

The Report  
of the  
Future of the Libraries Committee  
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# The Future of the Libraries Report

The Future of the libraries committee was called together in late October 2014, charged by the Provost and convened by Vice-Provost Cynthia Cyrus, to develop a vision for the direction of the Vanderbilt Libraries. The vision should outline how the library could most effectively support the research and teaching needs of Vanderbilt University, guided by the recently announced strategic plan for the university.

A group of 15 faculty representing all schools at Vanderbilt met as a committee for several months in the 2014-15 academic year; paralleled by a group of 14 library staff from libraries across the campus. Their objectives, carried out through discussions and querying faculty, staff and students in departments and schools, was to get a clear sense of how faculty members and students currently use the Vanderbilt libraries for research and teaching, as well as the university community's unmet needs. Additionally, the group was tasked to identify opportunities to develop new services or to stop unneeded services, enabling resources and staff to be devoted effectively to the strategic goals of the university. The two groups worked separately, though met jointly at times, shared data and feedback, but proceeded with appropriately differing filters and perspectives.

The faculty branch of the Future of the Library Committee was determined to establish what Vanderbilt faculty members currently valued or found missing in their library interactions, as well as needed and even hoped for from the libraries in the future.

Thanks to the dozens of faculty members representing all Vanderbilt schools that shared their opinions, experiences, and research and teaching needs with the committee, we were able to cluster faculty opinion about the Vanderbilt Library system present and future into three concise lists. The first list focuses on the aspects of the current library that Vanderbilt most value and would wish to see preserved in any future going forward. The second list elaborates the standards the Vanderbilt faculty uses in evaluating what makes for a good library. The last list builds on the first two to articulate faculty hopes for building a better system of library collections and services at Vanderbilt in the future. Though each listed item is stated succinctly below they are supported and amplified by the comments of diverse faculty referenced in the *Faculty Views Appendix*, which is recommended reading and provides in-depth reasoning for these findings.

## *The Context for Research Libraries*

Academic libraries constitute the intellectual backbone of research universities. Libraries provide access to information necessary for student and faculty learning, teaching, and research. Leaders of Vanderbilt have acknowledged the significance of the library to the university since its founding. As Chancellor James Hampton Kirkland stated in his 1893 inaugural address, “The library is the very heart of the university ... University work, in the proper sense, is an absolute impossibility without ample library facilities.”<sup>1</sup> Modern librarianship has and will continue to move beyond passively providing resources, now actively participating in learning, teaching, and researching. Those changes and continuing evolution are the heart of this report.

Traditionally, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) ranked libraries primarily according to their holdings.<sup>2</sup> In general, the scope of its collections determined a library’s level of excellence. The information environment has changed radically during the past twenty-five years. The advent of the World Wide Web and the development of commercial search engines have enabled unprecedented access to information. Rather than an environment of information *scarcity*, researchers now deal with *overabundance*.

Digitization has dramatically impacted the significance of traditional library collections. Physical journals have been replaced with online versions, and many of them are available in subject-based commercial databases. Large-scale nonprofit initiatives like JSTOR, the Hathi Trust and the Internet Archive provide wide access to historical literature. Interlibrary Loan provides quick and efficient access to materials in other collections. In today’s information economy, access to (not ownership of) information matters above all. Researchers and students can now easily discover the gaps between what exists and the local campus library resources.

Economic and legal barriers continue to prove disruptive to providing seamless access to materials. Providing access to licensed resources, especially to scientific journals, is ever more costly. Copyright restrictions and contractual obligations limit the availability of materials and while cross database searching increases exposure from unexpected sources, managing and supplying these materials becomes more technical.

As libraries move away from building local collections to interacting with multiple, diverse sources of information, librarians’ roles are also changing. Traditionally, the

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<sup>1</sup> James H Kirkland, *Proceedings and Addresses at the Installation and Inauguration of James Hampton Kirkland, Ph. D., Chancellor of Vanderbilt University: June 21, 1893 : September 25, 1893*. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1893), 43.

<sup>2</sup> See ARL’s Annual Library Statistics, [http://www.arlstatistics.org/about/Series/stats\\_series](http://www.arlstatistics.org/about/Series/stats_series)

library was divided between back end and front end personnel; today, librarians from all areas are working alongside researchers on scholarly initiatives – from back-office staff collaborating with graduate students on digital editions to special collections curators assisting community members with editing articles on Wikipedia to post-doctorates curating scientific data.

