Library Response to External Review
Conducted March 2016
Response September 2016

We appreciate the opportunity to learn how we are doing from an expert outside of Transylvania. In preparation for the External review, we shared a number of documents with the reviewer and also provided him with a list of questions that we wanted him to address. This document is available on request from the library director.

We appreciate that the overall impression of the library by our students, faculty and staff is positive. We do take pride in the library as an essential piece in the education of our students. In the preparatory documents, we said that we did not wish to limit the reviewer’s response but did want him to address the following questions, which he did in his document. This response to his report will take each question in turn.

Does the library provide the services our community needs? What needs should the library be addressing in the next three to five years?

We agree that the information literacy program is the headline service that the library provides. The work that we do with the First Year Program, and with the upper classes when we can, is the most important thing that we can do to help our students succeed here and on into their life. The reviewer mentions other supporting efforts including work with IT to provide software not otherwise available. This is something that we used to do before the labs moved to thin clients. The thin clients do not allow us to load unique software so we have ceased this service. We do provide students and faculty access to cameras, laptops, chargers, adapters and other auxiliary equipment to help them further their studies and support presentations.

While we are happy to serve the college and student needs, we agree that taking on the management of the tutoring program without additional staff has curtailed our ability to spend time with students in support of their research and has also curtailed the growth of the information literacy program. We would like to improve our information literacy efforts with the upper classes, whose students come to us for help with things that we feel they should know. We are pleased that those who seek help are doing so, but are concerned that there are others who do not seek help and are doing things like missing key research sources or paying for materials that we can provide for them for free. Unlike the work with the first years, where the information provided is fairly uniform, the work with upper classes, the resources that we teach them to use, and the way that they seek information, becomes much more varied depending on their area of study. We agree with the reviewer and feel strongly that in order to scaffold the information literacy program into the upper classes, we need to increase the size of our staff. We need to add an additional librarian to the Public Services team so that we can improve and expand the work that we do with our students. If the college wants a full and vibrant tutoring program, it also needs to hire someone to manage the program so that it can grow and become a strong source of additional support for our students.

Is the financial support of the institution sufficient to meet those needs?
We agree that we have done well with the resources we have and that we have been a team player in these times of lean budgets. We also agree and have provided evidence in Section 4.4 of the Library Annual Report that we are budgeted much more leanly than our benchmark institutions. We spent $613 per student in 2014 according to the IPEDS data and the average spending of our benchmarks was $1018 per student.

The reviewer mentions that we need additional staff in this section and we agree, as stated above and in section 5 of the Library Annual Report. We actually disagree with the reviewer’s statement that some may not see us as grossly understaffed. If we examine the 2012 staffing report from NCES data (IPEDS stopped collecting this data), we see that we are the lowest staffed of all our benchmark institutions. We wonder if the reviewer did not see this information in the Library Annual Report.

![Graph showing total staff without student workers in 2012 NCES](image)

Is the staffing adequate to provide the needed services?

We agree with the reviewer’s observation that we need additional support for the Public Services team. We agree that a way to address this would be hiring a paraprofessional position which would not require an MLIS, to manage the circulation desk. Doing so would enable our Instruction Librarians to spend more time with the Information Literacy program and expand into the middle and upper level courses as demand for our instruction services continues rise.

We also agree that we need an additional librarian in Special Collections. We agree that the use of Special Collections libraries at our institution and at other institutions is a different beast than the use of regular libraries. Special Collections requires a different kind of processing so that researchers, including our own students, can find materials. And they require a different level of service. Because of the delicate, irreplaceable, and rare nature of the materials, it is necessary that librarians work closely with researchers so that the
materials continue to be available to future researchers. A second librarian in Special Collections could aid with processing collections and could also work to expand our educational outreach to our courses.

