provide a unifying approach of making library expertise available from various regions to students and faculty across campus. The shared space, collections, and actions of the new IAS Library are just a beginning. As noted by both librarians and faculty, the new unit opens avenues for collaboration while promoting the means to access knowledge critical for research and understanding amidst global patterns in problem solving. These research problems require information from and about the world in both granular and broad form. The opportunities provided through the new unit move the provision of services to the fore. One member of the library faculty who is not part of the unit indicated that with the new, welcoming space; integrated approach; and simplified management, new energy was being brought to the space that will provide new opportunities to attract people with innovative projects and ideas (personal communication, June 18, 2014).

In addition, the NSM implementation demonstrates a new model for affecting organizational change within the University Library. Compared to the ad hoc development of discrete and often opposed area studies units based upon trends in federal funding and outside support from faculty, the NSM places each of the area studies within a unifying organizational context that strives to

focus resources and expertise on developing services and new modes of access to collections that have traditionally been difficult to use and access.

Compared to the implementation of holistic librarianship, which was top-down, the NSM program at Illinois exemplifies new models of shared governance through which multiple stake holders from within the library and the academic community work together to articulate a new vision for service across the library and within a new unit. Although not all parties agreed that change was necessary or even a positive step, librarians, faculty, and staff with various stakes in the outcomes participated actively in all aspects of the process.

Overall, the NSM for area studies has succeeded in expanding the relevance of regional and linguistic expertise while nurturing the important symbiotic relationship shared by the area centers and the library. As the NSM progresses and continues to include many stakeholders and perspectives, the library expects to see growth in the use of these specialized services and collections. Further, the area studies centers see potential to foster new cross-campus and interinstitutional partnerships that revolve around this new shared space and concept of area studies. Perhaps the resultant change due to the NSM progress was best articulated by one library faculty member who indicated, "I cannot believe we have done anything but gain from it" (personal communication, June 18, 2014).

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