Sustaining the Vision: Best Practices for Design, Implementation and Service

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Overview

- Planning – Investigation, Participation, Articulation
- Space Planning
  - Envisioning new spaces
  - Lessons learned / Best practices
- Working in New Spaces
  - Collaborations
  - Staff
  - Service
- Sustaining the Vision
  - Marketing
  - Assessing impact
  - Next steps
Planning

- Realization
- Action
- Investigation
- Participation
Realize the need for change

- Realization prompts planning
- Paradigm shift in libraries
- Programmatic shift in library program
  - Focus on services, not collections
  - Services are outcome-driven
- Environmental Impact --
  - Digital generation
  - Collaborative learning
- User satisfaction surveys
- Facilities not aligned with user needs
Be Pro-Active

- Get out of your silo and on the radar screen
- Become involved in campus initiatives
- Participate in university strategic planning
- Continually “sell” the library’s program to administration and development office
- Form strategic alliances with potential campus partners
- Recognize and seize opportunities that come your way
Investigate

- What do your users want/need? Ask.
- What are others doing? (visit other libraries, conferences, literature)
- Gather evidence for self-discovery and needs assessment (Focus groups, LibQual)
- If possible, seek outside advice (Informed colleagues, consultants)
- Form a task force for your project
- Begin to focus and determine your project scope and vision
Gather staff buy-in and build momentum

- Inclusiveness is essential
- Share what you know – be open
- Seek input from staff in the decision making process
- Retreats & consultants when necessary
- Formalize through library strategic planning
- Keep vision alive through constant communication – formal & informal
- Educate/train staff as needed.
Lay the campus groundwork

- Align your project vision with the University’s vision and core values
- Create a preliminary project concept
- Share your plan across campus constituencies (Beagle calls this “managing the campus conversation”)
- Identify campus partners and get them excited about your project
- Work with development to identify funding sources
- Encourage architectural needs assessment or feasibility studies
Architectural Input at RWU

- Came from the top – gave the project credibility
- Forced a needs assessment
- Brought various campus constituencies together
- Gave us key facilities data
- Presented us with six different plans for re-envisioning our space
- Helped to sustain and build momentum for the project
Best Practices for Planning

- Know your users and assess their needs
- Lay the groundwork for administrative support
- Know what you want to achieve – have a guiding document
- Get out of your building and engage the campus community in your vision
- Be inclusive - work to achieve buy-in through retreats, meetings, consultants…
Best Practices for Planning (cont.)

- Identify key campus partners & stakeholders
- Involve staff in the decision making process
- Stay focused on your vision, but be flexible enough to envision other possibilities
- Get outside help as needed
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
Space Planning

• Begin by asking the right questions
• What do you want to happen in this space?
• What types of activities will users be engaged in?
• What services will be needed to support activities?
• How will this space enrich the educational experience?
• What spaces/services can we live without that currently exist?
What do students want?

- Social space/quiet space
- Surfaces for their stuff
- Technology everywhere
- Collaborative group work space
- Access to experts
- Comfortable environments so they don’t have to leave the building (e.g. food and drink)
Reading/Study/Gathering Area
Bridgewater State College
Quiet study Simmons College
Multimedia Centers
Technology Everywhere

[Images of different office settings with technology present]
Group study rooms
Collaborative Work Area
Mount Holyoke
Collaborative work area
Connecticut College
Café with technology
Appalachian State
How will users find their way?

- How will traffic flow throughout the library be affected
- Line of sight
- Placement of furniture
- Carpet patterns
- Color
- Signage
- Lighting
Line of sight Plymouth State
Way-finding with color & carpet
Bridgewater State College
User support

- How will you support users in this new space?
- Let service model drive space planning
- Will you be working with campus partners?
- Integrated service desks?
- Additional staff?
Service Desks  UNC - Charlotte
Envision – then Re-envision

- Take what you can get and do what you can
- Space is transitional – it changes with user needs
- How can space be reconfigured as future needs dictate
- Realize that there is no “perfect plan”
- Continually assess what works and what doesn’t work
- Plan for plenty of power, data, and lighting so that you can remain flexible
RWU data & power
Flexible furniture
Beautiful but not flexible
Architects, Contractors, Facilities

- Ask to be included in architect and contractor meetings – good ones will ask for your input
- Be on your toes and be informed
- Know where you are in line of authority and what avenues of communication exist
- Be involved and on site as much as possible while contractors are working
Best Practices for Space Planning

- Don’t rush your implementation. Take time to ask the right questions
- Think about what your users will be doing in this space and what will draw them into it
- Engage in scenario building
- Phase your project if necessary
- Pay attention to way finding and navigation
- Stay flexible – envision & re-envision
Best Practices Space Planning

- In designing service desks, get feedback from all people working who will work there
- Think about line of sight – especially between service points
- Use flexible furniture
- Consider noise levels
- Never enough power, light, and data
- No perfect plan – anticipate need for change
Old space
New Space
Working in New Spaces

- Collaboration
- Staff
- Service
Create a Culture of Service & Collaboration

- Network/listen/learn
- Regularly scheduled meetings with service providers leads to mutual understanding and respect
- Build Teamwork – retreats, staff appreciation days, etc.
- Mutual understanding of organizational goals
Challenges for Staff Collaboration

- Each department has its own organizational culture
- Different leadership & working relationships
- Different working styles
- Who shapes this new “culture”?
- Who owns the space – the Library – I.T. – Academic Support?
Ways to Facilitate Collaboration

- COMMUNICATE
- Memorandums of Understanding
- Be clear in expectations
  - What the Library expects from IT
  - What IT expects from the Library
- Protocol for conflict resolution
- Cross-training & Staff Development
Successful Collaborations

- Stay focused on what is best for the user
- Offer a variety of perspectives for improving service
- Resolve problems more quickly
- Remove organizational barriers
- Open new avenues for achieving goals
Best Practices for Working in New Spaces

- Think about how new spaces will change the Library’s program of service.
- Inclusiveness and communication is essential – involve EVERYONE
- Allow time and space for staff to transition.
- Staff anxiety over new spaces will dissipate as they work together
- Memorandums of understanding/ protocol for conflict resolution
Best Practices for Working in New Spaces (cont.)

- Be flexible and continue to evolve. Change will occur, go with it and see where it leads you.
- The popularity of your new space may increase staffing demand.
- Market your progress to the community.
- Continually assess how new spaces are working for both staff and users.
Sustaining the Vision

- Phase the project to create reasonable expectations
- Build on past successes for future phases
- Work with Development Office to procure funding for next phase
- Market your progress to the community
- Provide teasers of what is to come
- Assess impact of changes
Marketing the New Space

- Provide tours to departments and community groups
- Give interviews to campus news media
- Change library website to reflect new space/services
- Publish articles in campus publications and digital repositories
- Provide receptions in the new space
- Create a brand for the new space and attach to freebies (bookmarks, coffee mugs, keychains)
Assessing the Impact

- Consider both qualitative and quantitative assessment (e.g. focus groups, surveys, interviews)
- Create institutional narratives to enhance intimacy with users
- Assess in tandem with the library’s Strategic Plan
- Tailor to your library and user group
- Focus on value added
- Pilot assessment tools with student workers
- Base all future decision making on what is important
Next Steps

- Use assessment results to fully plan next phases
- Get necessary training to interpret the data
- Leverage the administration with appropriate metrics
- Seek creative funding solutions
- Tie all results into student learning outcomes
References


A full list of readings can be found at http://faculty.rwu.edu/sbcmullen/Bibliography.htm
More Information

- Sabbatical study site:
  http://faculty.rwu.edu/smcmullen