

Middlesex Community College Library Strategic Plan 2013-18

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Introduction

Our library begins its planning for the next five years in a time of dramatic change for libraries and the institutions they serve. The planning process lasted many months and involved many stakeholders across our institution including students, faculty, library staff and other college staff.

The goals and action items contained in this plan are a direct outcome of the work done for our program review and reflect our commitment to responding to the needs identified through that process. It will guide our work and help us to ensure that we maintain a library that is strong, vibrant and innovative, offering all those services essential to achieving the college mission.

Goal 1: Instruction

We will partner with faculty to offer instruction that enables students to become skilled in the use of information resources, integrate this instruction throughout all levels of coursework across the curriculum and ensure its effectiveness through ongoing assessment.

Action items:

- Together with the Library Instruction Team, plan and implement a program for the English Comp. 1 classes which provides online resources to allow a flipped classroom model of instruction and includes an assessment of student learning.
- Create the necessary online instructional tools including point-of-need video tutorials and research guides which will be used for the flipped classroom trial and to support all courses that do not participate in face to face library instruction. Adapt existing online tutorials for use with our students and make them available on our website to extend the reach of information literacy instruction beyond the classroom.
- Increase the number of face to face Comp. 1 classes participating in some form of library instruction to 75% in the first year, 80% in the second year and 85% in the third year.
- Experiment with offering faculty alternatives to the typical “one shot” library instruction session which would increase the time spent in active learning, i.e. multiple “short burst” sessions, or group workshops that students could be assigned to attend in the library prior to a scheduled class.
- Partner with those faculty using either face to face library instruction or our online tutorials to develop effective and streamlined assessments of student learning.
- Develop activities and materials for instruction in those FYE courses which currently include library instruction without an assignment, which will provide a more consistent and meaningful experience for those students.
- Identify and reach out to faculty teaching the general education courses supporting the written communication and critical thinking ISLOs to increase the likelihood that information literacy instruction is included.
- Offer workshops for faculty from one discipline or program each year to introduce new resources and to assist them with creating effective assignments.

Goal 2: Services

We will find effective and innovative ways to optimize the successful use of evolving information resources and support all members of the Middlesex community as a center of teaching, learning and research.

Action Items:

- Explore collaboration with the Writing Center to more fully integrate their services with ours by offering regularly scheduled drop-in homework sessions which would include both a writing tutor and a librarian to assist students with all aspects of their writing assignments.
- Discontinue the practice of charging library fines to students with overdue library materials with the exception of reserve items including textbooks. Limit charges to the replacement cost of lost materials.
- Partner with other offices on campus to provide additional support for nontraditional students through library workshops offered early in the semester to welcome them and increase their confidence in using our resources.
- Explore the possibility of offering mobile reference services where librarians go to other floors within the library or to other buildings to assist students, bringing along the mobile technology necessary to demonstrate essential information literacy skills.
- Investigate using iRoam software to allow students to place a request for assistance and receive help from a librarian any place in the library.
- Include chat reference on the library's Facebook page. Develop a process for staff to monitor this along with the current chat reference and SMS the library offers.
- Offer workshops to faculty to increase their knowledge about available resources in support of their discipline and encourage greater infusion of information literacy instruction throughout the curriculum.
- Partner with IT to develop a pilot project which brings IT staff to provide technology assistance at service points within the libraries.

Goal 3: Staffing

We will provide a level of library staffing that permits the librarians to attend meetings, develop new initiatives, collaborate with faculty, and participate more fully in campus-wide programs, and that provides coverage and budgeting to enable all library staff to engage in activities in support of their professional development.

Action Items:

- Develop a realistic staffing plan for the library which reflects the evolving scope of our responsibilities, the changing needs of our students, and increasing demands of the college which is based on a comparison of peer libraries and includes a systematic replacement of the lost full time positions with new ones in light of the ongoing expansion of our roles as educational partners.
- Work with HR to establish and implement new pay rates for part time library support staff that more clearly reflect their level of expertise and responsibility and that align more closely with those paid by other area libraries. Explore the possibilities of hiring year-round part time support staff.
- Offer appropriate opportunities for professional development to all library staff that allow them to excel in their jobs and are relevant to their positions in the library. Identify and provide training to staff members based on changes in library systems and a review of workflows within the library.
- Provide an annual retreat for all library staff members, giving them the opportunity to share ideas, discuss the unique nature of their work, provide feedback about ongoing initiatives, and help set the course of our library for the future.

Goal 4: Facilities

We will create a physical space that is comfortable, safe and accessible, that is open the hours needed to optimize use, and that fosters student learning through individual study, one to one consultation, and group collaboration.

