

LIBRARY ISSUES

BRIEFINGS FOR FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS

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Capacity Building: Academic Libraries as Campus Partners

By Irene Herold

What is your job?" Many people, when asked this question, would begin to respond with their position responsibilities. Tim Caboni, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs at the University of Kansas, said when he first arrived on campus he would ask people in different areas this question, but as soon as they started listing their job responsibilities, he would immediately stop them and ask again, "what is your job?"¹ This would be reiterated until the unit focused on the common outcome, which is to graduate educated students, and in the library's case not only to graduate educated students, but also to graduate excellent researchers. This is every unit in the academic enterprises' job. Therefore, the library (and all other units) need to be involved in "institutional capacity building"—activities that improve their ability to achieve and sustain their mission; activities that not only raise funds but that can enhance and enlarge the role and influence of the library on campus

So often a typical response to tight budget times is to solicit project-based and on-going support to meet small renovations and increasing material cost needs. Academic libraries are no exception, but without an alumni base since students do not graduate from the library, and a wide-spread scope of subject areas to support, it is sometimes challenging to attract donors who are focused on supporting the library. What libraries have typically been successful in achieving is support for their unique campus function in preserving our cultural heritage for future scholars, and therefore attract many gifts-in-kind from donors to create and enhance special collections. While the result of these efforts are often

touted by the campus and certainly contribute to development goals, they are not often thought of as enhancing the overall value of the campus to the greater community.

Defining Capacity Building

Katie Gardella, president of Prosper Fundraising Strategies defines capacity building in nonprofits as activities that improve and enhance a nonprofit's ability to achieve its mission and sustain itself over time.² It is whatever is needed to bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, in order to more effectively and efficiently fulfill its mission. "Capacity building projects can take many forms. The outcome of these projects is to enhance the ability of the nonprofit to fulfill its mission, to improve its infrastructure to take it to the next level of performance."³

Gardella lists the following as examples of capacity building projects, which may be services, assessments, events, — any activity which enhances the nonprofit's ability to improve and achieve its mission:

- Providing access to repositories of information and resources
- Trainings, which are for the public, customized, or on-line
- Consultation (coaching, facilitating, expert advice, and conducting research)
- Coordinating alliances and networking organizations
- Business planning and development
- Collaboration planning, team building, and peer learning

- Evaluation, conflict resolution, and staffing (selection, development)
- Earned-income development, funding, financial management, and fund raising
- Development of Boards, management, and leadership
- Marketing (research, promotions)
- Organizational development and project management
- Strategic planning, mergers, facilities planning, and program design

Many of the activities identified by Gardella are routinely performed by the library for the campus community. Library instruction provides student learning development across a broad array of subject areas. Libraries have a strong ethos of sharing knowledge and enabling others through coaching and training to be self-sufficient in connecting to their information needs. While this may lead to current students as alumni thinking fondly of the library in future years, it does not necessarily result in monetarily enhancing the library and therefore the infrastructure of the campus to achieve its mission. When the library reaches beyond the campus, or engages alumni directly rather than through reminiscences, it is engaging in capacity building.

Social Media

Social media is often thought of as a vehicle to message and brand an institution to their current and future community. Tami Back and Mary Schmotzer from the Swem Library at the College of William and Mary, assessed the relationship between those who gave to their institution and those engaged with the institution.⁴ They discovered that those more engaged were more likely to give more to the university.

Back and Schmotzer indicated that those who received engagement scores of 100-200 (the lowest level of engagement) tended to give at the 30 percent level, but those who received engagement scores of 900-1000 (the highest engagement level) gave at the 100 percent level. The Swem Library's social media engagement is ranked 1st in Virginia and 14th nationally. Their research indicated that their YouTube postings had been viewed 17,335 times since June 2009.

While Facebook and Twitter engagement account for 72 percent of their current and future student engagement and YouTube 60 percent, they noted Flickr is heavily used by future students. While they have not yet directly correlated who is viewing social media with who gives, they identify social media engagement as a new standard strategy to create engagement.