The reviewer suggests that we seek grants and gifts to help digitize and process the collections. We agree that this is one good way forward and would like to work with the development office to identify potential donors to get this work done. We have begun putting a digitization process in place and now need funds to hire part time workers to help with this and to acquire software and hosting fees so that these digitized materials can be made available to our students and public researchers. We also would like to see the library budget increased so that these issues could be addressed within the normal budget and so that the efforts would be sustainable from year to year.

Is there adequate consultation between library staff, faculty and administration about the needs of the library and the development of services, resources and collections the library provides?

We appreciate that the overall communication between the library and other campus constituents has been good. We are intrigued and not against the idea of letting go of the library subcommittee. If issues arise that need more input from faculty we could set up a workgroup or ad hoc committee to address those specifically.

We agree that communicating new resources and reminding faculty of existing resources is one of the biggest challenges. We post regularly to our social media accounts and to TNotes. We also send emails to faculty to announce new resources and to remind them of existing resources. But like our students and like all of us, until resources become a regular part of our process and routine, we forget that they exist. We have worked with faculty one on one to let them know about the resources that they specifically would be interested in. We have offered workshops in the past but had only one or two people sign up for them. To address this challenge we can increase the posts that we do to TNotes as well as the emails that we send to faculty to remind them of resources.

Are the facilities adequate to support the services and house the collections of the library?

We agree with the reviewer that the overall look of the library has been vastly improved in the past three years. As the reviewer mentions, there is work to the building that needs to be done such as improved HVAC and amelioration of leaks and seepage especially in the lower level. We are excited about the continuing improvements to the building including the upcoming upgrades so that we can move the Writing Center into the building and then renovation of the quiet side of the library. We addressed the need for additional electrical outlets in the 2015 renovation to half of the main floor. The comments regarding the need for more electrical outlets must refer to the quiet or 1950s side of the building. We agree that this is an increasing need and will need to be addressed unless we ever get to the point that we can provide wireless electricity. The 1950s side of the building is especially bad since it was built in an era before electrical devices were so prolific. We currently address this with extension cords and hope to be able to address this in a more systematic way when renovations are approved for that side of the building.

We envision our library as a bright, light, dynamic and flexible space that supports our students’ academic discourse with texts as well as with each other. Half of the building reflects this vision. We now need to address the other half.
Are Transylvania students prepared to function in an information centered society? How might we improve?

We agree that this is a large question and not answerable with the data available. We have some data on whether students have learned what we teach in the first year program although even this is proving difficult to gather.

What is the role of libraries on campuses in the future?

We agree that the role of libraries is to provide services that enhance student research and learning. We also envision the library as a true Academic Center of campus offering multiple ways for students to engage with the academic discourse and become better scholars.

Additional Points

1. We agree with the reviewer that over the past ten years we have made good use of technology to enhance our student researchers’ experience. We have implemented ILLiad, migrated to WMS, and implemented LibGuides all of which enhance our students’ experience and allow our small staff to go farther. We have begun to put digitization process in place so that we can improve the experience of our own students as well as support academic scholarship worldwide. Through a project like this we also put Transylvania at the fore, providing additional visibility and accolades for the institution.

We have, so far, protected our ability to attend regional and national conferences and our library staff has been actively involved in attending, presenting, and learning with our colleagues and peers. We support the call to continue the support for this activity for the sake of our students and for the reputation of Transylvania.

2. We agree that our location provides additional rich resources. We have always said that the resources in the city are the icing on the cake, not the cake itself. We know that we still have work to do to encourage some of the faculty to have their students talk with us before they use the other resources in the city. We can guide students to materials that we have immediately so that they do not need to spend money on gas and parking. We also provide a higher level of service to our students than other libraries. When we do not have materials, we can get materials delivered directly to the student via ILL and email.

3. While the library director currently serves on the Curriculum and Planning Committee and thus does participate in conversations regarding aspects of the curriculum, we agree that it would be beneficial to include other librarians on faculty committees created to discuss specific aspects of the curriculum.