

Library Consultant's Report
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I want to extend a sincere thank you to Ms. Michelle Noel and the entire staff of the Sturm Library for inviting me to visit with them and for fully participating in the meetings with me while I was on the campus of the Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC). The personnel were exceptionally open to discussing a variety of topics and were equally forthcoming in suggesting potential improvements. Ms. Michelle Noel was especially encouraging and particularly gracious in welcoming me to her and her husband's new home for dinner on my arrival day and this hospitality was carried over into all my meetings and conversations with her.

When Ms. Noel first approached me regarding a consulting visit to the Sturm Library, the emphasis was on how to make improvements in the physical library. As I continued to exchange emails with her prior to my visit, the charge gradually expanded and it was broadened to making suggestions on anything which would help improve the building and its services to the students and faculty of TMCC. Since the initial charge was with regard to changes in the building, I will begin my comments on the building and then turn to more specialized areas of library services.

The Sturm Library opened in 1996 and is a very esthetically pleasing structure as well as showcasing the mountain vistas which are visible from the majority of the seats in the building. It truly is an awe-inspiring view! In addition to being a beautiful library, it also has some unique capabilities which are not normally evident. Some specific observations are: 1) the Library has sufficient stack space for 15 to 20 years of growth given that there is about 20% growth space available in the current stacks and the architect provided the needed square feet to expand all the book stacks on the upper floor when the book stock exceeds the current capacity of the stacks. This is a luxury which very few libraries have and so the forward-thinking skills of the library personnel and the architect are to be commended. 2) the circulation desk and reference desks are ideally located for user service and they, too, are exceptionally well-designed from a visual viewpoint. These desks are the most obvious indication that the Sturm Library was designed to be an excellent facility rather being built at the lowest cost possible. Evidence of this appears in several ways such as the coordinated Corian counter tops used in each of the desks. This single feature likely added \$40,000 to their cost and, in my experience, is very seldom done. Additionally, actual wall coverings were used on major expanses of the walls and again this is never done when the overriding objective is cost containment. 3) the administrative office area of the library is well-designed and the opportunity to have a well thought out conference room in the suite area is another indication of the time, effort, and funds which were devoted to the construction of the library, 4) the building has exceptional lighting. Parabolic fixtures were used in the office areas and stack areas

to limit glare on computer screens. The lighting used in the public areas is a combination of fixtures which provide both down and up lighting so, again, the normal light glare from regular florescent lights is limited. Finally, sconce lights are used on the building columns to highlight the highly complex and sophisticated ceiling plan. Again, this feature is exceptional and provides additional evidence that TMCC wanted a special space for the library rather than a bare-bones structure, and 5) the building is well maintained and very clean. In summary, it is very easy for the consultant to say the Sturm Library is one of the best planned and well maintained buildings which he has had the opportunity to visit while helping libraries. It is hoped these wonderful qualities do not eventually get taken for granted because they are unusual in any library and highly unusual in a state-funded facility in higher education.

While the Sturm Library has all of the aforementioned very positive attributes, it is also caught in the time frame in which it was designed and constructed. As a consequence some of the planned features of the building simply have not worked out as well as hoped. The next section of this report will summarize these building elements and then the consultant will make some recommendations for correcting the shortcomings.

Upon entering the Sturm Library, one is drawn to the window wall and the atrium area on the first floor. The views into the library garden and beyond are exceptionally pleasing. Unfortunately, this area simply does not work and this is still the case after the library personnel have implemented some notable alternatives to better control the noise from the architecturally-significant atrium. First, a cascading water fountain was installed in the plant garden to provide the restful sound of falling water and, perhaps more importantly, to provide a white noise background so that people's voices are less noticeable on the second floor which has been designated as a quiet study area. Next, a series of cloth banners were installed to form a whimsical ceiling for the fountain area. These banners are somewhat effective in helping absorb unwanted sound but, even more importantly, they introduce some needed color into the area. This area then is backed by a walled patio garden which is exceptionally well-designed and something which most libraries would love to have.

Seating for this area consists of modular sofas which may be taken apart and put together in a number of configurations and, as was noted by the most senior library employee, the furniture was well made and consequently, was quite expensive. Unfortunately, the area simply does not work as an informal gathering place for users of the library. In the two days the consultant spent on campus, only one or two people were ever seen seated in the space at one time. This observation was shared with and confirmed by the librarians. It became apparent that this area needs to be rethought so that it better meets the needs and expectations of the users.