Heidi Hancock and David Svet from Mosaic Non-Profit Development, completed global research on the value of a single like on Facebook and quantified it as worth \$174.⁵ While many institutions have experimented with a one-day online giving campaign, according to Hancock the average online gift globally is \$60-\$85 and is edging up towards \$100. The largest global online gift to date is \$260,000. The College of William and Mary's One Tribe One Day 24 hour giving campaign attracted 1,900 donors for \$214,500 in giving, but only 40 of those were library donors.

Put into the context of return on investment, the library's contributions to social media, whether Twitter posts, Facebook pages and events, blogs, or photos posted, are more than just information and marketing. The library is contributing to capacity building for the institution by providing further venues for the internal and external communities to engage with the campus. While the immediate return to the library may be modest, given the results of the One Tribe One Day campaign, the return to the campus in furthering engagement is clear.

Library as Local Capacity Builder

Many library directors understand the value of joining community organizations, such as service clubs. It provides visibility in the community and opportunities to share the good work the campus and especially the library are carrying out. Think of this as goodwill ambassadorship and a first local step in capacity building. It is a passive approach, but sometimes essential to be able to move to higher levels of engagement.

A second step would be undertaking a coordinating effort to bring other community groups together for a project. Other cultural heritage organizations

such as historical societies, museums, public libraries, and schools are candidates for groups with whom the academic library may find common objectives. This approach can be simple, as in calling a meeting to discuss a new collection and providing promotional materials which you ask the other groups to display and share, or elaborate where the group decides on a formal name, mission, list of projects, and much more integration. In either case, the academic library is now perceived as a community partner, supporting an infrastructure with common goals, and promoting the campus' resources.

If the group of cultural organizations decides to engage in grant writing, it behooves the academic library to act as the primary investigator. Not only will this contribute to campus grant fundraising efforts if successful, but also may establish the campus as trainers and developers to these community organizations. When the Partners for Monadnock History (Partners), a group consisting of a college library, a public library, a historical society, an art gallery, and a house museum in Keene, New Hampshire, decided to apply for national grants, the academic library took the lead in writing the national grants. After two unsuccessful applications, the library director volunteered to be a panel reviewer for a national grantor. This provided clear insight as to why the grant was not funded for the Partners (it did not provide a national or new model), but it did promote the campus as a partner in the national grantor's efforts, and allowed the library director to then train others in reviewing other campus national grant proposals. While these efforts did not lead to a national grant, they did lead to a modest local foundation-funded proposal for the Partners. The library director also built her own capacity by co-authoring a campus general education grant which was funded and re-funded. Perceiving and utilizing the human resource capital of active, forward-thinking library leaders in across-campus efforts maximizes capacity building.

Returning to focus for a moment on special collections, your creative library leader will see them as an opportunity to

create further community connections. This could be in the form of traveling exhibits, where the academic library not only provides content for others to host, but also hosts community members' exhibits. This exposes new audiences to the academic institution's holdings and brings to campus those who may not otherwise have had a reason to set foot on the grounds. Examples of this could be identifying speakers on a topic related to the special collection and hosting a lecture, creating a digital collection that may be displayed on an electronic signboard or web page, to having a booth at a community sponsored event. Events like these add to positive town and gown relationships, so when something is needed, the academic institution is perceived as a community contributor.

Library as Corporate Technology Capacity Builder

Academic libraries have been at the forefront of incorporating technologies into their work. From early adoption of the Internet to electronic catalogs to electronic information resources and the incumbent hardware and software to make them function, libraries have been leaders in this arena. Many academic libraries serve as beta testers for emerging technologies. While this has been perceived as useful to furthering the library's mission, there is another side to this role as a capacity builder with corporations.

Keene State College, due to its close proximity to a company's headquarters, was approached by a library database vendor about recruiting students to serve as usability testers of the database interface. Through a mutually agreed to arrangement, the company provided access to the databases to the campus for the period of the usability testing arrangement. Not only did this benefit the company, and the researchers on campus who otherwise would not have access to the information in the database, it also contributed to the library's indirect gift totals. For a small investment of time to recruit seven students every few weeks, the library received a large return, and enhanced the campus infrastructure.