Implementing the new strategic plan requires underscoring and reinforcing the shift from libraries as collections to librarians as contributors to learning, teaching, and research across campus and the global academy. If, as R. David Lankes suggests, a “new librarianship” is coming into being, it presupposes that librarians actively and directly advance the distinctive missions of their academic institutions.<sup>3</sup>

### *Faculty Opinions about Vanderbilt’s Library NOW – What They Value*

Current Strengths. Vanderbilt faculty across many departments and through committee members representing each school in the University were asked, “What works now?” “How do you use the library?” “What are the aspects of the library system that in any future ought to be maintained as a foundation of future on which to build?” Faculty members proved free with their opinions about what was important in their experience with the library, and from the tone of these opinions we identified five clear things that Vanderbilt faculty value now so much they would expect them to be part of any future university library:

***N1 Online Journal Access.*** The availability of scientific journals and subscriptions, together with downloadable medical, legal, humanities and social science journals was a key strength of the current university library system, receiving much favorable comment.

***N2 Interlibrary Loan Services.*** The quality and speed of ILL service at Vanderbilt was the most frequently mentioned library personnel mediated service in faculty comments, among STEM discipline faculty as well as humanities faculty. Faculty at Vanderbilt University have nothing but praise for the way ILL has helped to make up for the weaknesses in the core collection.

***N3 Divisional Libraries.*** Faculty whose disciplines or schools were associated with a specialized library (Peabody, Divinity, Law, Eskind, Science and

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<sup>3</sup> Lankes writes, “Libraries are defined not by their buildings, but how they combine the mission, the means of facilitation, and, ultimately, a set of ethics and skills.” See R. David Lankes, *Expect More: Demanding Better Libraries for Today’s Complex World* ([Place of publication not identified]: R. David Lankes, 2012), 129.

Engineering, Music) expressed a great sense of confidence that the professional librarians on site and the specialized collections of the respective library were meeting their needs.

***N4 Aesthetics.*** Faculty expressed appreciation for the aesthetics of windows to the outside at Peabody and Eskind, the study atmosphere of the Law Library, classrooms built into the Divinity Library, the 24 hour open policy in Engineering, and the Café in Central.

***N5 Professional Librarianship.*** Faculty in professional or specialized schools (Blair, Divinity, and Law) expressed great appreciation for the specialized knowledge and skill that librarians brought to the support of teaching and research. This was paralleled in other disciplines in larger schools, to the degree that disciplines had close associations with their bibliographer or research librarians.

### ***Library Perspective: Current Strengths and Weakness***

As was noted in the charge to the Future of the Libraries committees, the Association for Research Libraries 2012/13 statistics rank Vanderbilt University Library 61<sup>st</sup> out of 115 libraries. This is far below the ranking of the university, 16<sup>th</sup> on the US News rankings of 2014.

### ***Collections***

As information formats diversify, the goal of developing a useful and accessible library collection has become more complex and costly. The vast majority of library funds are allocated to maintain current subscriptions. At Vanderbilt the amount available to expand the collection has dwindled to barely 10% of the overall collections budget, leaving little room for growth. Simply stated, the library's collections are underfunded and, hence, hindered in the ability to meet the evolving teaching and research needs of Vanderbilt faculty and students.

Several variables influence the strength of a library's buying power. The three most significant factors at Vanderbilt are: existing commitments, the expansion of research areas, and space.

- **Recurring Expenses:** Serial prices rise on the average of 5-7% per year.<sup>4</sup> Approximately 90% of the library's materials funds – including Law and Biomedical Library expenditures – are committed to the recurring expenses of essential databases and serials. However, the demand for more serials is constant. The LibQual library survey,<sup>5</sup> consistently reveal the desire of faculty for additional scholarly journals.
- **University Growth:** The university is expanding its fields of teaching and research by developing new programs and hiring more faculty, whose expectations are often high as they come from highly ranked universities with larger libraries. New and expanded program areas of focus and emphasis include Asian Studies, Film Studies, German History, Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies, Latin American Studies, Medicine Health and Society, and Managerial Studies. When no new additional funds are provided for new programs, the funding for established subjects must decrease.
- **Collection Space:** All campus libraries have reached their shelving capacities. The remote shelving facility will soon be filled. There simply is not room for large physical material growth. Shifting the 3.8M volume inventory, to create spaces for acquisitions in new subject areas and new study spaces requires staff time investments.

As the focus on collections increasingly moves to providing access to information rather than the ownership and housing of physical materials, new models of acquisitions and collection management are developing. The Vanderbilt Library is adopting new practices in order to stretch the limited budget. Library staff have made great strides and accommodations in dealing with these limitations through focused attention and collaboration:

- **Vendor Relations:** Purchases and subscriptions are now aggressively negotiated and an alliance with library consortia of research libraries (NERL) was established. Each has saved the library thousands of dollars and allowed for additional purchases.