Another public area and service space which needs attention on the entry floor of the library is the area dedicated to watching and listening to audiovisual materials owned by the library. Many of these are on reserve and cannot be taken outside of the building. The equipment is currently placed along the back wall of the reference area and appears to be almost an afterthought, given that there is inadequate space for the carrels, chairs,

and the space needed for a user to walk behind the person seated at the work station. In fact, rather than having the required 36 inches, it is more in the neighborhood of 12 inches. Clearly, this situation needs to be corrected so the individual student has the needed private space to view the assigned materials. This viewing issue becomes even more complex when a group of students come into the library to use audiovisual material because the needed space is not available.

The final space problem on the first floor is with regard to office space for the individuals who work in both public and technical services. These spaces are similar to the garden area because they seemed to have been well thought out when designed, but they simply have not met the test of time. The situation is the Sturm Library now has a hodgepodge of space for its personnel rather than an environment which promotes efficient and effective work. For instance, the public service personnel are housed in opposite ends of the Library and the technical services people have ineffective space for ordering, cataloging, and processing the materials which are being added to the collection. At first glance, a solution for the library personnel seems difficult to achieve, but it is very possible when the first floor is looked at from a holistic viewpoint.

The final area of the first floor which needs to be rethought is the current art gallery. When one looks at this space, it seems to have been an add-on because it does not flow into any other library space. This was verified in conversations with the library personnel. Ironically, the art gallery space is really serving as a place holder in the library and it becomes a pivotal point in making some significant changes in space allocation in the following plan.

From a library consultant's perspective, it is a challenging situation to analyze a space which is not functioning effectively and reposition it so that it becomes an ideal space for helping patrons use information more effectively. This is particularly the case with the garden area given how beautiful but underused the space is. As the consultant actually sat in the area, he realized that the area was simply too large of a space to make an individual feel comfortable. The first suggested alternative is to move two of the modular sofas to the second floor of the Library. The remaining sofa section should be reoriented so it is facing into the garden and patio area and include a fixed carpeted ottoman. This will give the user more perceived privacy and it will also limit the amount of conversation between users because the seating will clearly say to a user that idle talking is not encouraged in this area given that the people will be somewhat lined up as in a doctor's office rather than in conversation pods. It is then recommended the remainder of the space be dedicated to a Market Place to highlight new and popular library materials. The DVD collection could be shelved there in user-oriented shelving so the discs are face out. (Please note, it is recommended that if this suggestion is adopted, the DVDs should be placed in clear plastic locking boxes to limit their susceptibility to theft). If the budget permits, it would be ideal to include in this area a best seller rental collection such as those made available from either Baker and Taylor or BroDart. The cost of a collection where the Library would receive 15 new titles a month is approximately \$2500 per year. In addition to providing popular books, it may be a nice feature of the Market Place to include popular periodicals such as People, Newsweek,

Vogue, Seventeen, Sports Illustrated, etc. In other words, the purpose of this space is to attract users to the Sturm Library.

Given that the Sturm Library is located in an area where the climate provides the opportunity to be outside most of the year, the consultant is recommending the patio area of the Library be reopened and revitalized. This space will be a magnet in attracting users because it has the potential to be one of the most attractive areas in Reno for promoting reading, i.e., beverages from the snack bar immediately outside the Library, an absolutely delightful space, and highly desirable and well-displayed new and popular materials in the nearby proposed Market Place.

To better guarantee the success of this area, the consultant is recommending two enhancements be made to the area before it is officially opened for use. First, the pipe railing should be replaced with a 6 foot-high plate glass wall to both limit the impact of wind on the area as well as discourage any user from trying to throw library materials out into the grass area without checking them out. The second item is not a necessity, but it would be ideal if another water fountain would be installed in the area to help attract users to the Library Patio.

The second shortcoming of the Sturm Library mentioned above was the lack of viewing areas for either an individual or a group of students. This problem may be generalized into the overall need for more group study space. This is one of those issues which was not a priority when the Sturm Library was being designed in the early 1990s but has become a basic necessity in a library in 2007 given how students are now encouraged to work together as part of the educational process.

