

# Howard University Libraries

## Strategic Plan for the Main Library Group

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### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Howard University Libraries system, like the University itself, is engaged in a strategic planning process that will help it carry its mission efficiently and effectively in a period of continual change and financial constraints.

Since the mid-nineties, the Library System has been challenged by several transformational forces: The ever-growing expansion of research resources beyond traditional materials to include electronic text, datasets, multimedia; newer technologies to support these types of materials; the demand of expanding academic programs; the demands of faculty and students for new services; the requirements for new sets of competencies required by the environment.

At the same time the materials budgets have been flat and further constrained by the annual rate of increased in cost of materials which significantly exceeded that of inflation. The library has also lost a number of critical positions through budget cuts, while a hiring freeze and non-competitive salaries for professional positions have constrained staff renewal and replacement.

Budget cuts and loss of positions, coupled with an inflationary cost of library materials at 6-8% have caused a steady decline in the Library System's ranking in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).

Notwithstanding these challenges, the April 2005 Customer Satisfaction Survey, conducted by the Main Library Group (Founders/UGL, Architecture, Business, Divinity and Social Work) rated the Library services favorably: 40% excellent; 23% Above Average; 26% Good; and only 11% Poor to Fair. This is reflective of the high service quality provided by our staff, in particular their accessibility, information skills, and helpfulness, as well as the availability of resources. The 656 survey respondents included ten faculty members, seven of whom rated library services as excellent.

In May 2005, a Library Strategic Planning conference, which included 33 library employees representing the professional and support staff of the Main Library, convened for a two-day review and planning retreat. The meeting was facilitated by Mr. Dean Sirjue, Assistant Dean for Administration, Howard University School of Business, in collaboration with Ms. Lucille Smiley, Assistant Director for Business Library and Staff Development.

We discussed the forces shaping the current environment; reviewed and revised the library's existing statements for vision, mission, and values/beliefs; conducted a SWOT analysis; made recommendations for library goals and strategic directions for the next five years; and identified performance indicators for each strategic direction.

The results of the SWOT analysis reflect the impact of the transformational forces and the library's staffing and budgetary constraints, and consequently its ability to deliver the desired highest level of service quality.

With the budget remaining flat over the next three years, the Library will focus on the following priorities:

1. Innovation—applying creative ways to improve support to teaching and learning, through collaborative opportunities among library staff and with faculty and related campus units.
2. Assessment—use assessment processes to ensure library effectiveness.
3. Staff renewal—rethinking current practices and organization; realignment with user needs and to address critical deficiencies and vulnerabilities.
4. Improving quality assurance—clearance/billing library patrons of all types; patron records updates and quality control; online equipment inventory control; and fee-based printing/photocopying.
5. Closing gaps in technological and physical infrastructure—improving network speed and security; full implementation of Sterling Millennium functionalities; proactive application of IT so it can drive the library, rather than library needs driving systems.
6. Strengthening the Library's fiscal position—the regular budget is insufficient, which affects all areas of the Library.
7. Implementing strategies to communicate more effectively internally and externally.

## **ACTION PLAN**

### **GOAL 1 – TO STRENGTHEN LIBRARY SUPPORT FOR LEARNING, SCHOLARSHIP AND SERVICE**

#### *Strategic Direction 1a: Improve Access to Resources and Services*

##### *Performance Indicators:*

1. High quality (accuracy, completeness, usability, presentation, etc.) of library-generated data (TS; units creating/maintaining electronic records, including Web pages – Continually)
2. High quality (accuracy, completeness, usability, currency, presentation, etc.) of library Web pages – Continually)
3. Prompt delivery of ILL articles via e-mail or fax (Access Services – December 2005)
4. Access to digital copies for at least 50% of articles placed on Reserve by instructors in UGL and respective branch libraries (Managers of depts. maintaining Reserves, Systems Analyst, April 2006)
5. Review of serial titles subscriptions with the faculty to reflect needs and align with available funds (TS; bibliographers; faculty – October 2005)
6. Linking capabilities for e-content--URL linker application, installed and fully operational (Assoc Dir/IRRS; Product review & implementation team: TS, Systems, IRRS – April 2006)
7. Implement fully remaining Millennium functionalities (Systems; Access Services; Branch Librarians; TS – December 2007)
8. Refer to Performance Indicators for Library Outcomes Assessment Plan, Objectives 1a, 1b, 1c; and 4a