The Hunt Library at North Carolina State University is a second main library for all students, though it primarily serves students in the Colleges of Engineering and Textiles, located on NC State's Centennial Campus near the library. This innovative library includes many cutting edge technology components from a gaming studio to a maker space to virtual immersion rooms where students can create new content building upon existing knowledge and technology platforms as part of their course of study. The library attracts users from the entire university—all disciplines, undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty. These spaces include the incorporation of technologies that were the result of partnerships with several corporations, some of which are housed on NCSU's Centennial Campus where Hunt Library is located. Providing this sandbox not only prepares those who will be entering the workforce, but also gives the opportunities for others on and off campus as they see it as relevant to their work. For example the ROTC program uses Hunt Library's Creativity Studio for immersive technology training in Naval Air Warfare, simulating via virtual reality a submarine control room environment. In the Creativity Studio they run a "white box" space of the most advanced version of the Navy's Mariner Skills Simulator.⁶

As another example, Texas Tech University, The University of Hawaii at Mānoa, and the Greater Western Library Alliance have teamed together to create Occam's Reader. Occam's Reader creates a process for requesting, processing and delivering eBooks. Interlibrary loan (ILL) has always been possible under the terms of Springer eBook licenses, but previously there was no process for doing so. By integrating with the existing ILLiad (an interlibrary loan software commonly used by libraries) framework, Occam's Reader makes eBook ILL part of libraries' everyday workflow. It is in its pilot phase with one publisher, Springer, but if successful could revolutionize virtual book lending and libraries' licensing agreements with publishers. This in turn could benefit not only higher education institutions, but also all who value the model of a library as a resource for the greater

good in making information accessible and available, while strengthening ties with publishers who in an academic publish or perish model are essential for the tenure and promotion system.

Who are the Library's Friends

Although it is often mentioned that the academic library does not have alumni, since no one graduates from that unit, many still decide that the library is their donation destination. These may include retired faculty and staff, former student employees, and those from the community who just love libraries. Further analysis of giving indicates a few overlooked populations who may be more inclined to give to the library if approached: those who graduated with multiple degrees in different fields from an institution and two alumni who are now partnered. Those with multiple degrees may feel no particular loyalty to the department of their undergraduate degree or their graduate degree and rather than splitting their donation, may not give at all.

The library provides an alternative place for their giving that does not feel disloyal to their former departments. Alumni who are now partners often wish to give back to their institution, but unless they graduated from the same program may feel conflicted about where to send their donation. Again, the library provides a solution whereby they are supporting their alma mater, but not favoring one partner's department over the others. Research reported by Jennifer Broome, Senior Executive Director of Development, and Tracy Sullivan, Associate Director of Development, both from George Washington University Libraries, indicates that these two groups of alumni often are not current donors, but when approached to give to the library, many become donors.

The Symbol of the Propeller

A small private aviation-degree-granting college's first large push toward fundraising was to engage friends—potential donors—in establishing scholarship funds. To wit, they held a fundraising diner and auction, which is not an uncommon approach. The donor for whom the library was named owned an antique wooden

propeller, which she donated to be auctioned. During the auction the same donor bid on and “won” back the propeller, which she in turn donated to the library. The library put the propeller on display. The next year the donor asked that the propeller be placed back in the auction, and she encouraged a different Board member to bid on the propeller, with the understanding that it would be placed back in the library for the next year and then again placed in the auction.

The library started putting a plaque on the propeller each year with the new winner’s name. Every year it was dusted off and placed again in the auction, “purchased” and then generously re-donated each year. Of course, the library received nothing monetary directly from this exchange, but did contribute to the institution’s capacity building as each year the propeller’s winning bid was higher than the year before.