Just as in the situation with the garden area, this one may be corrected at a very reasonable cost because the space is already available. The consultant believes the College would have a much higher return on the space which is now informally called the art gallery if it were remodeled into four group study rooms. It is also recommended that these be high tech rooms. This would mean that each room would be equipped with a 42" flat panel screen installed on the wall and include all the data jacks needed for truly facilitating group work in the electronic era. Other recommended items related to the construction of the rooms are: 1) the use of floating double-wall construction for the partitions to limit sound being transferred from one room to another and the installation of sound-absorbing carpet as wainscoting, 2) the use of insulated glass in the doors to again contain any sound as well as to provide an acceptable level of safety, and 3) the use of wheeled task chairs so it is easy for a group of students to move about in the room. If this recommendation is accepted and the space is remodeled, it would be a nice touch to highlight important events in the history of TMCC via pictures mounted on the opposing wall of the corridor which provides access to the individual rooms.

The next space the consultant would like to recommend for reorganization is the area dedicated to office space. It is believed that both the office space for the public service personnel and the space for technical services staff needs to be analyzed because it appears it has been developed in a very informal fashion since the building was

constructed. This is evidenced in several ways, including the placement of office space in walkways in the technical services area, the creation of walls for new office space made of old library card catalogs (also in technical services), and the adoption of an attractive glass-paneled office for a rather glaring display of personal interests.

The consultant will begin to address this situation by first addressing the technical services area. This space needs to be completely rethought and a minor renovation undertaken to make the space really work effectively for the personnel and for the Library. The consultant asked the people who work in the area if they had any suggestions for making the area better and a tidal wave of suggestions just happened. To begin with, the area needs to be simplified so the circulation staff has a designated work area as well as the acquisitions and cataloging staff. It only makes sense to begin with the circulation area given they need to be adjacent to the circulation desk so their current space is in the correct area. The area only needs to be updated with the appropriate type of panels to separate the work areas as well as providing the right kind of space and furniture for each of the personnel to do their job. While most institutions often use office landscape furniture to resolve this situation, the consultant will recommend an alternative which provides the same environment but at a much lower cost. Rather than purchasing the needed panels, it is recommended the College's facilities group build the panels for the offices and use wall board which already has a wall treatment on them. Once the panels are constructed and placed in the needed location, then the required counters would be installed which would be covered with plastic laminate, and then the appropriate filing cabinets, shelves, and pencil drawers would be purchased from a company such as Hon and simply slid under the counters. This approach, if well planned, costs about half or less of what the typical office landscape furniture does.

When exiting the circulation staff area and walking toward the acquisitions/cataloging area, one would pass shelving installed along the wall which would accommodate all the returned materials waiting to be reshelfed in the book stacks. These shelves would provide a transition from the circulation area to the other areas and the reshelfing area would be immediately adjacent to an exit door so it would be very efficient to take a loaded book truck to the almost immediately available elevator. This area now houses what was supposed to be a circulation point for media equipment and was unsuccessfully modified while the building was being constructed. It is recommended the poorly thought out windows be removed and replaced with plaster board walls which would provide more useable space in the area and it would help eliminate the noise leaking into and out of the adjacent classroom. It was also recommended by the Technical Services personnel that the classroom be made deeper by absorbing some of the unneeded hallway space into the classroom.

Currently the Technical Services area has a good sized compact shelving unit for housing new, uncataloged materials and office supplies, and there are additional shelving units for Quality Control, office supplies, and a reshelfing stack range for circulation. As previously mentioned, the reshelfing unit would be moved to a new area, and after conversations with both the Technical Services and Public Services personnel, it was agreed the Quality Control work should be discontinued. This decision will free up a

large amount of space so all the Technical Services personnel may have their own office space including Ms. Clough, Ms. Sidles, Ms Torres, and Ms. Phinney. If this recommendation is implemented, the exact office needs of each of the individuals will need to be studied so the office space may be best utilized and the most appropriate furniture provided. This arrangement assumes that Ms. Sue Bradley and Ms. Maureen Leshendok will be relocated to what are now considered to be study room spaces in the back corner of the library adjacent to the stairway. This arrangement will recover a large amount of space in the area which may be rededicated to other needed, and not yet specified, activities.