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<sup>4</sup>Ebsco's *Serials Price Projections for 2015*:

[http://www.ebscohost.com/promoMaterials/Serials\\_Price\\_Projections\\_for\\_2015.pdf](http://www.ebscohost.com/promoMaterials/Serials_Price_Projections_for_2015.pdf) or *Library Journal's Periodical Price Survey 2014* )

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.arl.org/focus-areas/statistics-assessment/libqual#.VTP-WZMt6mU>  
LibQual+ enables systematic assessment and measurement of library service quality, over time and across institutions. LibQUAL+ services have been used in a variety of libraries, including college and university, community college, health science, law, and public libraries – some through various consortia, others as independent participants.

- Consolidation of Services: Most journals and packages have migrated to one main subscription vendor with integrated usage data, resulting in greater assessment capabilities and generating savings (\$300,000 for the life of the five year agreement).
- New Acquisition Models: The libraries have adopted a demand-driven acquisition (DDA) eBook program which exposes researchers to more titles in the catalog, but only charging the library after the eBook is downloaded for use.
- Interlibrary Loan: When researchers cannot find needed resources at Vanderbilt, they turn to borrowing materials from other libraries. The demand for this service has risen steadily (increased by 27% since 2008)<sup>6</sup> which has staffing and resource implications.
- Collection Space: In 2014 the library began deaccessioning print journals which have permanent digital facsimiles and thus far has emptied almost 2,000 linear feet (about 667 shelves) in the libraries and Annex, an offsite storage facility.

## Facilities

The function and purposes for the physical library spaces on university campuses have evolved through the years. In the pre-network print era, physically coming to the library building was the only way to access the collection. As the percentage of the materials available on-line increases, the building is no longer a condition for accessing the collection. Now, more than two-thirds of library visitors do so virtually, outside of the library buildings, from offices across campus, dorm rooms and beyond. Yet the physical space of the library remains relevant.

Students have described the experience of working in the library reading rooms as evoking a sense of the participation in the enterprise of higher education. It is important to highlight this symbolic role of the library space. The distinctive educational experience of a residential college structure is part of the benefits offered by elite private institutions such as Vanderbilt. Undergraduate students value high quality space for quiet study and for collaboration. The eight libraries across the campus vary considerably in the quality and type of space available; in many ways the diversity of locations is advantageous, though students are quick to point out elements of some spaces which are in need of significant improvement. When library renovations have occurred (Divinity, Peabody, Central) it has yielded positive response and increased use

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<sup>6</sup> The increase was actually greater until 2012, up 54%. The subscription to fulltext access for all digital dissertations has addressed a large recurring category of requests.



in each case.

- **Renovated Student Space:** Students increasingly use library spaces, particularly spaces that have been renovated, or have desirable features. Comfortable furniture, quiet study spaces, group study spaces, and natural light are frequently cited as desirable by students.
- **An Ethos for Academic Focus:** Surveys point to other reasons why the library as place is important to students. Libraries are cited by as representing a unique type of space. Students are not seeking simply a quiet area or attractive surroundings. The library is described as a distinctively inclusive space, intentionally accessible to anyone across campus.
- **A Place for Support:** Libraries are also spaces inhabited by people whose job focus is to assist others in finding needed information. Even when students are not actively seeking assistance from librarians, they describe the ethos of the space as one that helps them focus on their learning or research.

Students clearly are drawn to the new and fresh spaces. However, the dramatic turnaround in perception, cited after the 2010 renovation of the flagship Central Library, has already faded as the generation of undergraduates has turned over. Students on campus prior to the 2010 renovation were extremely pleased with the changes; focus groups this year yielded almost exactly the same complaints about the building as prior to the renovation: the layout is confusing; lack of natural light; ‘warehouse for books’. The upgraded user spaces are still appreciated, but the limitations of a building that was indeed built literally to be a warehouse for books remains clear.

- **Limitations of Current Space:** With structural steel stacks at the core of the building, little can be done to change or repurpose those spaces.
- **Opportunities to Transform Existing Space:** There are library spaces across the campus libraries that have potential to create additional makerspaces as well as spaces with the higher education ethos desired by students.

### *Human Resources*

Excellence in academic research librarianship requires a talented, agile, diverse, and creative workforce. The traditional point of entry into academic librarianship has been a Master of Library Science (M.L.S.) accredited by the American Library Association (ALA). Subject specialists may also hold additional academic or professional degrees—for instance, law librarians frequently have a J.D., divinity librarians a M.Div., etc. There



have always been exceptions, including those who hold an academic Ph.D. or an alternative master degree in lieu of an accredited M.L.S. degree. The current library staff possess many of the skills and experiences that make for a successful library.

- **Education and Experience:** The combination of study in librarianship and academic/professional fields enables librarians to operate effectively at the intersection of information management and faculty research and teaching.
- **Flexible Staff:** Traditionally, non-exempt staff members, particularly in circulation, interlibrary loan, technical services, and technology, support academic librarians and provide operational services in both public-facing and back-office functions.
- **Excel at Traditional Work:** Library staff members are extremely efficient at acquiring, inventorying, describing, and interpreting information to students and faculty. With technological change, and evolution in the expectations for professional librarians, boundaries between tasks for librarians and staff have shifted, and will continue to evolve.