Action Items:

- Bedford - Explore options for creating quiet and group study space within the Bedford library. Prepare a report detailing those options along with costs for the consideration of college decision makers.
- Lowell – Examine ways to maximize space for student computers and study through the use of customized furniture on all three levels of the library. Provide display furniture for the Lowell library main level that is equivalent to that used in Bedford.
- Develop a plan to test the value of having the library open additional hours. Secure funding to implement a pilot program for the fall 2013 semester to open the libraries at 7:00 am using student employees and to be open additional hours during the two weeks before finals. Base future decisions about hours on usage numbers during these trials.
- Investigate ways to transition more of our floor space to users by continuing the weeding of the reference collections in both libraries. Develop a plan for the reallocation of space as the need for reference materials diminishes and more stacks can be removed that is based on proposed new initiatives and needs for additional user space.
- Provide a more uniform and consistent look with signage that allows flexibility for changes while matching the look of the existing signs in each library.
- Explore the possibility of creating a micro-café within each library and new outdoor study areas adjacent to the libraries.

Goal 5: Collections

We will provide access to the most current, relevant, authoritative resources available to support the curriculum and to expand and enrich the educational experience for our community of users.

Action Items:

- Continue to build a collection that responds to the needs of our community and provides access to quality course-specific resources to students at the point of need by expanding the scope of online content in all formats.
- Expand immediate access to materials outside the scope of our current collections by implementing a system of on-demand purchasing of ebooks. Establish a collection of pre-selected items within our catalog that are available for purchase by the library at the time of student or faculty use.
- Develop a more strategic plan for the acquisition of textbooks for the library reserves. Work with faculty to keep these collections up to date and make them more comprehensive.
- Address the needs of new courses as they are developed by contacting the faculty members to ensure that our collection is aligned with their needs.
- Contact department chairs and program coordinators as resources continue to evolve to ensure that we continue to offer the best online resources available in support of each of their programs.
- Explore the idea of assigning some faculty members the role of selector for the library to increase their participation in collection development.
- Extend our purchasing power by participation in all appropriate opportunities to expand access to library materials offered by the state, or one of our consortia.
- Review and revise our collection development policy to ensure it reflects the changing needs of our library and the changing information environment.
- Explore the cost, workload, copyright and technical issues involved in digitizing and providing the metadata necessary to access our collection of college newspapers, yearbooks, and other materials now held in the library's supplemental archive collection.

Goal 6: Technology

We will affirm our commitment to the innovative use of technology to serve the information needs of our students and in offering students the opportunity to use new technology

Action Items:

- Provide one computer in the lower level of the Lowell library that is restricted to searching the library catalog so staff may assist students in finding materials without repeated trips upstairs to check the catalog when all student computers are in use.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Integrated Search tool now in use. Make changes in the number and type of resources included to improve its usefulness.
- Explore how best to assess the effectiveness of our current website from a usability standpoint. Make improvements based on user feedback.
- Work toward identifying the tools needed to develop and implement a more robust and intuitive web interface that will simplify access as it guides users to our online resources and services.
- Explore and implement mobile options for accessing library resources and services.
- Develop a plan to circulate iPads, eBook readers, and laptops to students.
- Increase the number of desktop computers in the Lowell library by 10 to provide an equal number to Bedford.
- Provide two student copiers in each library which are heavily used as a result of the expansion of the textbooks available on reserve.
- Explore the benefits and cost of implementing a discovery search tool to replace our current integrated database search tool to offer a simpler interface and more seamless search experience.
- Partner with IT to ensure that evolving campus infrastructure and equipment are adequate to support the needs of students accessing our online content. Work with them to compare print management systems that might be appropriate for our college and are necessary to implementing the peripherals that students are requesting in the library.

Goal 7: Outreach

We will provide innovative and interesting programs that foster a greater understanding of the library's role in student learning and greater use of the library and its resources, inspiring an increase in perceived value of the library and promoting further collaborations within our campus communities.

Action Items:

- Host a faculty authors' event each year to highlight the work of faculty based on the successful "Speaking of Writing" event held in 2012.
- Provide a welcome event for new faculty that offers an introduction to library services and covers program-specific resources that the library offers.
- Email faculty through Deans to encourage information literacy infusion. Explain all the new active learning options available for including information literacy in their courses including the flipped class, short burst sessions, and pre-class workshops.
- Communicate with FYE faculty to promote relevant activities that enhance the educational experience of their students.
- Feature faculty reviews of books and movies on display in the library by focusing on two departments each semester. Include these reviews on the library website. Feature faculty with their favorite book on library "Read" posters.
- Continue to explore new ways of reaching students by meeting them where they are, using social media to inform them about our services.
- Explore offering popcorn to students in the library during national library week.
- Offer snacks to students in the library during the study week before finals.
- Hold an eBook expo every year to demonstrate what the library has to offer, and how they may be retrieved and downloaded to the student's mobile device.
- Hold a faculty brown bag lunch to introduce new products or databases.

Goal 8: Planning and assessment

We will continually assess and update library resources and services in response to technological advances and user expectations and improve our patrons' experience by attending and responding to user feedback and statistics.

Action Items:

- Develop and implement an assessment of student learning with the library instruction team as part of the English Composition initiative. Expand the use of that assessment to other courses where applicable.
- Review and revise the current library staff organizational structure to gain efficiencies and respond to changing academic needs and evolving technologies and services.
- Create and implement a plan for ongoing assessment of student needs and satisfaction based on the findings of the program review and the actions taken as a result.
- Complete a survey of faculty and staff to measure satisfaction and identify gaps in service expectations.