Before leaving the review of the first floor of the Sturm Library, the consultant would like to comment on the materials housed behind the circulation desk as well as the group of display cabinets that are currently near the Information Desk. As mentioned earlier, the circulation desk may be considered a work of art because it has a high amount of design included in the structure and it was constructed from costly, high eye appeal materials. Unfortunately, the materials housed behind the circulation desk do not project the same image and it is recommended there be some changes made.

First, if the Market Place idea is accepted, the consultant would recommend that all the audiovisual materials now shelved behind the desk be moved to open stacks area and the film collection should be considered for the Market Place concept. Again, if theft is a concern for these materials, they should be placed in lockable cases which are opened at the circulation desk when the materials are checked out.

Next, the circulation desk is housing a fair amount of paper materials which are on reserve for specific faculty members. It is highly recommended that these materials be digitized and made available via electronic reserves. While there are several products available, one highly successful company is DocuTek. Their software is completely compatible with Voyager and has an approximate cost of \$6000 for the first year and a cost of \$3,000 for each succeeding year if the Sturm Library took the hosted approach offered by the company.

The last two suggestions for the first floor of the Sturm Library are fairly simple, but they have the potential to have a significant impact. The first is a consequence of one of the librarian's thoughts when she suggested that the display cabinets now located near the Information Desk be relocated. The consultant concurs with this suggestion because it would free up needed space and make it easier for users to walk through the area. It has been the consultant's experience that display cases almost always create more work than they are worth so his first suggestion is to decide if they are worth keeping. If they are, it is recommended they be moved to the second floor and be placed in a similar configuration near the entrance to the HR office area. This area would ensure the contents of the display cases are seen by a good mix of both full and part time personnel employed by the College as well as students who use the second floor of the Library.

The final suggestion is to install a flat panel monitor in the vestibule of the Sturm Library. This is a generously sized area and it is thought a digital announcement panel

would be potentially helpful to the students who are seeking information on the time and location of library classes, the status of new library materials, as well as campus wide information regarding class cancellations, etc.

The second floor of the Sturm Library is much simpler to describe because it fulfills two basic missions of the library which are to provide stack space for the circulating collection and quiet study space for the users. It is successful in both cases and is particularly so regarding space for the current collection as well as providing the needed space for future acquisitions. While it also functions well for providing seating, it may be easily enhanced with some modifications.

The seating in on the second floor is primarily composed of four-person tables and there are also a number of carrels added around some of the perimeter walls of the building. This seating configuration provides for about 144 students at the tables and 28 at the carrels. While this sounds somewhat generous, it is not as good as it seems because, in reality, the four person table will only accommodate one person in a normal situation. This is because many of the tables will be filled with individual students who will not sit together at the same table, leaving many of the seats unfilled and wasted. The carrels are a good alternative, but they are placed so the students' backs are exposed to people walking behind them and this is a poor situation for encouraging a high use of the seats. In other words, the practical seating on the second floor is more likely 28 people at the tables and then perhaps 10 additional people at the carrels and these would be the ones that are more isolated.

The most reasonable alternative to this situation is to replace a portion of the tables with carrels. Perhaps one easily implemented suggestion would be to replace the tables near the HR offices with carrels which would significantly increase the practical number of seats even though the over all number would be less. The next suggestion would be to strategically place the two modular sofas from the garden area to areas which would be attractive to the students. It has been the experience of the consultant that placing fixed, carpeted ottomans in front of the sofa seating will dramatically increase the attractiveness and use of the seats. Wiring the ottomans for electricity will facilitate the use of laptops and further increase the sofa's desirability as a seating option.

One other suggestion is to introduce some additional color into the furniture on the second floor. This should be a very conscious decision if it is decided to add new carrels to the mix of furniture and a portion of the current tables could be modified by simply adding a new sheet of laminate to the table top. This works well and may be done at a very modest cost. The final recommendation for the public areas of the second floor is to reorient the carrels so they are perpendicular to the walls rather than parallel with them. This will provide much more privacy to the users and it is believed they will be more heavily used by simply changing the spatial configuration.