During the past twenty years the increasing complexity of the information landscape has challenged and stretched human resource models in libraries. Sweeping changes in intellectual property law and practice, the development of large-scale digital libraries like Google Books and the HathiTrust, rising expectations for support of digital scholarship in the sciences but also the humanities, and trends toward interdisciplinary research and teaching have posed new challenges. The library has been meeting these changes by revising its job descriptions, yet these challenges are persistent and structural.

- **Legacy Work:** There is agreement that time intensive, legacy tasks and duties that no longer reflect the needs of current Vanderbilt students and faculty should be identified and abandoned. It may seem obvious to simply switch staff time and attention away from print resources to electronic and outreach services. However, the added complexity of managing and teaching online resources means that additional training and skills are needed.
- **Managing Print Collections:** Print materials for some areas of scholarship will remain highly relevant and will continue to require management for some time to come. Even if one views the print collection as merely a warehouse the less obvious fact is that it would take additional staff time to de-select and withdraw seemingly obsolete material than it does to warehouse it. Long-term efficiencies will be achieved with selective removal and freeing of shelf space and that process has already begun. To continue this work, staff resources will need to be applied.

- **Evolving Need for Specialists:** To support the research study and teaching at Vanderbilt specialists and development of current staff skills is critical. As the campus sees increases in cross disciplinary and digital scholarship, the library will need to rise to meet the occasion with staff that can support discovery tools, digitization and data projects and digital learning expertise.

### *Faculty Members' Standards for Judging Library Quality and Effectiveness*

The faculty branch of the Future of the Library Committee discovered in its own discussions a fairly common set of standards that faculty across the whole of the university recognizes as ways to judge the quality and effectiveness of the university's libraries and the library system as a whole. These standards also reflect the sentiments of faculty e-mail comments received:

***S1 Electronic Interaction.*** Faculty measure the library by their experience of online access of materials, by interlibrary loan availability, and by ease of the reserves process for teaching support.

***S2 Collection Acquisition and Preservation.*** Faculty in diverse fields evaluate the library on the basis of its ability to preserve and acquire books and collections (some physical and some digital). From music to mathematics and from scores to textbooks, there is an expectation that a wise library will acquire and retain physical media when there is a logical use in research or teaching while also adopting digital formats when those make sense in terms of use.

***S3 Librarian-Faculty Partnerships.*** Faculty evaluate librarians as partners in research and teaching. They expect professional capabilities from librarians that faculty and students do not themselves possess to be offered to both faculty and students in creative collaborations.

***S4 Facility Usefulness and Beauty.*** Physical spaces matter for faculty members, too. While some of the divisional libraries at Vanderbilt, notably Eskin, Peabody, and Law were judged to be perfectly adapted to their respective uses, other spaces, especially Central (even after the renovation) were less successful from a faculty perspective.

***S5 Searchability.*** Faculty judge the library's quality on the basis of its collection's searchability. Search needs to work at Vanderbilt University in order for the library to be held in high esteem. This was an area of extreme dissatisfaction in the library as it now exists and focused faculty agreement.

**S6 Core Holdings and Facilities.** Faculty well beyond those in the College of Arts and Science look to the Central Library's collections and facilities for resources, for places to study, and as a measure of institutional research strength. Central's facelift failed to persuade faculty.

**S7 Accessibility for All Users.** Faculty also measure libraries by how they meet the specialized needs of specialized non-resident users. Distant users have distinct clinical (VUMC, VMG) and learning (VUSN) needs that are important 24/7 and must be met for the libraries to be judged effective. These include improved access to materials now only available in the campus domain to allow clinicians and faculty to stay abreast of field developments from home.

### *Library Perspective: Standards for Evaluation of Collections and Services*

#### **External Metrics**

Metrics produced by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) have long been one of the primary measures by which library collections are benchmarked. As has been noted in the charge to the committee, the ranking of the Vanderbilt University Library among North American research libraries (61<sup>st</sup>) is in sharp contrast to the aspirations and national ranking of the university. The venerable ARL statistics do not account well for electronic resources, and have been deemed to show preference to the size of physical collections, privileging long standing universities with deep and historical collections. Therefore, the ARL statistic gathering is under review. One replacement for the traditional statistics, the ARL Investment Index,<sup>7</sup> was developed and applied retroactively. The library committee reviewed a sub-set of 10 peer institutions with the ARL investment index data from 2003 through 2013.<sup>8</sup> Over that ten year period the data showed these trends:

- **Total Budget:** Total library budget increased 26% in the middle range of the cohort (-9% to 49%).
- **Collections Budget:** Collections funds at Vanderbilt increased, but at a lower rate than many of the cohort libraries. The overall collections budget in 2003 (\$8.4 million) was the fourth lowest of the 10 libraries. By 2013 the 42% increase (to \$11.9 million) left Vanderbilt now third lowest. Vanderbilt's materials budget is not close to comparison with Duke, Chicago or Emory.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.arlstatistics.org/about/arl\\_index/biblio](http://www.arlstatistics.org/about/arl_index/biblio)

<sup>8</sup> Appendix L-1 - ARL 10U+1 worksheet investment index.xlsx

- Staff Salaries: Professional salaries rose 19.3% in the ten year interval, third lowest in the cohort (4.7% to 54.85%).
- Staff Count: There is a stark contrast in the total staff count (professional and non-exempt). While all 10 libraries reviewed show decreases in staffing, Vanderbilt's drop of **23.9%** was **the largest** decline among the peer group (-1.2% to -23.9%).

## Local Metrics

The library uses quantitative and qualitative assessment tools and metrics to optimize library operations and budgets. The LibQual survey provides a tool to measure local perceptions of library services and is normed against a national pool. Vanderbilt libraries have used the LibQual tool four times, typically every three years, most recently in 2012. Survey results provide quantified measures of service expectations among the university population, with data decomposable by population (faculty, undergraduate, graduate/professional, staff) by school, and combinations of those factors. There is also provision for free text comments, which have been carefully reviewed. Comments received during focus groups for the Future of the Library committee work are strongly consistent with comments received in the LibQual+ 2012 survey and previous surveys.

- LibQual: LibQual results have been used to drive decisions about changes in services and service priorities. Student feedback from LibQual was instrumental in the case made leading to the Central Library renovation of 2010. It has helped to focus collection reviews in specific disciplines. LibQual results were a driver leading to the internal review and proposal to adopt the liaison paradigm for library professionals, implemented in 2013.
- Focus Groups: Focus groups are used to gather feedback and insight for initiatives such as the web redesign project in 2012-13. Usability studies measuring user experience and preferences need to be systematized as a regular tool, but represent yet another challenge for allocation of scarce staff time, expertise and, budgets.
- Website Analytics: Website analytics are utilized to enhance the online user experience.
- Door Counts: Door counts are gathered to influence staffing levels and facility open hours.

- **Resource Statistics:** Usage statistics for online resources are collected and analyzed to measure and gauge the usefulness of databases and journals across the campus. This information informs the library's return on material investments.

## Human Resources

Two controversial and challenging questions for staffing the future library are educational preparation and professional development. The evolving need for specialists in digital technology and learning, data management, assessment, digital humanities and other areas,<sup>9</sup> require the broadening of the definition of librarians and librarianship.

The traditional combination of a M.L.S. (or Master of Information Science) plus an academic degree will remain relevant into the future. Library school and iSchools ("information schools") are evolving to meet new challenges with revised curricula. The value of academic or professional education for librarians likewise remains uncontested. Still, the libraries will need to recruit and retain specialists in other areas as well to support the evolving need of students and faculty. There is no longer a single path into academic librarianship.

There must also be a mixture of repurposing and retraining existing library staff to support Vanderbilt's research, teaching, and learning needs. Currently, support for professional development in the library is self-initiated, not well structured (in comparison, for instance, to the training program in the Eskind Biomedical Library). The library will need to mirror Vanderbilt's commitment to lifelong learning to ensure the best possible service to its users.

Library staff members have sketched measures to evaluate the success of evolving human resource models. The committee staff members made the following recommendations during Future of the Library meetings:

- **Align Goals to Staff Outcomes:** Assessment of service value should be measurable, documented and promoted to departments.
- **Staff Support:** Realignment of staffing needs to occur to support liaison communication with students and faculty.

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<sup>9</sup> Such as copyright advisory, data visualization, digital humanities, educational technologies, geographic information systems, information architecture, instructional design, linked data, metadata analysis, open access publishing, research data management, statistics, strategic planning, and user experience testing,

- **Staff Development:** Innovation and risk taking in the development of new models of library outreach should be encouraged.
- **Develop Campus Partnerships:** Strategic partnerships with other campus units working in the field of educational technologies, such as, the Center for Teaching (CFT), the Center for Second Language Studies, the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities, and the Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning (VIDL).