***Strategic Direction 1b: Strengthen Programs for Information Empowerment for Life-Long Learning***

***Performance Indicators:***

1. Refer to Performance Indicators for Library Outcomes Assessment Plan, Objectives 2b, 2c, 2d
2. Disseminate, through regular postings on the Intranet, information about library operations as well as announcements of on-campus activities and programs in which library is involved. (GASD – Spring 2006, daily)
3. High learning outcomes scores from four workshops for professional and support staff to align needs-capabilities (Assist Dir/Staff Development; Department Heads – Annually)

***Strategic Direction 1c: Position the Library as a Trans-Institutional Center for Academic Life.***

***Performance Indicators:***

1. Present two workshops in partnership with CETLA and the Graduate School to promote teaching & research (Assoc Dir/IRRS, Reference – Annually)
2. Promote at least one event (e.g., BHM, faculty forum, book talk, film discussion series) in partnership with individuals, organizations, and academic departments (Assoc Dir/IRRS; Reference Librarians; Development Officer – Annually)
3. Produce the Campus Virtual Tour (Director & campus-wide VT Task Force – August 2005)
4. Install and test a campus image database and retrieval system (Curator of Art & Architecture; Media Center; Systems Analyst, Director; TS; HU Webmaster – May 2006)
5. Update the Faculty Authors Database (Direction; bibliographers; Development Officer; Assoc Dir/IRRS – Continually)
6. Prepare for a successful Annual Faculty Authors Appreciation Day event (Development Officer; Director; Systems Analyst)
7. Ready retrieval of articles on “Women Studies” in HU Faculty Authors Database (Assoc Dir/IRRS; SW Librarian; Dr. Florence Bonner et al; Director – March 2006)

***Strategic Direction 1d: Improve Physical Facilities***

***Performance Indicators:***

1. Status of application to designate the Founders Library as a National Historic Landmark (Director; Development Officer – December 2005)
2. Report/follow-up on conditions of library premises requiring action (GASD; Branch Libraries – Daily)
3. Recover UGL space occupied by Upward Bound and furnish this space to accommodate the African American Core Collection (GASD; Director; Access Services – December 2006)
4. Install new drinking fountains in Founders and UGL (GASD; Access Services; Director; PFM – December 2005)
5. Repair Founders roof to stop water leaks permanently; repair damaged walls and ceilings (GASD; Access Services; Director; PFM – December 2005)
6. Refer to Performance Indicators for Library Outcomes Assessment Plan, Objective 3

**GOAL 2 – TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE LIBRARY EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH STRATEGIC PLANNING AND OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

***Strategic Direction 2a: Improve Library Effectiveness through Strategic Planning and Outcomes Assessment.***

***Performance Indicators:***

1. Implement the Library's Outcomes Assessment Plan (Director; Department Managers – Continually)

***Strategic Direction 2b: Enhance Staff Competencies***

***Performance Indicators:***

1. Staff complete successfully (as measured by learning outcomes) two library related educational opportunities per year to further professional development, in addition to any Leadership Academy courses (Assist Dir/Staff Development; Department Heads, Systems Analyst – Annually)

***Strategic Direction 2c: Improve Effectiveness of the IT Infrastructure***

***Performance Indicators:***

1. Relocate Sterling server to the Data Center in ISAS, fully tested and operational (Systems Administrator; ISAS – Spring 2006)
2. Configure redirect and Proxy servers to new server's IP (Systems Administrator; ISAS; TS – Spring 2006)
3. Improve the effectiveness/conductivity of Founders/UGL local area network (Systems Administrator; ISAS – Spring 2006)
4. Upgrade Millennium Server Hardware/Software to Release 2005 of Innovative Interfaces operational (Systems Administrator; ISAS – Fall 2005)
5. Schedule Millennium training with iii for all library staff operational (Systems Administrator; ISAS – Spring 2006)
6. Upload/download data for timely Bursar Reports and student patron record updates operational (Systems Administrator; ISAS – Continually)
7. Refer to Performance Indicators for Library Outcomes Assessment Plan, Objective 1b