The final area which needs to be commented on with regard to the second floor is the space dedicated to the archives of TMCC. It appears from looking at the area as well as discussing the collection strategy with the current archivist that the current approach is to

collect as much as feasible when it is possible. While this is an admirable goal, it does contribute to an area which is severely overcrowded and a likely consequence is that no one truly knows the range and depth of materials which are collected. From a purely architectural perspective, it is thought the current dead weight of the full filing cabinets is possibly exceeding the load bearing capacity of the structure. (Libraries are typically built with floors which support 150 pounds per square foot for a typical book stack configuration. There are some areas of libraries, such as spaces where microforms are housed or where compact shelving is used, that are constructed to support 300 pounds per square foot.) Because the archives area is being used to house many full filing cabinets, this arrangement may exceed the load bearing capacity of the floor. It seems there are two options available: 1) confirm the load bearing capacity of the floor and if it is 300 pounds, there is no issue, and 2) if the load bearing capacity is the normal 150 pounds per square foot many of the materials will need to be removed from the archives room. The consultant will discuss some other options in the next section which may provide some other ways to deal with the archives and its contents.

While the physical library structure and how to improve the service to the students and faculty of TMCC was the over arching objective of the consultant's visit, a secondary, and perhaps even more global objective, became obvious as plans for his visit were finalized. This objective was to identify methods and procedures for improving the student and faculty skill set in using information. As the consultant became more educated about the Sturm Library and discussed the situation with the Library Director, it was agreed the usage figures were below what would normally be expected for an institution with a headcount of approx. 12,000 students and an FTE of about 6,000 students. The current regular circulation of the Library is approximately 10,500 items per year and the facility circulates another 6,000 items through its reserve collection. While every school is different, these counts are fairly low and the consultant is recommending the library personnel set a goal of increasing the figures by five fold over the next several years.

While it is easy to set the objective, it is quite another to implement practices and policies which will encourage the changes which will make it happen. One of the most basic approaches is to think of the library in terms of the user rather than in terms of the employees. This philosophical change requires one to really analyze how the library interacts with its users and to reconsider many of the long held traditions of libraries. While the consultant did not go into detail with the librarians on these topics, some possible alternatives include a roving reference librarian rather than only providing service from the traditional reference desk. Another possible idea is to arrange collections in mini rooms within the library. This idea is similar to what department stores do when they display merchandise by a clothing manufacturer or designer so the customer may easily get to what they want to buy rather than looking through racks of merchandise which has no interest to them. A comparable analogy for the library is to put all the health materials together including the reference collection, the circulating book collection, periodicals, and the audiovisual collection. While this is an extreme application of how to better merchandise a library, it is very difficult to do it in an already existing structure such as the Sturm Library and it is only provided as food for thought.

The consultant did discuss some other more evolutionary techniques for increasing the use of the library and they are listed below:

- Circulate laptop computers. The consultant has had the experience of implementing this service and seeing the circulation figures grow geometrically. The most interesting aspect of this service change is that by offering this new service, other library services will also increase because the users are already in the Library. If this service is judged to be doable for the Sturm Library, the consultant is recommending it be well planned from every aspect, including how to recharge the batteries of the laptops, to installing more electrical outlets, i.e., the ottoman idea for the sofas, to having the necessary space and personnel to handle a surge of use which will far exceed what the Library has experienced in the past.
- Purchase and implement an electronic reserves module which is compatible with the Voyager Integrated Library System. This new service will substantially increase the number of items which faculty put on reserve because the students will be able to access the materials from anywhere they are located. Please note that the materials will be password protected so copyright issues are held to a minimum because only TMCC students will be able to access the items which are placed on reserve. To get the most value out of this purchase, materials which showcase the service will need to be developed and shared with the classroom faculty. It may be a viable strategy to have some incentives to give to faculty members for moving to the electronic era of reserves. As mentioned earlier, the product provided by DocuTek is very well-respected and functional.
- Continue to develop and refine the liaison program which is currently being put into place so that all the contacts with faculty flow through their liaison librarian. This could include all bibliographic instruction, materials orders, and any suggestions and/or issues with current services. These individuals should be empowered to make decisions which facilitate the use of the Library without seeking permission as long as it fits within the policy of the liaison program.
- Refine the materials allocation formula so it reflects if the discipline is library oriented, i.e., English would likely receive a high use factor while physical education would receive a low use factor, the number of faculty and students being supported, the general cost of the materials for the discipline, and most important of all, from the consultant's viewpoint, is the actual use of the materials in the discipline. The use of the materials is somewhat difficult to capture because it requires a very fine analysis of the LC schedules so that all appropriate classification numbers are identified for a discipline and the correct query statements are then written to retrieve the needed information from the Voyager System. If this approach is adopted and implemented, the consultant can almost guarantee the use of the Library will increase because the organization is funding what does circulate rather than what may circulate.