### *The Future of Vanderbilt's Library as Seen by Faculty*

When faculty members on the committee and those we queried thought about library usages in the future they saw four key, and recurrent themes: More digitization and electronic availability; and, on the other hand a great need for a place to keep the specialized physical resources that digitization doesn't handle well (archives, music scores, etc.); accompanied by an increasing need for professional librarian expertise to help unlock the ever-changing treasure-house available to students, scholars, and practitioners; finally, faculty saw an emerging role for academic libraries to be new kinds of partners in the academic enterprise. One of our committee members wrote thoughtfully:

One key possibility is to see the library not as a warehouse of ideas, but in a more kinetic role: as a facilitator of and guide to the research activities of its clients, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students. Some of this is already in place: with area-specialist librarians who have developed significant expertise and are invaluable resources both to faculty and students. Deepening and expanding this resource, and encouraging more active research collaboration with all client communities, would be a very positive first move.

A faculty email query respondent from Music made a great case for the library of future maintaining a very strong physical presence, even though it was clear from the response the professor is teaching enthusiastically with 21<sup>st</sup> century resources:

[I count on the library to remain pretty unequivocally, physical. When I stream content for a class, it tends to come from sources like YouTube, Spotify, and so on, that I can access on my own. While institutional subscriptions to streaming services (Naxos et al) are wonderful, as a rule the streaming content by definition stands outside the need for a library. The library's advantage is actually that it CAN be a dinosaur - it can maintain physical resources which, due to price or space or sheer obscurity, I cannot maintain on my own.

Faculty members even engaged the Open Access question in places, and one of the best

comments we received placed Vanderbilt University's problem from a library subscriptions and faculty reputation standpoint in such clear context, that by the end the chicken and egg problem seemed a simpler matter to solve. Nevertheless, the faculty writer does hope that academic libraries as a whole will step up to help address the matter for the sake of the scientists, society, and the free exchange of ideas:

An ongoing discussion in the sciences relates to open-access publication. While there is universal agreement that this is a desired outcome, it is not clear how this should be accomplished. One important consideration is the fact that, for journals that are not exclusively open access, individual researchers are paying to publish the work in open-access format, but the library is still devoting significant funds to pay for subscriptions. With the majority of relevant journals being published by 3 big publishers (Elsevier, Springer, Wiley), it seems inevitable that the library will continue to pay subscriptions that consume a large fraction of the budget. In this context, how can we conceive a system whereby costs of open-access publication incurred by researchers are offset by savings with subscriptions? This is clearly an effort that cannot be led by individual researchers. One has to recognize that the leverage an individual library can have with big publishers is limited, but perhaps there are ways to approach this issue through associations or consortia of libraries. This is an important discussion, and I would hope the library would take the lead in engaging the faculty and other constituencies in a discussion that could lead to a positive path forward towards open-access publication.

Thinking far into the future led the faculty committee to think first about what a library is if it is not principally a physical collection and the ancillary services to make it useful to patrons. We are already half the way away from that 1960s *terra firma*. Therefore, if libraries, in the words of one of our members, "as physical spaces housing books and periodicals are likely to face a growing challenge from research materials accessible virtually anywhere, then the present task is to reimagine the library as a resource of a related but different kind." Therefore, much of the discussion among the faculty in the committee centered on the fundamental roles that the library could play. To a large extent, this derives from a perception that the digital revolution has allowed libraries to deliver content online, which has effectively reduced the need for users -particularly so in the sciences - to physically occupy the library space. While there are unquestionable gains related to obtaining materials online, many of the discussions emphasized differing views over the desirability to physically visit the stacks and to take advantage of the library space in general. Two important consequences of the continuing shift to online content seem to be: (1) the availability of online material has the potential of freeing up space for new activities, making it possible for various library facilities to become attractive and useful spaces that could ultimately draw users back because they offer desirable spaces not available elsewhere; and, (2) the greater ease of access to reading materials allows the library to devote personnel to emerging needs for which



the university community lacks sustained support, as exemplified by the GIS service currently run by the scholarly communications team.

Combining faculty committee conversations and input from departments and schools, the Vanderbilt University's faculty's hoped for future library would include all seven of the following elements:

***F1 Better Search.*** In the future, Vanderbilt will have faster, better complete search of Vanderbilt accessible holdings in one place, with savable search histories to permit scholars to replicate their work, and to use findings to request items from ILL when necessary.

***F2 Dramatic Additional Digital Collecting in Addition to Monograph and Serials Acquisitions.*** In the future, Vanderbilt's faculty hiring may often necessitate new collecting of serial and book titles, and even rather expensive collections that are increasingly making humanities and social science holdings of the world's greatest libraries and archives available to libraries, but at the cost of \$10,000 to \$15,000 a set. The advantage to Vanderbilt to catch-up in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with peer institutions is clear, yet advance budgeting will be necessary to support digital collections acquisitions given their scale.

***F3 E-Textbook Acquisition.*** In the future, there will be a greater demand for the acquisition of e-textbooks to support current teaching and graduate students preparing to teach, as well as faculty who research how teaching and learning is occurring in many disciplines.