The problem of the symbol of the propeller is that it limited the institution’s and Board members’ perceptions of the value of the library in building institutional capacity. In the same way that encouraging donors to “buy” a book in which a book plate is placed noting the donation, it creates a false expectation that a one-time finite gift is all the library needs. It was a missed opportunity to view the library as more than a repository of materials, in this case an antique propeller, and as a collaborative partner in the job of the institution which would be to generate scholarship funds to graduate educated students and excellent researchers.

In a more developed capacity building regard, funds for internships in the library, which would

have fit the parameters of scholarships, may have been a more helpful focus. The library could have contributed auction items such as one-on-one research assistance to a community member, a behind the scenes tour, or a review of the donor’s private book collection and advice on preservation. In turn the institution could have targeted scholarship funds to provide students with project-based research and/or collections-based opportunities within the library. Libraries with collections needing processing, but a shortage of labor budget would benefit, donors would see the stewarding of their in-kind donations being processed and made available, students, faculty, and researchers would benefit from collections made accessible, and the institution’s capacity would be enhanced.

Working Together for Success

Henry Ford may not have had a formal education, but he did have an innate talent for capacity building by perceiving and pulling together systems and products in a successful way to produce the first widely purchased automobile in the United States. Ford is attributed with saying, “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”⁷

It is in the interest of higher education to work together with all of its available constituencies to enhance the infrastructure of the organization and achieve its mission. The academic library is already contributing to the institution’s capacity building, but could be doing more with an integrated and planned approach that is valued and supported. While many isolated instances and approaches to capacity building have been given,

none of them represents an approach that was viewed as part of a campus plan. To leverage options, forward-thinking campus administrators will want to consider how the library fits within advancement across the board and encourage library engagement. This may mean an investment in capacity building education for the forward-thinking library leader and development professionals. The potential return on investment could help to raise institutional capacity in heretofore unexpected ways, as campus leaders within the library and beyond create an environment of “working together is success.” — *heroldi@hawaii.edu*

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4. Tami Back and Mary Schmotzer, Swem Library at the College of William and Mary, 2014 ALADN Conference presentation, “Let’s Get Social: Engaging your Audience on Social Media.”
5. Heidi Hancock and David Svet, Mosaic Non-Profit Development, 2014 ALADN Conference presentation “One Team: Aligning Marketing and Fundraising.”
6. For information about uses of Hunt Library’s technology see <http://www.ncsu.edu/huntlibrary/immerse/>.
7. Henry Ford, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/erikaandersen/2013/05/31/21-quotes-from-henry-ford-on-business-leadership-and-life/>.

Further information about Capacity Building can be found at the end of the online version of this article on our website www.libraryissues.com



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Further Information on Capacity Building

Gardella recommends the following online resources as starting points for the further understanding of capacity building. For example, she suggests using The TCC Group's Core Capacity Assessment Tool to target where specific capacity building efforts could be most beneficial for your nonprofit group. TCC Group was founded as The Core Conservation Group in 1980. Gardella also proposes using resources from the National Council of Nonprofits, which provides links to further resources, and The Free Management Library which has numerous links to information on capacity building.

- <http://www.tccgrp.com/sections/capacity/>
- <http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/capacity-building/what-capacity-building>
- <http://managementhelp.org/organizationalperformance/nonprofits/capacity-building.htm>

For resources specific to capacity building and academic libraries, the Association of College and Research Libraries' Value of Academic Libraries core value provides another perspective. The whole report and subsequent findings may be viewed at <http://www.acrl.ala.org/value/>. Three of the six key findings from a white paper by Carol Tenopir, et. al, included:

1. For every monetary unit invested in academic libraries, the parent institutions received a return on investment of between 0.64:1 and 15.54:1 in research grant income.
2. In two North American universities, regression analysis using 10 years of data shows that an increase in the library budget is correlated with an increase in grant funding.
3. Faculty survey respondents cite averages of 7.5 to 41.2 books or articles in each grant proposal they write.

(Tenopir, C. et. al., (2010). University Investment in the Library, Phase II: An International Study of the Library's Value to the Grants Process. [White paper]. Retrieved from Elsevier: http://libraryconnect.elsevier.com/sites/default/files/2010-06-whitepaper-roi2_0.pdf)