- Refine a collections development policy for archives which targets the most important elements of what makes TMCC the institution it is. The consultant would expect the following publications may be examples of a more targeted policy: student newspaper, annual yearbook, minutes from the Faculty Senate and its most influential standing committees such as Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Finance, and the governing board for the College. Once the list is assembled and agreed to, it would be ideal if the materials would be described bibliographically in the online catalog and then have the actual items scanned, digitized, and actually attached to the bibliographic record so the user would have them immediately available when needed.
- Purchase access to the Interlibrary Loan Module from OCLC. The consultant believes this is an absolutely critical component in the array of library services of the Sturm Library if it is going to be recognized by the faculty as a viable academic library. Once the service has been well developed and tested with faculty requests, the consultant then recommends it be made available to the students. For this to be to become a successful student service, it will need to be emphasized in any library instruction provided by the reference staff and it also needs to be a priority of the library personnel providing the service. While it is a time worn adage, exceptional service guarantees more use.

The final portion of this consultant report is devoted to some more global recommendations which will help facilitate the library personnel's work and, consequently, the Sturm Library in providing more effective and timely service.

- Assign a priority to submitting grant applications for available grant funds. From a pragmatic viewpoint, it would make the most sense to begin with Library Services and Technology Act grants which are funded by the US Department of Education and administered by the individual Library Development Office of each of the respective State Libraries. These grants are normally for reasonable amounts of money, i.e., less than \$100,000.00, and are not exceedingly difficult to get because the competition is from other libraries within ones own state. If Nevada is similar to Pennsylvania, a current top priority is digitization grants so this fits very nicely with some of the current objectives which have been discussed.
- The librarians and staff have developed a fairly isolationist philosophy and this was apparently fostered by past library administrators. This is not a good philosophical position for any library and it is particularly suspect in the age of electronic information where people live and work in a global society. It is recommended the library personnel be encouraged to attend state and national meetings of the appropriate library associations as well as the user meetings for Voyager software with the travel costs being supported with College funds.

- The reorganization of the library personnel being proposed by Ms. Michelle Noel is on target from the consultant's viewpoint because it reduces the number of people who report directly to her as well as providing additional support for actually completing the work priorities of the Sturm Library. It appears that the Library should seriously discuss whether a systems technician or librarian needs to be a priority because the institution is simply not getting the level of benefit it should be from the very powerful, but complex Voyager software.

I sincerely hope this report is helpful in making the Sturm Library a destination for the students and faculty of TMCC. I have outlined a number of alternatives for correcting some shortcomings of the physical building as well as proposing some philosophical changes for making the library service more proactive in nature. While the list is quite lengthy, please do not lose site of the fact that you have a very good facility and the suggested changes will only make it better. It is very interesting to note that the majority of the building suggestions were mentioned in one of the many meetings I had with all the library personnel and so most of them are not new ideas, but this may be the first time they were ever all consolidated into one report.

The alternatives I noted for changing how library service is delivered may be newer to many of the library personnel and these will definitely take some money and persistence to have them implemented. While they may seem daunting at first, they really are not difficult to do because there are many libraries throughout the United States who are doing exactly what is being proposed.

I thoroughly enjoyed being with you for the past two days and I hope my report will not collect dust in a filing cabinet but be used to provide a cohesive plan for charting a more comprehensive direction for library service for TMCC. Please let me know of your successes as you have the opportunity to make some of the suggested changes. It would be a tremendous honor for me to return to the Sturm Library to see how it has changed in a few years and to help develop a new set of objectives once you have implemented the most viable ones mentioned in this document. Best wishes to all of you as you help the students of Truckee Meadows Community College become better prepared to use information in the 21st Century.