***F4 New and Readapted Spaces For New Functions.*** Vanderbilt's future libraries' facilities and spaces need to be adaptable to the many uses students, scholars, and clinicians put them to new uses that are just now acquiring names-digital curation, scientific visualization, virtual bookshelf browsing, and be task suited rather than forced to fit outdated architectural designs in some cases.

***F5 Supporting Digital Humanities.*** In the future, Vanderbilt's libraries will be part of the campus's digital humanities solution, by providing robust research and instructional support for faculty and departments.

***F6 Librarian Professional Partners in Education.*** Vanderbilt librarians in the future are regarded as valued professional partners by faculty in the teaching and research enterprise, are deployed in classrooms, personally interfaced with departments and schools, involved in student and faculty research, and key to leveraging the university's reputation for student research.

***F7 Constant Access.*** In the future, there is no time when users think of the

Vanderbilt's Libraries as "not open." Eskin and all university central divisional libraries are seen to work for off-campus users, including Medical Center affiliates and distance nursing students, as well as for residential users.

### *Library Perspective: Issues for the Future Library*

*...to determine what Vanderbilt's own needs are as we move forward...*

The Vanderbilt University Libraries have the potential to be a stanchion of the Strategic Plan. As an organization at the crossroads of all four pillars, the library can be integral in the realization of the university's plan for whole-person development, advancing inter-disciplinary programs and scholarship, material support for healthcare solutions, and a practice facility for transformative educational technologies. Working with others across campus, and the broader academic library community, the Vanderbilt libraries will continue to evolve and improve upon current collections and services to be an innovative campus leader. To reach this potential, the libraries cannot compromise the critical services outlined in section I and would need to strengthen its role as a vital partner in scholarship, teaching and discovery.

Building on current strengths and recognizing an ever changing information landscape, there are four distinct areas that would create conditions for faculty and students to do their work at the highest levels.

#### *Broader and deeper access to information*

The future library will be recognized as more than a warehouse of books and access to journals, and become a portal to advanced scholarship. By delivering access to premier resources, beyond the maintenance of current collections, journals and curriculum support materials, the library will support emerging areas of study, cross-disciplinary scholarship, an information experience beyond coursework, and offer new material formats that push current boundaries of text, online or print. An increase in digitization efforts of the libraries' unique collections will enhance the university's ability to attract scholars and allow the university to better converse with the broader academic and research communities.

### *Tools that enhance information discovery*

The future library will develop information discovery tools that would advance and enhance the research experience for students and scholars. Improvement of interfaces to present and synthesize complex information and data will boost campus research productivity. Discovery platforms (currently DiscoverLibrary) expose a broad array of metadata representing multiple sources and platforms. Competing desires for simplicity of search, and depth of access to resources, have led to highly polarized opinions about library discovery services. Delivering information through the course management systems, mobile devices and new and emerging educational technologies will enrich the student learning experience. Creating an ecosystem and infrastructure that fosters agility in managing and sharing research data will ease the burden of grant requirements. Services for data analysis and visualization fill a gap in emerging research practices on campus.

### *Spaces that enable reflection, intellectual investigation and collaboration*

The future library will repurpose facilities to create flexible spaces for individual and group interaction between librarians, students and scholars. The creation of educational technology labs allow students and faculty to experiment with emerging tools and deliver new curricular and extra-curricular experiences. The development of makerspaces establishes a place of intersection for creation, invention and learning.

### *Highly developed and responsive staff with discipline, subject and technological expertise*

The future library will acquire and cultivate an expert and adaptable staff that consult with faculty and students along the entire teaching, research, and publishing continua. Library staff members fill a central role in teaching students research methods, critical thinking and aptitudes for life-long learning. Library subject experts support and participate in the research process and escalate campus productivity, especially in cross-disciplinary scholarship. Along with their partners in higher education, library staff leads efforts in reforms and adoption of new publishing models.

Vanderbilt is among the minority of research libraries without a rank and promotion system. The lack of such a system puts Vanderbilt at a competitive disadvantage when seeking to recruit and retain talented library staff members. In order for the library to support the research and instructional needs at Vanderbilt, it must have a skilled, vibrant, motivated, and flexible staff. Any such program must be adequately funded to support needed training; staff members must also be given time for professional development. Having a system of promotion in place ensures the following:

- Clear expectations of what is required for success in every position in the library.
- Incentives to learn and master new skills to support evolving library services.
- Stronger representation of Vanderbilt librarians on the national and international scene.
- A program to reward staff who surpass expectations through service and scholarship.

In tandem, nonexempt library staff would benefit from a similar program. As exempt staff responds to new needs in academia, they cannot succeed without the skills and assistance of others. As the skill set for nonexempt staff grows through structured training, this frees up the time of liaisons and other exempt staff for greater integration into the teaching and research process.