***Strategic Direction 2d: Improve Financial Processes***

***Performance Indicators:***

1. Implement fee-based networked printing (Director; GASD – Fall 2006)
2. Demonstrate cost-effectiveness and efficiency in all purchases and funded projects (Director; Department Heads; GASD – Continually)
3. On-going implementation of policies and procedures for clearing library borrowers (Access Services; GASD – Continually)
4. Develop and test an online inventory system for continual updating of computing equipment inventory (Systems Administrator – December 2006)

***Strategic Direction 2e: Align Staffing Configurations to Changing Library Goals and Objectives***

***Performance Indicators:***

1. Produce an organization chart detailing functions for each position (Director; Department Heads; GASD – Spring 2006 and biannually)

2. Update position configurations in light of programmatic needs and requirements (Director; Department Heads – Spring 2006)

### **GOAL 3 – TO INCREASE AND ENHANCE EXTERNAL SUPPORT**

#### ***Strategic Direction 3a: Improve Support to Library Programs through External Review***

##### ***Performance Indicators:***

1. Establish a Library Board of Visitors (Director; Development Officer; Office of University Secretary; University Advancement; Development Officer; September 2005).

#### ***Strategic Direction 3b: Enhance Marketing and Public Relations to Increase Visibility On/Off-Campus***

##### ***Performance Indicators:***

1. Produce a promotional a case statement brochure for the University Libraries (Director; Development Officer – March 2006)
2. Identify and cultivate five corporate sponsors (Director; Development Officer – May 2006)
3. Complete and publish a “History of the University Libraries” (Development Officer – May 2006)
4. Publish annual reports of University Libraries (Director; Development Officer – Annually July)
5. Refer to Performance Indicators for Library Outcomes Assessment Plan, Objective 4b (Director; Development Officer – Continually)

#### ***Strategic Direction 3c: Develop Partnerships with Business and Community Entities***

##### ***Performance Indicators:***

1. Offer fee-based library services to small businesses who cannot afford to have their own library (Business; Education; Social Work Librarians – 2007)

### **GOAL 4 – TO ENHANCE NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

#### ***Strategic Direction 4a: Increase Support to Community Programs***

##### ***Performance Indicators:***

1. Number of DC area high school teachers adopting Howard Libraries’ TILT (University Library staff – May 2006)
2. Size and composition of attendance and learning outcome test for World War I film series based on instructor’s feedback (Reference Department – September 2005)
3. Number of library presentations to MS(2) classes (Assoc Dir/IRRS; Reference Librarians – Annually, June 2005-07)
4. Results of learning outcomes tests for MS(2) students (Assoc Dir/IRRS – Annually, June 2005-07)
5. MS(2) teachers’ feedback (Assoc Dir/IRRS – Annually, June 2005-07)

#### ***Strategic Direction 4b: Enhance Resource Sharing with Other Institutions***

***Performance Indicators:***

1. Number of items donated to underserved libraries in developing countries (TS – Annually)
2. Number of items donated to HBCU libraries (TS – Annually)
3. Number of gift items received (Assoc Dir/IRRS; Reference Librarians – Annually)
4. Percentage of completed ILL requests from other institutions (Access Services – Annually)

***Strategic Direction 4c: Enhance Support to Diversity Initiatives in Librarianship***

***Performance Indicators:***

1. Internships for students at local library schools (Director, Assistant/Associate Directors, Branch Librarians (Fall 2006 – Annually)
2. Active participation in ARL, CIRLA, ALA and other library organizations' diversity initiatives (Director; Librarians – Continually)

June 30, 2005-S