

Library Commons Memo of Understanding

Introduction: The Library West Commons (LWC) was an important collaboration between the Library and the Office of Information Technology to define the vision and the design of the Undergraduate Learning Center. The Library Commons is composed of the West Commons (including the Productivity and Multimedia Labs) and the East Commons. This memo of understanding outlines the essential service, funding, leadership and governance elements that sustain the endeavor, mitigate confusion and conflict, and clarify responsibilities of the parties to assure uninterrupted success.

Teamwork and governance:

Day-to-day leadership is shared between the Library's Head of Information Services Department and OIT's Liaison for Library Support. These individuals: promote cross-cultural understanding and reduce the negative effects of cultural differences between OIT and the Library; reduce "turf ownership" and exclusivity; coordinate centralized support for consistency, continuity and reliability; and reduce service failures due to confusion of responsibility.

An Advisory Council monitors the convergence of technical, informational, instructional and research support; assists the development of procedures and policies; and oversees the appointment and facilitation of staff and teams to create and successfully deliver needed services. The Library Associate Director for Public Services and the OIT Director for Information Technology Services facilitate the work of the dual leaders and that of the Advisory Council.

The Dean and Director of Libraries and the Associate Vice Provost / Associate Vice President for Information Technology are sponsors of the shared services and provide strategic direction, support at the Institute executive level, funding and organizational support as well as a vital connection to all Georgia Tech constituencies affected by the expanded services..

Partner responsibilities:

The shared project represents a genuine collaboration between OIT's Information Technology Services units and the Public Services division of the Library.

OIT

OIT provides a Liaison for Library Support who is housed in the Library, as well as a Multimedia Studio manager. OIT also provides staffing within the building in the form of undergraduate assistants, co-op students, and with contributions from permanent OIT staff from various areas of the organization. Together these staff provide the bulk of technical and applications support at workstations. The level and duration of staffing contributed by OIT anticipates the technical and instructional support required by students in the collaborative spaces. OIT provides staff in the Productivity Center and in the Multimedia Studio from 8 am to midnight Monday through Thursday, 8 am to 6 pm Friday, 9 am to 6 pm Saturday, and noon to midnight Sunday.

OIT finances shared workstations, servers, and productivity software. OIT strives to keep 100 % of workstations, peripherals and servers in operation at all times, and an escalated solution path for equipment that is not easily repaired.

OIT provides technical experts in a timely manner from inside and outside OIT to maintain workstations and servers, and to trouble-shoot and develop solutions.

OIT finances software applications for student production and for systems support that are appropriate to the needs of students using the shared spaces, and in accordance with Student Computer Ownership committee standards. The various applications at standard and multimedia workstations are upgraded and modified in a timely manner to satisfy student emerging needs as identified and agreed-to by both parties. A review of existing and requested software applications is conducted each semester by a small group appointed by both partners. A desiderata list is maintained throughout the year.

OIT finances basic consumables like printing paper and toner.

Note: See the attached Continuous Improvement plan for specific business processes and procedures as related to the operation of the labs in the shared spaces.

Library

The Library staff at the Information Services desk sustain service every hour the Library is open. The Head of Information Services is housed in this area, along with a complement of career information assistants. The level and duration of staffing contributed by the Library anticipates the information support, and to a lesser degree, the technical support required by students in all shared service areas. The Library pays for information resources that complement pedagogical technology, and multimedia and special productivity demands.

The Library provides and sustains comfortable and well-maintained spaces to house the expanded services, with appropriate furnishings and facilities. The Library also provides office space for the OIT liaisons.

Continuing the experiment: The LWC was an iteration of space, technology and service in a particular moment in time, and provided a starting point for elements that promote and support student productivity and learning outside the classroom. The Library and OIT will continue to identify opportunities to launch collaborative services that inform the programming of the Undergraduate Learning Center. This may take the form of renovating adjacent spaces, or providing training and exposure for students and faculty to support learning and emerging pedagogies. New directions will be grounded in careful observation and assessment of the experiment(s), and informed by the direct input of students and faculty.

New partnerships: The Library and OIT actively seek new partners to advance student learning and productivity, and to inform the programming for the Undergraduate Learning Center. In 2006, several campus entities are co-locating to the Library into the new Resource Center (formerly the old Library Archives, ground floor West). The Resource Center is funded by OIT (infrastructure improvements, furniture and technology). The new partners are OIT Customer Support, Undergraduate Academic Advising's outreach advisement program, and Success Program's 1-To-1 Tutoring. Each of these student support services is imagined to have a presence in either the Undergraduate Learning Center, or in a re-modeled Library.

The services provided by each partner in the Resource Center are overseen by a manager or director. These individuals are members of the Advisory Council and may attend any meeting at their discretion. Resource Center representatives will be encouraged to attend a quarterly review meeting where their operations and associated issues will be discussed.

The evolving partnerships will be observed over time to determine if the calculated mix of assistance, resources and services effectively support students in their academic endeavors. As occupancy is sustained over longer periods of time, and as students take advantage of services offered, elements like communication / public relations / marketing; staff orientation / training; informed referrals; security; and all aspects of customer service will be continually assessed and refined. The annual assessment of the partnerships will incorporate these entities.

Convergence and collaboration: Sustaining a genuine convergence of the two organizations will positively influence the service and support provided in the shared spaces. The Advisory Council will promote cross-unit mentoring, cross-unit participation on teams, and appropriate training opportunities. Staff with special skills that advance productivity and learning will be hired as circumstances indicate.

Public relations: All announcements and communications that showcase or elaborate on the partnership will be coordinated between OIT and the Library. Each partner will keep the other informed of all publicity related to the service areas. Customers, staff, the university, funding agencies and the media-at-large will receive targeted information that is timely, focused and verifiable. All public comments, reactions and questions sent to the Library homepage "comments" utility will be reviewed by representatives of both units and replied-to by the most qualified individual(s).

Evaluation & assessment: In addition to regular operational reporting and assessment, an annual review will be undertaken to:

- review management and disposition of operational issues to date, and

- engage sponsors, contributing staff and customers in an assessment of the effectiveness of the service

Periodic review of Memo of Understanding: The Advisory Council annually will review the conditions set forth in this Memo of Understanding. Changes to this document may be mutually agreed to at this annual review, or at any time the partners agree that changes or additions to the terms are beneficial.

Rich Meyer
Dean and Director of Libraries

Date

John Mullin
Assoc. Vice Provost &
Assoc. Vice President & CIO of OIT

Date

Approved: 10/2002; Revised: 4/2006