### *Integration of the Eskind Biomedical Library into the Heard Library*

The complicated process of identifying how the university and the Medical Center will separate was announced shortly after the work of the Future of the Libraries Committee began. It has only been as the committee is wrapping up its work that conversations have begun as to how library services will be affected by this change. As such, there is not much that the committee felt prepared to address about this important matter. As with the rest of the process, clearly we will want an end-state that continues to meet the needs of both entities.

The complicated task of defining what library services are needed and appropriate for the educational task, and which are needed and appropriate only in the clinical environment will be an opportunity for creative restructuring. We are confident that the licensing for electronic resources can be re-negotiated to continue access to both sides, though the costs for doing so to two legally separate entities is a question that will likely have to be resolved vendor by vendor.

At the time this report is being drafted, it seems agreed that a portion of the staff and resources most focused on clinical support will move to the Medical Center, and the Eskind Biomedical Library, with some portion of the staff and resources, will remain within the University as one of the libraries in the Heard Library. Support for the degree programs in the School of Nursing, the School of Medicine and other relevant departments and programs will remain with the Heard Library, but the nature of services and staff needed to provide those are only now being determined.

## *Executive Summary*

While the work of the faculty and library staff committees proceeded largely independently, the views and hopes for the future of the library are strongly coherent between the two. Similar strengths and weaknesses in the current library are recognized; changes and improvements are needed and desired by both. Needs for physical collections and spaces may vary from discipline to discipline, yet all recognize the inevitability of the continued transformation toward electronic resources. Some key differences in perspective exist, largely between humanities and STEM disciplines about the continuing need and importance of historical and ongoing print materials. All agree that library resources and funding fall short of what the aspirations of the university and its faculty would seem to require.

Vanderbilt's future library will continue to evolve and transform, as it has for decades, though the pace and scope of change continues to accelerate, both in higher education broadly and in research libraries particularly. To keep pace with the changes facing research university libraries, Vanderbilt University will require a combination of imaginative leadership, focused increased funding, and careful deployment of staff. Key points drawn from the review of the committees for the future library can be summarized:

1. Search and discovery tools need to be improved as the transformation from print to electronic resources continues and expands. In a diverse universe of platforms and sources of information, search engines must improve to facilitate access to resources. The library will need to enhance accessibility and instruction when google simplicity is inadequate for uncovering complex information. Information discovery in an age of superabundance of information may be simple; research and analysis at the heart of university education remains complex.
2. The library will need to continue to offer high quality spaces for students. However, some of our legacy structures are not amenable to dramatic change. How to provide space for collaboration, research and group study will be an ongoing challenge.
3. Funds to acquire and/or provide access to a collection equal to the aspirations and expectations of the university faculty are not present. The library will continue to do its best to maximize available resources, and to use most efficiently any new resources that become available. Targeted funds for specific needs, as cited in the Faculty list (F2) is a path to explore.

4. The digital revolution, already well established in the STEM disciplines, is just now arriving in the humanities. It has already been demonstrated that expanded access and functionality of electronic resources comes at a higher price, and usually with a loss of granularity of control over expenditures. As the digital humanities grow in scope and importance, we should expect similar investments to acquire and provide resources and tools for humanists in order to reap the benefits already seen in the sciences.
5. Developing an agile, well-qualified and increasingly diverse staff to support the educational and research goals of the university is crucial. Providing structured training and professional development will be crucial; there is much work to do to create a framework and culture to ensure opportunities for professional growth will be available.

### **Concerning the Next Leader of the Vanderbilt University Library**

The examination of Vanderbilt's Library and its hoped for future, leads directly to some clear qualities that are indispensable in a leader if the library is to proceed to achieve its full promise in support of the teaching and reaching mission of the university.

1. The library's leader must be an ambassador to the university, such that senior administrators trust what the library can accomplish and what it requires to meet the academic goals of the university. The ambassador's role also extends to maintaining good relations with the schools hosting the divisional libraries, and facilitating the work of the professional librarians with faculty and departments so that together they can realize the research and teaching potential of information resources available.
2. The library's leader must be an effective manager of the inevitable change that is becoming a constant in the world of academic libraries, by demonstrating an honest communication style with library staff, and a healthy balance between open collaboration that allows professional input from staff and decisiveness that allows colleague to know when to execute on plans.
3. The library's leader must be at home in the mission of a leading research university with the particular array of schools and commitments that Vanderbilt possesses. Just as not all universities are alike, not all library systems are alike. A director who can wrap his or her head quickly around what Vanderbilt does

well- and promotes that - will be swimming with the current and will find more allies than someone who tries to remake the system into the likeness of another university's library.

4. The library's leader should evidence the kind of can-do attitude toward his or her work that many of Vanderbilt's best faculty and librarians bring to their work. In seasons of greater or lesser funding there is always something new to be done, and that something is often the inspiration for one's colleagues and a foundation for the future of one's work.